

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

Week Five: New Beginnings

For the upcoming fifth week of our forty day journey, we will be highlighting the Isaiah 54 passage below.

June 18, 2014

Day Twenty-nine: New Blessings

Isaiah 54:1-3 HCSB, "**Rejoice, childless one, who did not give birth; burst into song and shout, you who have not been in labor!** For the children of the forsaken one will be more than the children of the married woman," says the LORD. "Enlarge the site of your tent, and let your tent curtains be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your ropes, and drive your pegs deep. For you will spread out to the right and to the left, and your descendants will dispossess nations and inhabit the desolate cities."

How lovely to start off our "New Beginnings" week with the news of one of Impact's own giving birth to a precious baby girl on Father's Day. Congratulations Catherine and Joel, we are so excited to meet the newest member of your family!

We are walking in a prophetic day and season, where we are being guided and led by God through the person of the Holy Spirit. It is a time of being led from our captivity, bondage, barrenness, and wilderness into a spacious, promised land of blessings and favour—a promised land of spiritual fruit as we cooperate with God's Spirit. Zechariah 4:6 says, "*Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,*" says the LORD Almighty" (NIV). The King of kings and Lord of lords is walking ahead of us, clearing the pathway and walking his people into freedom, destiny, promise and fulfillment! May we stay sensitive to his leading through consistent, corporate, persistent, and prevailing prayer.

This particular Isaiah passage is called, The Future Blessings of Israel. It speaks of God's amazing promise to the Israelites in Babylon—captive, barren, desolate, isolated and lonely—of their future restoration and blessings to come.

I would like to take a moment to briefly share something God spoke to me on Saturday, May 24/14. In prayer, God showed me a picture of an antique baby's cradle, with a blanket lying over top. The blanket was flat, signifying an "empty cradle". He then showed me the cradle again but this time the blanket began to expand and seemed to begin to move as if there was now a baby underneath, alive and breathing. In that moment He spoke to me Isaiah 54:1-3. The cradle was now "full". It signifies, no longer being barren but fruitful.

Yes, this is a personal promise as God spoke this word to me in December of 2000 when my husband and I miscarried our second baby. Over and over again, God has comforted me with this promise; fourteen years to be exact. Everything within me says that now is the time for the arrival of fruitfulness in ministry for all of God's people who are hungry and thirsty for his power to be brought from the realm of the unseen to the realm of the seen. Today is the day of the favour of our God and his vengeance on the enemy that has stolen life, left us barren and unfruitful, and in captivity.

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

It's time for freedom, and it's time for blessings. I believe God is saying that breakthrough is here, ***"Rejoice, childless one, who did not give birth; burst into song and shout, you who have not been in labor!"*** Remember that breakthrough also means to burst out, spread abroad, disperse, grow, and increase!

As a church, we know that God has spoken to us about the building we are to have and how we are to strategically pray for and over it through his words in Zechariah 4:6-7, *'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit', says the LORD Almighty. "What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'"*.

We are in a strategic moment in time, where God has sent a herald or a messenger to go before him into our barren, desolate, lonely wildernesses and declare to us that the path will be cleared for the coming of the King—God's presence—when we shout and rejoice saying, "God bless the work"!

God alone is the God of the breakthrough; God alone is the one that secures our freedom; God alone is the one that brings provision, protection and safety, and God alone is the one that establishes his presence in our midst and will establish us in this city. God alone is the one that will establish the works of our hands—as it's not our work—it's His! God alone makes us fruitful in ministry. God alone will bless it. *Rejoice...burst into song and shout (God Bless it!)* (Is. 54:1, Parenthesis mine)

Prayer Focus: Isaiah 51:3 NIV, *"The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing."*

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

June 19, 2014

Day Thirty: New Horizons

Isaiah 54:1-3 HCSB, “Rejoice, childless one, who did not give birth; burst into song and shout, you who have not been in labor! ***For the children of the forsaken one will be more than the children of the married woman,***” says the LORD.

What an unusual scripture and an unusual statement, “*For the children of the forsaken one will be more than the children of the married woman*” (Is. 54:1b), and yet it speaks of so many life changing things.

First, it speaks of our hunger and thirst during times of barrenness which causes us to press into God and to pursue him without restraint. The need and desire for change begins to override and overtake our comfort and false security within our captivity. This hunger and thirst for more, or a different life or circumstance, drives us into prayer and causes us to seek God for a breakthrough because we know finally, that we can’t do it ourselves—we need God to save, deliver and set us free. We not only recognize that we need God to free us but we also need him to bless us.

An amazing example of this is the story of Hannah in 1 Samuel 1-2:10. Despite Hannah’s desire to have children and despite all the love and care of her husband, she was barren for many years. In Old Testament times, to be barren was a terrible burden for a woman to carry as children and fruitfulness was seen as a sign of God’s blessing upon a life, therefore, Hannah’s barrenness suggested that God wasn’t blessing her. In the midst of this trial, her husband’s second wife Peninnah constantly irritated her with jabs about how fruitful and blessed she was with children from the same husband.

However, instead of giving up and believing that barrenness was her lot in life, Hannah pursued God through prayer. She became hungry and thirsty for God to change her circumstance and provide a blessing. She refused to be comforted in her captivity even when others told her to be satisfied with knowing that her husband loved her more than Peninnah. Instead, Hannah’s barrenness drove her to seek and pursue God and it drove her to seek the only one that could bless her and change her life’s circumstances. Hannah knew that God alone could change her future, so she persisted in prayer.

As we know, Hannah received a breakthrough answer to her prevailing prayer! She gave birth to a son named Samuel who would go on to be dedicated to God and His service. Samuel’s destiny was to be God’s prophet, and he became a leader of God’s people for many years—ushering in the era of kings residing over God’s people, first Saul and then David.

The following scripture is taken from Hannah’s song of praise to God for fulfilling his promise of giving her children, and exemplifies an important point. 1 Samuel 2:5 NLT, “*Those who were well fed are now starving, and those who were starving are now full. The childless woman now has seven children, and the woman with many children wastes away.*”

Our hunger drives us to the only one that can truly fill our needs and desires. It drives us to the one that can free us and bring us blessings upon blessings. Those who are already full and have no hunger for God will find, that despite being seemingly fruitful, without God continuously blessing the fruit—it will

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

eventually waste away. The God of life is the source of life in all things, whether it's physical life or his blessings in our lives. All things are, and must be sustained by Him alone!

If you are hungry and thirsty for God to change your life or circumstance, to bring a breakthrough and a blessing—press in, pursue, and seek him with all that you are and have and *PREVAIL IN PRAYER!* You will see a breakthrough.

Second, this verse speaks of a contrast not between God's people (Zion) and other peoples and cities but it speaks of the contrast between the *past* of God's people and their *present*. The apostle Paul also refers to this passage and contrasts it with that which is spiritual and earthly as well as between slavery and freedom. It calls us to remember that our past is not our present or our future. What was once barren and unfruitful will no longer be so, God has promised breakthrough and blessings as we move from captivity to freedom.

A third thing to consider in this verse is that it speaks of God's people being asked to rejoice, and to burst into song because the blessing of fruitfulness is so close to being fulfilled that it's as if the fruit "already conceived has been born and is waiting for the mother to acknowledge that it's there" (Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges). God's promises are "Yes, and Amen" the moment they are spoken to us! "For all of God's promises have been fulfilled in Christ with a resounding 'Yes!' And through Christ, our 'Amen' (which means 'Yes') ascends to God for his glory" (2 Cor. 1:20, NLT). What has God been speaking to you? God's promises are close to being fulfilled and they are yes and amen in Christ.

Last, but certainly not least—it speaks of *New Horizons*. God is saying to his people, "Listen, I know that in your captivity and in your struggles of being unfruitful and barren that you feel like all you're going to see is the same mountain to circle, or the same mountain to climb—but I'm telling you today, that you are about to top the mountain and see a whole new horizon set before you! Lift up your eyes and see what I am about to do for you."

Be encouraged son/daughter it's a new day, bringing new beginnings, with new horizons...

Prayer Focus: Isaiah 49:21 HCSB, "Then you will say within yourself, who fathered these for me? I was deprived of my children and unable to conceive, exiled and wandering—but who brought them up? See, I was left by myself—but these, where did they come from?"

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

June 20, 2014

Day Thirty-one: New Borders

Isaiah 54:1-3 HCSB, "Rejoice, childless one, who did not give birth; burst into song and shout, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the forsaken one will be more than the children of the married woman," says the LORD. ***Enlarge the site of your tent, and let your tent curtains be stretched out...***"

God is the one that establishes our borders or boundaries and there are multiple scriptures that speak to this concept, but I'll quote only a few. "*It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth*" (Ps. 74:17, NIV). Acts 17:26 NIV, "*...he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.*" And, "*God establishes your borders peacefully...*" (Ps.147: 14, CEB).

The Bible speaks harshly to those who move the borders or boundaries of another (Deut. 27:17; Prov. 22:28; Prov.23: 10) as landmarks in ancient times were sacred, and still are today. Landmarks or borders designate ownership, possession and inheritance, and it is interesting to note that the enemy—"*the thief—comes only to steal, to kill and to destroy...but God comes to give life, that we might have it to the full*" (John 10:10 paraphrased). The enemy has trespassed and removed boundary or border markers in our lives, and he must repay sevenfold. "*But if he is found out, he must restore seven times [what he stole]; he must give the whole substance of his house [if necessary—to meet his fine]*" (Prov. 6:31).

The enemy has stolen multiple lives and has left us barren and unfruitful, desolate, lonely and empty, but the Bible tells us in Isaiah 61:1-2, that God in the day of His favour (salvation) will enact his anger against His enemies that seek to destroy his people.

*"The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, for the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the brokenhearted and **to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.** He has sent me to tell those who mourn that the time **of the LORD's favor has come, and with it, the day of God's anger against their enemies.**"*

When God brings his people out from under, and away from constrictive borders or boundaries of captivity and barrenness, he provides them with borders that are spacious and prosperous. He enacts his anger against what the enemy has stolen from his people and causes the enemy to pay it back multiple times over—in some places it speaks of a double portion—and as in the above scripture, it speaks of paying back seven fold.

As we know, when Israel left their captivity in Egypt—God caused their enemies to give them their treasures. Those treasures were then used for God's glory as he had the Israelites use it in the establishment of a moveable temple for His presence.

If you recall from an earlier devotional, we spoke of God having given the Israelites an inheritance in the Promised Land, with borders that were larger than they ever ended up occupying. God loves to bless and prosper his children! In this verse, "*Enlarge the site of your tent, and let your tent curtains be stretched out*", God is bringing to Israel's mind their old wandering or drifting lifestyle of living in tents, and is encouraging them that they are going to have so many children that their tents will need to be

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

enlarged. This speaks of abundant fruitfulness, and a larger border of influence.

This verse was also a prophetic declaration of the inclusion of the Gentiles through the salvation of the Messiah—*that's us!* We are the Gentiles who have already received the answer to this amazing promise. We are saved, set free, and are receiving a spacious inheritance with ever expanding borders and fruitfulness as we proclaim the gospel to the lost, dying and captive. May God be forever enlarging our influence and helping us to stretch out our borders!

In reference to this verse, something has been speaking deeply to me from the Benson Commentary which I am going to paraphrase here in modern language (as it was written in language we might not understand)... "Fear not, and avoid the risk of not preparing more room than you think will be occupied; for a very large inheritance (or fruitfulness) is to be expected."

Begin to expect the unexpected! Don't place borders or boundaries around your life or the life of others. Begin to speak of a new day, with new beginnings, bringing forth new blessings and expect great influence and more fruitfulness. It's a New Day!

Prayer Focus: Isaiah 9:1-4 HCSB, "*The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; a light has dawned on those living in the land of darkness. You have enlarged the nation and increased its joy. The people have rejoiced before You as they rejoice at harvest time and as they rejoice when dividing spoils. For You have shattered their oppressive yoke and the rod on their shoulders, the staff of their oppressor...*"

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

June 21, 2014

Day Thirty-two: New Strength

Isaiah 54:1-3 HCSB, “Rejoice, childless one, who did not give birth; burst into song and shout, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the forsaken one will be more than the children of the married woman,” says the LORD. Enlarge the site of your tent, and let your tent curtains be stretched out; ***do not hold back; lengthen your ropes, and drive your pegs deep.***”

To hold back refers to the act of restraining or hindering progress and achievement or to keep from advancing to the next stage, grade, or level (merriam-webster.com). A great example of this is the game of tug of war. The goal of this game is to pit two teams against one another in a test of strength and to cause the other team to fall down and admit defeat; the stronger team is the victor. This is often what is taking place in our hearts, minds and spirits as we struggle to move forward and advance into new territory or to be established in a new place. The enemy loves to see us weak and vulnerable, and to see us fall down—defeated.

It would be my assumption that in the area you’re seeking breakthrough, the enemy has possibly whispered in your ear that you are weak. He has spoken, “You might as well give up because you’re not strong enough. You’re not strong enough to hold on against me—why don’t you quit?” Well, as with many words and strategies the enemy uses there is some truth to what he speaks to us, and in terms of breakthrough—it’s true—we are weak.

But..., God says, “When you are weak then you are strong.” What? Hold the phone...what did God just say? “When we are weak then we are strong.” *“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness”* (2 Cor. 12:19, KJB). It’s all true. There *has to be* a time when we acknowledge that we can’t bring a breakthrough in our own strength. We can co-operate with God’s promises, direction and will for our lives but we can’t bring a breakthrough—only He can. It is when we let go of our own possibilities, and we let go of trying—trying and trying—that we find our strength to prevail and overcome. It is when we admit that there is nothing in us that can bring anything to pass that we see God arise and scatter his enemies (Ps. 68:1).

I know—this is a hard concept to grasp—especially if you’ve never walked it with God before. It’s kind of like this: If you’ve ever played tug of war with a child then you probably know that they don’t want you to use your whole strength because they want to try to do it themselves. But then there comes a moment in time when the child is tired and frustrated and weak, and they finally say, “Ok, you pull—then they allow you to take over while they just hold the rope and pretend to still help. That’s what God does with us. He’s been holding the rope the whole time but it’s when we finally acknowledge that in our own strength we can’t move the enemy and ask Him for help, that he suddenly takes over and “in our weakness He is strong”.

When I read this portion, ***“do not hold back; lengthen your ropes, and drive your pegs deep”***, I hear God speaking strategy to his children as if it’s time to win the game and this is how we’re going to do it. I can see him leaning in, and whispering in our ears so the enemy can’t hear. “Ok, son/daughter...*do not hold back; lengthen your ropes, and drive your pegs deep*, that’s how you’re going to overcome the enemy. Don’t restrain yourself from following my direction; don’t hinder your progress or achievement by not believing my promises. Lengthen your ropes and believe that you’re going to expand, spread out and have influence. Drive your pegs deep and stand firm on my promises, the authority I have given you

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

and advance the kingdom of God. Don't hold back, and don't back down. It's your time to burst out, grow, and increase! It will be done *'Not by strength or by might, but by My Spirit,' says the LORD of Hosts. (Zechariah 4:6, HCSB).*"

Our strength comes from God and his game plan, not ours. We overcome by playing within His rules and hearing his strategies. Take time to ask God today if you're playing tug of war with your circumstances in your own strength, and are just letting him hold the rope? Or, have you acknowledged your weakness and asked Him to take over in his strength?

Prayer Focus: Philippians 4:13 AMP, *"I have strength for all things in Christ Who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him Who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency]."*

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

June 22, 2014

Day Thirty-three: New Anointing

Isaiah 54:1-3 HCSB, "Rejoice, childless one, who did not give birth; burst into song and shout, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the forsaken one will be more than the children of the married woman," says the LORD. Enlarge the site of your tent, and let your tent curtains be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your ropes, and drive your pegs deep. ***For you will spread out to the right and to the left and your descendants will dispossess nations and inhabit the desolate cities.***

"For you will spread out to the right and to the left" speaks directly to God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 28:14 when God promised him land and descendants. *"Your offspring will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out toward the west, the east, the north, and the south. All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring"* (HSCB).

Then, ***"and your descendants will dispossess nations and inhabit the desolate cities"*** portion speaks to the same promise of God to Abraham given in Genesis 22:17 which was, *"I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your offspring will possess the gates of their enemies"* (HSCB). Other translations say, "possess the strongholds of the enemies" or "possess the cities of their enemies". This speaks directly to the blessing, inheritance and promise of God to all mankind through Jesus Christ. Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible states,

"gate" or "gates", where *courts of judicature* were held, and which are the *security of cities* and which also include the whole country round about: so *that this phrase is expressive of an entire jurisdiction and dominion over them*; and was literally fulfilled in the times of Joshua, David, and Solomon; and spiritually in Christ, Abraham's principal seed, when *he destroyed Satan and his principalities and powers; overcame the world; made an end of sin and abolished death; and delivered his people out of the hands of all their enemies*; and in all Abraham's spiritual seed, who are made more than conquerors over them, through Christ that has loved them (emphasis mine).

So in essence, a portion of God's promise to Abraham and now to the Israelites in captivity in Is. 54 was, *"You will spread out to the right and to the left and your descendants will dispossess nations and inhabit the desolate cities"* (Is. 54:3). You will spread out, break forth, burst out, grow and increase and take ownership, control and occupy (possess) the 'gates', 'strongholds', and cities (entire jurisdictions) and have dominion over them. How was this to take place?

I would love to quote all of Isaiah 61 but I can't, so I encourage you to take some time to read it yourself. Isaiah 61 states—that in the year of God's favour—the spirit of the Lord would be upon Jesus and he would be *anointed* to bind up the broken-hearted, to set captives free, release prisoners from darkness...to rebuild ancient ruins, restore devastated places and renew ruined cities. God's children would receive a double portion, take joy in their inheritance and would be rewarded and blessed by God. They would be clothed with salvation and would wear a robe of righteousness (be made right with God).

Again, we are the fulfillment of this promise! We are the descendants that are the Israelites increase, and we are now, through Christ, anointed to go in and dispossess nations—take ownership, occupy, control and take dominion over the enemy's gates, strongholds and cities (entire jurisdictions). There is

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

a new anointing coming upon God's children as we learn who we are in him, and the authority he has given us—to rebuild, restore and renew cities full of people that have been devastated, isolated, broken, captive and sitting in darkness. There is a new anointing coming *“to bring good news to the poor”* (Is.61:1, NLT).

The anointing is never just for our own breakthroughs; God always has a bigger purpose and plan to his work in our individual lives. God is always after a city; he's always after people. As we allow God to establish his presence in our lives, he will establish his presence in a city. Why does God work this way? Because He desires to establish a place, a people and His Presence.

Today, is the day of salvation...today is the day of favour. It's a new beginning (the old is gone, the new has come), with new horizons (a different future), giving us increased borders of influence and a new strength and reliance on God. May God's new anointing help us breakthrough and reach our city with the good news!

Prayer Focus: Isaiah 52:7 HCSB, *“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of the herald, who proclaims peace, who brings news of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’”*

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

June 23, 2014

Day Thirty-four: New Power

Isaiah 61:1-2 NIV, "***The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me 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 and the day of vengeance of our God...***"

We are nearing the end of week five of our breakthrough to transformation and God has been doing some amazing things in people's hearts and lives. He has been literally walking people out of captivity within their minds, hearts and spirits to begin to believe for a new future and a new day. When God's people are in captivity and they call out to him in repentance—he hears them and He comes to deliver them. It doesn't always look the way we want or arrive in the timing that we would prefer, but it is definite that God always answers the cry of His children's hearts and he always does what is best for them. God is never early and he is never late; He's always right on schedule so he receives all the glory from an ultimate deliverance or breakthrough.

Between the last Old Testament book of Malachi and the writings of the gospel of Matthew in the New Testament there was 400 years of silence from God; there were no more prophetic writings. However, during this time, God was maneuvering world systems and powers and slowly moving Israel and the world to a time when he would bring forth His manifested word (Jesus Christ) from the realm of the unseen to the realm of the seen here on earth. God was working on background details that would allow Him to establish his presence among his people, bringing forth their ultimate deliverance in a way that they never could have imagined. They did expect a Messiah to come and deliver them from their oppression under the Romans but they didn't expect the Messiah to come in the form of a baby, and to be born in the humble circumstances as we know he was— nor did they expect him to deliver them by dying a criminal's death, and then being resurrected. In what areas of your life is God working on background details, and is he showing up differently than you expected?

Right in the midst of the Jews desperately trying to establish their nation again in their own power— without success—the ultimate deliverer arrives, born in a stable to an unmarried virgin. After 400 years of prophetic silence, Jesus, the Word of God made flesh arrives on the scene in the most unlikely manner and continues to do everything in an unlikely manner up to and beyond the day he speaks these words in one of the Jewish synagogues, "*The Spirit of the Lord is on Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim freedom to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed...Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*" (Luke 4:18-20).

It's amazing to read this because prior to Jesus reciting this verse in the Jewish synagogues and revealing who he was—the Son of God, the Messiah—He had been recently baptized, been blessed by the Father, and then was sent to the desert for 40 days to be tested and overcome all of the enemy's tactics. Jesus then arrives on the scene in the **POWER** of the Holy Spirit. The power to preach the gospel and proclaim freedom for the captives, came after having been in the desert and overcoming the enemy. Acts 10:38, "*...God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power,...he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.*"

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

The power that came upon Jesus eventually came upon the disciples at Pentecost in the book of Acts, and if we have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, upon us as well. We too are now anointed with power *“to preach good news to the poor. He has sent us to proclaim freedom to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed...”* (emphasis mine) because God is with us!

The Holy Spirit is our power and our anointing and he is with us, however, he is not a **thing** to be poured out at will—He is a *person*. He longs to see his children saved, set free, delivered and living an abundant life but we must also understand that he is *Holy*. We can't touch His glory, and because He can't reside with sin our lifestyle choices does affect our intimacy with Him, and how much power and anointing he'll give. Sometimes, God withholds his presence until were able to handle it out of His protection of us. The anointing and power is never for us, it's always to see others set free. Jesus had the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit in fullness because he always pleased His Father and did His will. At this time in our journey, it's good for us to ask ourselves some honest, soul-searching questions.

Taking into consideration that the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit increases through our intimacy with God—before we seek new power—let's ask,

- ✓ Where are we in our intimacy with God? Are we close to him or are we distant?
- ✓ Are our lifestyle choices making room for God to pour out more of His Spirit into our lives?
- ✓ Are we utilizing the power that God has already given us?
- ✓ Are we spending time with God reading His Word, praying and then spreading the good news to those near us, so they too can experience the profound love of God as we do?
- ✓ Can He trust us with more anointing and power?

Prayer Focus: Isaiah 10:27, *“And it shall come to pass in that day, [that] his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing.”*

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

June 24, 2014

Day Thirty-five: New Favour

Isaiah 61:1-2 NIV, “The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me 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 and the day of vengeance of our God...***”

What is the year of the LORD’S favour? Other translations say, “The acceptable year of the LORD”. It is referring to the year of Jubilee in Leviticus 25. A Jubilee year was established to be celebrated within the Israelite nation every 50 years. It was a Sabbath year set aside where every debt was cancelled, and every slave released as well as every piece of land that had been sold was returned to its original owner. Israel didn’t necessarily follow this regulation but God had commanded it.

So, when Jesus sat in the synagogue that Sabbath day (mentioned in yesterday’s devotional) and quoted from Isaiah 61:2, he was declaring a Jubilee season and not just a year. He was declaring deliverance so profound that people would be set free for eternity, all sin debt would be paid and cancelled, and we would no longer be a people sitting in the darkness of spiritual depravity but would be released into light. He was declaring that our lives that had been given over to the enemy would be redeemed and given back to its original owner—God.

Jesus was literally declaring, “You who have been sold into slavery, not only in the past to Egypt and to foreign countries and powers throughout your lifespan, but all that have been given over to slavery and captivity to the enemy, will be released! I proclaim a season of the *LORD’S favour—Jubilee.*”

What does the day of vengeance of our God mean? This refers, ultimately, to a day when the enemy will experience all of God’s wrath and final judgement. Unfortunately, it also speaks of God’s wrath that will come upon those who have had ample opportunity to receive salvation (the jubilee year) and reject Jesus Christ and his salvation. This is why God says we are to proclaim good news to the poor in spirit (all of us), so that none should perish and stay under his wrath but have a chance to be redeemed, and bought back that they might receive His favour. Jesus has prepared the way for all to enter into His Sabbath Rest—Jubilee year, and we are to “*make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience*” (Heb. 4:11 NIV). The author of Hebrews describes this rest as the season God calls “Today”, which refers to Isaiah 61:2 and Luke 4:18-20 where Jesus speaks of, “*the year of the LORD’s favour*”. Today is the day of salvation and favour. There will be no other time for being set free, delivered, or bought back from the enemy—this is it! This is why it is so imperative that we spread the gospel of good news—Jesus has arrived, delivered and set us free from all our enemies. He has provided and proclaimed a season of Jubilee. *Be released!*

The day of vengeance of our God also speaks to our salvation experience. When God saves us and pours out his favour upon us he also enacts vengeance on the enemy’s lies and tactics in our lives. If we allow God to continuously work out our salvation and kick the enemy out of our lives you will notice more and more of God’s favour resting upon you. It’s not that God’s favour hasn’t always been there but sometimes we choose to hold onto the enemy’s thoughts, ways and life instead of kicking him out and embracing and making room for the favour of God to rest in and upon us.

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

May I suggest to you, that if you are seemingly experiencing a greater emphasis of the enemy's lies and activity in your life right now during this breakthrough to transformation season—it might be because God is highlighting and revealing where the enemy has been hiding in your life all along. God is ready to enact vengeance on the enemy and pour out his favour, if we will co-operate with him.

How do we co-operate with God and kick out the enemy? Don't push down or aside the areas God is revealing—merely acknowledge it before God, repent if needed and then ask God to heal and set that area free.

I liken this concept of favour and vengeance to this: If it rains, which is good, it not only brings out the flowers and grass but it also brings out the weeds. God's favour and presence being poured out does the same thing. When his favour is being poured out it brings out the good and it also reveals where the enemy was hiding. Co-operate with God through obedience and allow him to pluck out the enemy. James 4: 6-7 NIV, *"God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble." Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*"

Although there are many areas I could highlight there is one that needs mentioning—fear. There are a few different kinds of fear:

- ✓ Healthy fear that protects. This is good and we need this.
- ✓ Spirit of fear where we are attacked by the enemy because he is afraid. Rebuke the enemy.
- ✓ Then there is fear that God says is a sin, and needs to be repented of because it is unbelief. God's Word says that unbelief will keep us from entering our Sabbath rest or favour because we will be in disobedience just like the Israelites (Heb. 3:12-14).

What kind of fear are you experiencing? Deal with it accordingly.

Today, is the day of salvation—deliverance and release of the captives! May we experience a new outpouring of God's favour and vengeance upon the enemy's activity in our lives, bringing forth transformation. It's a new day, so be released!

Prayer Focus: 2 Cor. 6:2 NIV, *"For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."*