

Breakthrough to Transformation~ A 40 Day Journey

Week Three: Be Established

Introduction:

Wow, here we are entering week three of our 40 day journey of breakthrough to transformation! It's likely that many of you have been experiencing some push back from the enemy. Don't be alarmed but keep pushing through.

When we are feeling the oppression of the enemy, what happens next is often decided by our response to the push back. Do we give up or do we keep pushing through? Our response should always be to push through. An old song that keeps running through my mind at this stage is,

Step by step we're moving forward,
Little by little we're taking ground
Every prayer's a powerful weapon,
Stronghold's come tumbling, down and down and down...

The enemy is losing his grip and he'll eventually completely let go if we stay focussed, faith filled and trust in God's deliverance and breakthrough!

Here are some key questions to ask yourself in recap of week two:

- ✓ Are you declaring your breakthrough?
- ✓ Have you shared with at least one other person what breakthrough you're praying for?
- ✓ Are you recognizing and taking your thoughts captive so they line up with God's Word?
- ✓ Are you seeking God to help you conquer areas/strongholds in your life that have been hanging out in your life?
- ✓ If personal choices of sin were identified as a stronghold, have you repented before God and received his forgiveness?
- ✓ Are you praying scripture over the areas of breakthrough you are seeking God for?
- ✓ Are you choosing to rest and trust in God's salvation and strength for deliverance and breakthrough, even when you feel the enemy pursuing?

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June 4, 2014

Day Fifteen: Praise Him!

Exodus 15:2-3, *“The LORD is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name.”*

At this stage in our journey it's time to give God all the praise, glory and honour that He alone deserves. Today is a great opportunity to think about all that God has already done for us and where he has already brought us in our journey with Him. It doesn't matter if we've just started our journey with God or we've been in relationship with him for a long time—it's always good to stop for a bit, refresh our memories of all the ways God has led us, and give him praise and thanksgiving for it. A great place to start is to consider this scripture expressed by Moses to the Israelites prior to their entry into the Promised Land, *“What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him”* (Deut. 4:7)? We are in relationship and covenant with God; He is our Father, and we have an inheritance; we have a God that chooses to live with us. He is always near us to teach, to guide to advise to communicate. He is a God that hears us, a God that listens, and a God that answers prayers!

Another simple way to think about what God has done is to journal some stages in your life and notice how God has lead or is leading you each step of the way. What spiritual lesson has God taught you or is teaching you during this 40 day journey? Numbers 33:1-49 describes a moment in time where God had Moses record the Israelites journey from the time they left Egypt to where they camped in the plains of Moab, across from Jericho—just prior to entering the Promised Land. It says,

Here are the stages in the journey of the Israelites when they came out of Egypt by divisions under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. At the LORD's command Moses recorded the stages in their journey. This is their journey by stages:

This exercise can be a very useful tool in your spiritual journey, and it often helps us see progress which might otherwise get overlooked. It also helps us continue using new principles or helps us avoid mistakes we might have made in the past.

Take some time today to walk through stages of your journey and give praise and thanksgiving to God that he has brought you this far, and is continuing to work in your life.

Prayer Focus: Philippians 1:6, *“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”*

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June 5, 2014

Day Sixteen: Move On

Isaiah 43:18 (TLB), *“But forget all that—it is nothing compared to what I’m going to do!”*

Earlier we looked at a scripture in Exodus 14:10, *“The Israelites looked up and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD.”* In reading this statement a thought is highlighted for me, *“In order for the Israelites who were escaping their captivity to have looked up to see the Egyptians pursuing them, they had to have turned and looked back.”*

In regard to this thought, a statement has been resounding in my heart the past couple of days and that is, *“Don’t look back, you’re not captive any longer!* Allow that thought to sink deeply into your heart for a moment. Perhaps you need to reread that statement again.

Let’s acknowledge that there are times when—despite a deep desire to break free, to see breakthrough, and to move forward into our future—we are afraid to leave our place of captivity. No longer is it necessarily a fear that the enemy is pursuing, it’s now our own fear of the *unknown*. The unknown requires *trust*; trust that the one leading us is taking us to a good place—a place of provision, protection and safety.

God gave the Israelites ample opportunity to return to Egypt if they wanted to, the place of their captivity, and they often desired to do that very thing. Can we imagine a people in captivity for 430 years, which is almost twice the age of the United States of America, leaving to go—where—the desert to worship a God of their fathers that they didn’t know, and to be eventually established in their own land? They had nothing to rely on; no education, no weapons, no food, no extra clothing or water—just Moses and Aaron who were leading them into the desert. They had treasures from Egypt but what benefit would that be for them in the wilderness? They had a dilemma. On one hand, their captivity had provided some ‘seeming’ comforts; security and provision such as homes, food, clothing, and survival compared to all of the unknowns and merely promises.

It was in this moment that they had a choice to make, either turn back or *choose* to trust God. Could they trust a God yet unknown more than their known captivity? There is another interesting scenario highlighted in these passages as well. We read in Exodus 14:15 after the Israelites voiced their fears of dying in the desert, *“Then the LORD said to Moses, “Why are you crying out to me...?”* Moses, the leader was praying for guidance. This is great and leaders need to pray for direction in all and every situation but those being led must have their trust firmly established in God alone, and not even in our leaders. We trust that they are being led and guided by God—but our trust isn’t in them. Why? Because leaders as well as those they lead are *all* trusting God. Breakthrough is brought about by God, not by any other. The above scripture goes on to say, *“Tell the Israelites to move on.”* It is God that says, *“Trust me, move on.”*

What did the Israelites trust God to do? They trusted that God was fulfilling his promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They trusted that God would not only free them from captivity and their oppressors but that he would establish them as a chosen people in their own land—a place where they would be

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prosperous, protected, and provided for by God Himself! God had also promised that He would give them rest from all of their enemies around them.

At this stage of breakthrough to transformation there may be a struggle within our hearts as well. Do we turn back to our 'seeming' comfort, security and provision of captivity or can we trust God with our unknowns?

I personally believe God is saying, "**Don't look back, you're captive no longer—move on!** Put the past captivity behind you and move into your future. Isaiah 43:15, *'Forget all that—it is nothing compared to what I'm going to do!'* Trust me to establish you as my own son/daughter and to provide for all that you will need."

Prayer Focus: Proverbs 4:25 (ESV), *"Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you."*

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June 6, 2014

Day Seventeen: Look to the Future

Deuteronomy 1:6-7b (NIV), “The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, “*You have stayed long enough at this mountain*. Break camp and advance...See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land the LORD swore he would give to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them.”

Similar to week one’s devotions, we are going to take a close look at the above scripture for the next five days. Let’s set up a brief background.

Prior to entering the Promised Land, Moses is reminding the new generation of Israelites of the works of God during the past 40 years in the wilderness. He sets before them what God has done for them, reminds them of the mistakes of past generations in their relationship with God, and then encourages them to look to the future blessing of the Promised Land because of who God is to them. We now pick up the Israelites story where Moses is reminding them of God’s first directive to the previous generation before they made multiple mistakes of disobeying God’s words and guidance because of a lack of faith, and trust, and instead caved to fear. Thankfully, today, we can learn from their mistakes and won’t have to learn the hard way if we choose to listen and respond. “*Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God’s promises to be fulfilled*” (Rom. 15:4, NIV).

Deuteronomy 1:6-7b (NIV), “The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, “*You have stayed long enough at this mountain...*” Mount Horeb, according to the commentaries, refers to a mountainous region, whereas we know the Israelites met with God at Mount Sinai which is a specified mountain peak within the overall Horeb region. Horeb means *parched or burnt region* and Sinai a *mountain of par excellence or of Elohim*, Hebrew for God.

For approximately a year the Israelites were camped in a parched and burnt region during which God laid a foundation in their lives of who he was, what he expected of a covenant children, and where he revealed himself to them. At that mountain, God said that he had “*brought them to Himself* (Ex. 19:4, paraphrased). In the middle of circumstantial wildernesses; parched and burnt areas of our lives, God still calls us to the mountain of His presence where we too experience a foundational relationship being established in Him.

Then there came a season where God then spoke to His children that a foundation had been laid in His relationship with them—enough that it was time to trust him to take them to the a land of blessing, protection and rest, and annihilate the enemy.

So God said, “*You have stayed long enough at this mountain...*” His children had now been tested enough in a dry and barren land, and God felt that they were ready to move out and follow Him into his promises for them.

Today, is there a dry, burnt, barren, parched land of past mistakes, failures, fears, doubts etc., that God is calling you away from? Is there a place, although you have heard the voice of God and built a

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relationship with Him in the midst of it, that God is saying to you, *"You have stayed long enough at this mountain..."* it's time to look to the future?

If so, lay those past wilderness times before Him in prayer. Thank God for the foundation he has laid in you, the relationship you have built with him and then thank him for the future that He is encouraging you to look forward to.

Prayer Focus: Exodus 19:4 (NIV), *"You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself."*

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June 7, 2014

Day Eighteen: Advance

Deuteronomy 1:6-7b (NIV), “The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, “You have stayed long enough at this mountain. *Break camp and advance...*”

As mentioned in yesterday’s devotional, the Israelites were in a dry, parched, barren mountainous region where they experienced God drawing them to Himself at Mount Sinai. In that place, God revealed himself to them and built a covenant relationship with his chosen people prior to bringing them into the Promised Land.

Having shared with His people that he felt they had stayed in that place long enough he also states, “*Break camp and advance...*”(Deut. 1:6). This was not an easy task for approximately two and half million people. When we “break camp” it’s a simple matter of tearing down a tent, packing up the food and supplies, and away we go—not for the Israelites! As with all of their activities in the desert, even their breaking camp was commanded by God as to how they were to do it.

Their kind of breaking camp is highlighted in Numbers 10:1-36 where the sons of Aaron were to sound two silver trumpets. The type of blast would signal to the people what they were to do; gather at the tent of meeting; only leaders gather, etc., or set out. This required the trumpets to be sounded clearly and with the right command. The trumpets needed to give all the Israelites the same command at the same time, and the people need to know and recognize what command was being given so they could respond correctly.

I wonder what it was like for the Israelites to be waiting for a trumpet blast, and then wait to recognize which signal was being given? What exactly was being asked of them? I wonder if it was a shock to them the day they heard the two trumpets blasts—giving the command to break camp and set out or advance? They had been camping in that spot for a full year—I’m sure they wondered if they would ever hear the sound of the trumpets signalling their continued journey into the Promised Land. As we know, they were a whole new generation that had arisen from the time of coming out of slavery in Egypt, and they had lived in the wilderness their whole lives. Did they wonder if they would ever make it out of the wilderness? When they finally heard the trumpet blast, did it confuse them for a bit and did they question their neighbours if they had heard the trumpet blast correctly?

“Hey Joe, did I hear that blast right—we’re breaking camp and going to the Promised Land?” “I think so Steve. I’m pretty sure that’s what I heard too, but let me check with my wife first.”

Sometimes we’re like that. We’ve heard a sound in our hearts and perhaps we’ve been encouraged by those around us—friends and leaders—that it’s correct but we’ve been so long in the wilderness we’re not sure. We’ve been so long in a dry, parched and barren land that it shocks us when we finally hear a command to break camp in the wilderness and advance. It’s possible we never thought we were ever coming out of the desert...

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I hear God's voice saying, "Break camp and advance, you are coming out of the desert. You are coming out of that dry, parched and barren land. Can you hear the sound of marching, it's the sound of breakthrough—it's your time to arrive in the Promised Land."

Prayer Focus: Isaiah 41:18 (NIV), *"I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs."*

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June 8, 2014

Day Nineteen: God Gives the Increase

Deuteronomy 1:6-7b (NIV), “The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, “You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance...*See, I have given you this land.*”

It’s a really good time to remember a few things: breakthrough is God’s idea, we breakthrough and advance because God says it’s time, and it is God that gives the increase. God says to the Israelites, “*See, I have given you this land.*” In other translations it says, “*Behold, I have set the land before you*”, which literally translates from Hebrew as “I have set it before your faces; **it’s in open view.**”

I think it’s interesting that God starts it with, ‘*see or behold*’. I can imagine God saying, “In the wilderness what do you see children? Can you see the land that I have promised you? Can you see the breakthrough? You use to, ‘*see in open view and have it set before your face*’ your captivity, the enemy pursuing and your wilderness state, but now my children can you see the promises of your inheritance coming about?”

Remember in an earlier devotional we highlighted that Elijah was afraid of Jezebel’s threat because he could see and imagine her killing him. The enemy always likes to counterfeit God’s work, so where God encourages his children to see and imagine what he has in store for us—the enemy tries to turn that around and cause us to instead see fear, desolation, loneliness, no hope, etc.

At this juncture then, God encourages his children to look up and no longer see a pursuing enemy but to see what he had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and to their descendants. He is now giving the inheritance to the generation that is sitting in faith and trust—a generation that knows who they are in God and who he is in them, and what He wants to accomplish in their world, in and through them.

What exactly does God want us to see? It’s interesting that the boundaries that God set out for the Israelites in the Promised Land was larger than the Hebrews ever occupied (Num. 34:1 NIV, footnotes). God always gives the increase and often more than we can think or imagine. God desired to give and establish his people in a spacious, prosperous place.

Let’s take a moment to gain a bigger picture. The Israelites had been taken out of captivity and slavery; a place called Egypt, which in Hebrew *Mitzráyim*, literally means ‘the two straits’ or ‘double straits’. The word strait means a very narrow passage or a position of difficulty (dictionary.reference.com). Therefore, God was taking his people from a place of constriction to a place where they could spread out, prosper and live an abundant life.

Let’s remind ourselves what breakthrough means from Week One,

Breakthrough means, in military terms, an “act or instance of removing or surpassing an obstruction or restriction; the overcoming of a stalemate”. It can also mean a “movement or advance through and beyond an enemy’s front-line defense” (Dictionary.com). The Hebrew definition of the word *parats*: to break through, means to “break away, burst out, spread abroad, disperse, grow or to increase” (NAS Exhaustive Concordance).

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God guided his chosen people through a narrow, constricted place of captivity, slavery and a difficult position to a place of breakthrough where they would break away, burst out, spread abroad, disperse, grow and increase!"

God was the God of breakthrough and increase then, and he is the God of breakthrough and increase, now! Can you *see* the promises, your inheritance—it's in open view?

Prayer Focus: Hosea 11:1, "*When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.*"

Do you hear God calling you out of a place of captivity, slavery and double straits to a place of being called his son/daughter and seeing promises fulfilled; a place of receiving an inheritance provided by Jesus Christ? It's in open view and has been set before your face—salvation and freedom from your enemies all around you.

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June 9, 2014

Day Twenty: Possess and Establish Your Inheritance

Deuteronomy 1:6-7b (NIV), “The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, “You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance...See, I have given you this land. *Go in and take possession of the land.*”

“Go in...and take possession of the land.” The first thing one has to do to possess their inheritance is to ‘go in’. Pick up from where you are and move from one place to another—don’t stay where you are! It’s time for you to begin to act on everything you’re seeing. Maybe ‘go in’ for you means acting on new perspectives, changing an attitude or behaviour? Maybe it’s starting that new venture, finishing an old venture (that’s been the promised inheritance all along but you shelved it out of fear)? Maybe it’s starting a new job/career? Maybe it’s restoring a relationship or breaking off others? Maybe it’s using new spiritual gifts/talents and skills? Whatever it is for you, *‘Go in!’*”

Once you go in then what do you do? You possess the ‘land’. To possess something means to take ownership, control, or to occupy. In 2 Samuel 5:6-12, we find David, having received his promise of being anointed King over Israel, going into Jerusalem the stronghold of the Jebusites and conquering their fortress. At this time, Jerusalem was still occupied by enemies of the Israelite nation and was on the border between the tribes of Benjamin and Judah. This was a very strategic military spot and David wanted Jerusalem for his capital. We of course know that God wanted Jerusalem to eventually be his holy city where his presence would dwell among his people.

*“David captured the fortress of Zion...then **took up residence** in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the terraces inward. And he became more and more powerful, because the LORD God Almighty was with him...Then David knew that the LORD had **established** him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel”*(2 Sam. 5:7-12).

What was once enemy occupied territory, God calls us to go in and occupy and instead be established in that exact place. He calls us to possess the strongholds of the enemy and turn what the enemy use to inhabit into our place of inheritance, and a final habitation and resting place for God’s presence. As we allow God to establish us in the very place the enemy used to fight against us—to keep us weak and vulnerable—God says his presence will cause us to become more and more powerful, and he will release a greater anointing over our lives for the sake of His people.

It’s time to turn the enemy’s strongholds into God’s strongholds and allow his presence to infiltrate, possess and occupy all areas of our lives. Ultimately, Jesus Christ is our Promised Land—our inheritance. He is the good and spacious land we have entered through salvation having been taken out of captivity and slavery to sin; a place occupied and controlled by the enemy. We have been brought from a place of constriction into a place of freedom and rest, provision, protection and prosperity. If we allow Him to transform our minds and lives we will see the power of his presence increasing upon our lives for the sake of *“proclaiming the good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor”* (Is.61:1-2).

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2 Samuel 5:13 NIV says, "After he (David) left Hebron, David took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem, and more sons and daughters were born to him." David too was in Hebron, a dry, parched and barren land. He was anointed king there (5:1-4), and then he 'went in and possessed the land' that God had given him.

David's kingdom, his life (wives) and the fruit of his labour (children) increased, expanded, spread out, and grew—he prospered. When David established God's presence in all areas of his kingdom and allowed Him to take up capital residence, David had breakthrough!

Have you gone into the enemy's stronghold and taken captivity captive, that God might be established in all areas of your life? Have you allowed him to take up capital residence and given him control of your life? It's key to any breakthrough.

Prayer Focus: Genesis 12:7-8 (NIV), "I will take you as My people, and I will be your God. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD."

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June 10, 2014

Day Twenty-One: Establish the Promises

Deuteronomy 1:6-7b (NIV), “The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, “You have stayed long enough at this mountain. Break camp and advance...See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land *the land the LORD swore he would give to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them.*”

Believe, receive, embrace and establish the promises of God for your life. I know, you’re going to say, “Easier said than done.” True, so let’s walk this through.

It first must be established—made firm and stable—that God is real; one must believe that He exists, “*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must **believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him***” (Heb. 11:6, NIV).

Believing doesn’t just mean to give a mental assent to something and to mentally say, “I believe something is true” because even the enemy *believes* God exists, even more than we do. James 2:19 NLT, “*You say you have faith, for **you believe that there is one God. Good for you! Even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror.***” To believe God’s Word and his promises in His Word, we must receive, embrace and establish them in our hearts and lives.

Let’s look at what these words mean.

- ✓ **Receive** means to make room for or accommodate. Are you making room in your heart, mind and life for God’s Word and his presence?
- ✓ **Embrace** means to encircle or surround. Are you encircling and surrounding God’s Word through prayer and study, as well as allowing it to be expressed in your life through action?
- ✓ **Establish** means to make firm or stable, to secure or make permanent. Are you allowing God’s Word to be made strong, firm and steadfast in your life, so that you are not tossed around by every passing wind? “*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must **believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do***” (James 1:5-8, NIV).

Remember that to ‘believe’ is not merely an agreement that something is true. It’s believing that God exists, and if we believe that God does exist then we can have faith to receive, embrace and establish God’s promises to us in His Word.

Now that we acknowledge God’s existence, we also need to establish that God can’t lie and there is no shadow of turning in him. Numbers 23:19 NIV, “**God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?**”

One last thing, if God exists and he can’t lie, and if he does not change then that also must mean that His Word is true. Psalm 33:4, “**For the word of the LORD holds true, and we can trust everything he does.**”

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And, 2 Samuel 22:31 NIV, “As for God, his way is perfect: The **LORD's word is flawless**; he shields all who take refuge in him.”

How did the Israelites overcome their doubt and fear so they could step into a place of faith and trust that the promise given by God to their ancestors, “*the land the LORD swore he would give to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them*” (Deut. 1:8), would come about? They believed that God existed; they believed he could not lie and that he did not change, and they believed His Words were true, therefore, they were able to believe the promises of God because he is faithful even when we are not. God ‘swore’ by himself, as there was none greater to swear by that he would give the land of Canaan to Abrahams descendants.

We can **establish God's promises** to us, not because of who we are—son/daughters of the king—or by what we desire, but only because of who God is and what His Son has done for us.

Hebrew 6:13-20 CEB, “When **God gave Abraham his promise, he swore by himself** since he couldn't swear by anyone greater. He said, I will **certainly bless you and multiply** your descendants. So Abraham obtained the promise by showing patience. People pledge by something greater than themselves. A **solemn pledge guarantees what they say and shuts down any argument**. When God wanted to further demonstrate to the **heirs of the promise that his purpose doesn't change, he guaranteed it with a solemn pledge**. So these are two things that don't change, because **it's impossible for God to lie**. He did this so that we, who have **taken refuge in him**, can be encouraged to **grasp the hope that is lying in front of us**. This hope, which is **a safe and secure anchor for our whole being**, enters the sanctuary behind the curtain. That's where **Jesus went in advance and entered for us**, since he became a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.”

Wow, what a scripture! I am not going to do this scripture justice but let me try.

Jesus Christ, our promised land and inheritance which is the culmination of God's promise to Abraham, has advanced before us to shut down every argument of doubt and fear that we might know that we have a secure hope lying in front of us in open view. Jesus has conquered the enemy's stronghold of captivity and slavery to sin, that we might enter into his presence—the Promised Land—and find there a safe refuge and stronghold in Him; an anchor for our ‘*whole being*’.

Establish this promise today, that Jesus Christ is the key to every breakthrough!

Prayer Focus: Return to Hebrews 6:13-20