

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

Week Six: Releasing Life!

Introduction:

What an amazing journey we have taken so far as we enter our sixth week, and the last five days of our 40 day journey of *Breakthrough to Transformation!* Let's briefly recap our past five weeks:

Section One: BREAKTHROUGH

- ✓ Week One: Break the Chains
- ✓ Week Two: Escape From Prison
- ✓ Week Three: Be Established

Section Two: TRANSFORMATION

- ✓ Week Four: A New Day
- ✓ Week Five: New Beginnings
- ✓ Week Six: Releasing Life

To release something literally means to free from confinement, bondage, obligation, pain, etc.; to free from anything that restrains; loose; liberation from anything that restrains or fastens—to let go. The word liberate suggests particularly the deliverance from unjust punishment, oppression, or the like, and often means to set free through forcible or military action (www.thefreedictionary.com).

This is exactly what God did for the Israelites held captive in Egypt and what Jesus Christ has done for us whom were held captive by the enemy. He has released us and set us free from all confinement, restraints and constrictions, and loosed us from the chains of injustice. Jesus Christ has carried our captivity, captive and *Released us into Life!*

These next five days we're going to focus in on the *life* Jesus has given us, and what that looks like. I hope you are ready to dig in?

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

June 25, 2014

Day Thirty-six: Redefined

Romans 12:2 NLT, *“Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think...”*

When God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, he told Moses to speak to Pharaoh and say, *“Let my people go, that they may worship me in the desert.”* There are those words *‘let go’—release them!* Release them from slavery and captivity that they might come and worship me in the desert. Why did God say, *“Worship me in the desert”* instead of *“So they might be taken to a Promised Land that I have envisioned for them?”* It's because He knew that the Israelites needed to have their relationship with Him, and their mental state *‘redefined’* from one of slavery to one of adoption. If they were going to be a people of God, he would have to change and transform their thought patterns.

The Israelites had been in captivity and a slave mindset for 430 years, again that is almost twice the age of the United States. Can you imagine how difficult it would have been for God to transform or redefine their minds and hearts to let go of their past state, and to embrace the new life of freedom He was granting them? God not only had to redefine their past but he had to redefine their future, so he allowed them some time to get to know him in the desert prior to bringing them into their new inheritance and Promised Land.

God not only had to help the Israelites redefine their past so they could move into their future, but he also had to teach them that they were no longer alone and required to survive by themselves. Sometimes when we're in captivity we feel like we're all alone and we need to be strong, protect self, and provide for self. Key word here is *‘self’* and God has to redefine us from thinking, leaning on and worshipping *‘self’* to thinking, leaning on and worshipping Him.

For example, when the Israelites had gone into the desert, despite all of God's miraculous dealings in bringing them out of captivity and providing them with manna, the moment their leaders Moses and Aaron went up the mountain to meet with God—and are gone too long—the Israelites started feeling alone and afraid. In the middle of not knowing what had happened to Moses they began thinking about, leaning on and worshipping what they knew from their past; a golden calf.

Unknown to the Israelites, Moses was gone a long time because God was establishing the Ten Commandments which would define their covenant relationship between Him and his people. These commandments would give them defining guidelines enabling them to come close to Him.

God was literally redefining their nature from one of slavery to one of sonship/daughtership—adoption. Why? Adoption releases inheritance. *“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ...”* (Rom. 8:16-17). He was going to redefine their understanding of how to worship and to teach them to conform to him and not the world around them. *“Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think...”* (Rom. 12:2, emphasis mine).

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

God knew that if he was to bring the Israelites into a new future, within a new land, and give them a new life—lived within a covenant relationship with Him as their lead and guide—he would have to help them redefine their past so they could successfully face their future life. Romans 8:15-16 states, *“The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father’.”* Slaves have to take care of themselves; children look to and trust their parents.

It is good for us to recognize that we are at our most vulnerable when we are transitioning from one state to another, such as from our past to our future; removing the old to establish the new. For example, after a butterfly has struggled to free itself from its constrictive cocoon and has emerged from being a caterpillar into a butterfly—it is vulnerable to predators until its wings dry and it can finally fly and is released into its new life.

We are like that as well. It takes a little bit for us to find strength in our redefined life as we no longer conform to the *“customs of this world, but let God transform us into a new person by changing the way we think...”* (Rom. 12:2, emphasis mine)—from one of slavery to one of adoption.

- ✓ What is God redefining in you?
- ✓ During your redefinition, are there places you feel vulnerable?
- ✓ Can you trust God to take you from your past into a redefined future?

Prayer Focus: Romans 8: 29 NLT, *“For God knew his people in advance, and he chose them to become like his Son, so that his Son would be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”*

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

June 26, 2014

Day Thirty-seven: Redirection

Luke 1:45 (NLT) says, *“You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said.”*

It’s amazing to read the stories of divine encounters in the Bible. Not only did these encounters arrive unexpectedly and in unexpected ways but in moments, the direction of people’s lives—and at times whole nations—shifted from travelling in one direction to heading in another; they were redirected.

Abraham is a prime example of having a life suddenly redirected. He was living in the land of the Chaldeans who worshipped multiple gods and suddenly he encounters the true God, receiving the promise of a new land and descendants who are to live under the direction of *one* God. Through God’s redirection the possibility of a whole new way of life surfaced in his consciousness, one that had never been imagined before. *“Abram believed the LORD, and He credited it to him as righteousness”* (Gen. 15:6 HCSB).

Another example is the Israelites, after years of slavery and believing that oppression would always be their way of life; one day Moses arrives and reveals a plan of deliverance. Suddenly their life had new possibilities and promises set before them—a life of freedom and the promises of Abraham, their patriarchal father, coming to pass through them. *“By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter”* (Heb. 11:24, HCSB).

Skipping to the New Testament we read about Mary, born in a small inconsequential town called Nazareth and betrothed to be married—this was the direction her life was taking—until suddenly an angel of God arrives on the scene and she is being blessed to carry the Son of God in her womb. Her life is redirected and she births the one that would ultimately bring about the deliverance and salvation of the entire world. Luke 1:45 NLT, *“You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said.”*

The Bible is full of the unexpected and suddenlies of God that can in a mere moment redirect our lives. In all of these encounters, suddenlies and redirections it took only one thing for the redirection to occur—it took belief/faith.

I want to encourage each of you to never give up and always believe God for the promises He has placed within your life. I would encourage you to take a few moments and contemplate how many unexpected encounters, suddenlies and redirected lives are recorded in the Bible. Think about those you know that have had their lives redirected from abuse, suicide, depression, and apathy to one of healing, restoration, freedom and purpose because of an unexpected moment when God spoke and dropped the seed of a promise into their hearts, and they *believed*. Today, what area(s) of your life is God redirecting and asking for you to *believe*?

God releases his life into ours through our faith and belief in his promises. So, as we move through the last few days of our journey from breakthrough to transformation, allow God to release life over your circumstances and the areas you are praying for—by believing that *“the Lord will do what he said.”*

Prayer Focus: Romans 4:20 NLT, *“Abraham never wavered in believing God's promise. In fact, his faith grew stronger, and in this he brought glory to God.”*

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

June 27, 2014

Day Thirty-eight: Refocused

Colossians 3:1-2 NIV, *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”*

I grew up in a traditional— rule and regulations—type Christian home, which in many ways gave me a great foundation. However, an understanding of a *relationship* with Jesus Christ seemed to be missing. Therefore, at aged 16, I walked away from the church and Christianity feeling like I was under a constant cloud of condemnation. My parents did the best they could with what they knew and with what they had, but I had somehow received a perspective of God through my early years that wasn't really of Him.

When I gave my heart to Christ at age 24, God began to dismantle many of the enemy's lies surrounding my perspective of Him and how he wanted to build a relationship with me. I had so many internal regulations and rules that I couldn't receive God's love. Finally, God said to me, *“Rachel, you are going to have to forget everything you've been taught except that Jesus loves you, and let Me rebuild and refocus your perception of Me.”* And so I did. I allowed God to strip away everything that was not built upon the life of Jesus Christ and His representation of my Heavenly Father. It wasn't easy but it happened and God completely refocused my life from the enemy's perspective to God's perspective.

The term refocused means to be once again focused on a central point and to give attention to one thing. Often, as is so easy for humanity, our focus can shift from God's perspective to the earthly or enemy's perspective. It often occurs gradually and subtly so that it goes unnoticed until one day, we find ourselves sinking under life's circumstances and situations instead of being the overcomer and the victor.

God's answer to this is *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, **set** your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **Set** your minds on things above, not on earthly things”* (Col. 3:1-2 NIV). Picture a person with really curly hair—if you pull the curl until it is straightened—and then let go or release it, it will bounce back to where it was 'set'. When we first come out of a captive place our lives are often like that as well, we return to where our focus has been 'set' for so long. In the midst of God redefining and redirecting, he's also refocusing us so that we will no longer be 'set' on the enemy's lies, ways or tactics but instead 'set' on Christ and our position in Him.

Jesus Christ has been raised to life, and through our salvation and baptism so have we (Col. 2:12). Christ now sits at the right hand of the Father, with all authority over every power, in heaven and on earth (Eph. 2:6). Since we are adopted into the family of God and are now co-heirs with Christ, we too sit in heavenly places at the right hand of the Father, with all spiritual powers and authorities under our feet (Eph. 1:4). Therefore, instead of sinking under our circumstances we can *speak over* our circumstances from our position in Christ. If we set our hearts and our minds on things above where Christ is, we will no longer have an earthly focus but a heavenly one. We will be focussed on the centre of the universe, Jesus Christ, and give all of our attention to him and not to earthly things and the enemy's perspective.

The apostle Paul (Saul) is a great example of having one's mind refocused. Saul was a murderer of Christians, and he did it in the name of God. His perspective of what God desired was off and his mind

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

was set on earthly rules and regulations. Until one day, Saul's knocked off his horse while on the road to Damascus to kill more Christians and instead God encounters him. In the midst of that encounter, God *redefines* Saul to Paul, *redirects* his life from one who kills Christians to one who spreads the gospel to the Gentiles, and *refocuses* his life from rules and regulations to one of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

When God *releases life* into us we are redefined, redirected and refocused on our relationship with Jesus that we might experience his love and the fullness of life. During this 40 day journey how is God,

- ✓ Redefining you?
- ✓ Redirecting you?
- ✓ Refocussing you?

Prayer Focus: Colossians 2:6 NIV, "*So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him.*"

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

June 28, 2014

Day Thirty-nine: Restored

Romans 8:1 NLT, “*So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*”

God is a god of restoration. No matter what happens, He seeks to bring restoration to people and his children—God goes out of his way to clear a path for that to occur. In this season, if God is redefining, redirecting and refocussing us then we know he’s doing it that we might be *restored*.

Restoration through Jesus Christ always brings about something that was above and beyond what we could have imagined or thought. God doesn’t just restore to the original state, he goes beyond our expectations. Remember we shared briefly in an earlier devotional that we are to ‘*begin to expect the unexpected!*’

Let me briefly share a personal story of restoration. I grew up on a farm which was situated across a field and adjacent to my father’s family homestead, which we rented out for many years. After the death of both of the renters (who had become family friends and dearly loved), the home remained empty for a long time and fell into a state of disrepair. So much so, that eventually the township declared it condemned and required it to be torn down. My sister and I, however, believed God was asking us to begin to pray for restoration of the homestead because it symbolized the restoration of our family. So we did. Amazingly, within a few short years the house was completely rebuilt and restored beyond its original state. After the passing of my father, my mom moved in and lived there for ten years before it was passed on to a granddaughter and her new family.

When I think of this restoration process, I think of the idea that—not only did God restore the *previous* generation homestead (my father’s family home,) but he had restored it for the *now* generation (my mom), and restored it for the *next* generation (a granddaughter’s family). God restored generationally. He restored beyond what we imagined and continues to bring blessings to a whole new generation—a great-granddaughter!

Can you imagine what would have happened to the homestead if my sister and I had not prayed? One thing would have gotten in the way of any possible restoration—*condemnation*. When something is condemned, it is declared unchangeable, uninhabitable and unusable. Our family homestead was declared unchangeable, uninhabitable and no longer useable, which my sister and I believed the enemy was trying to speak over our family. However, because of our belief in Christ and his ability to restore through prayer—we began to pray God’s words of restoration. We had received God’s perspective and began to expect the unexpected. We then saw an amazing restoration take place.

Unfortunately, despite our salvation, many of us still sit under a cloud of condemnation declaring to ourselves, or allowing others and the enemy to declare us—that we are unchangeable, uninhabitable and unusable. Therefore, we continue to be oppressed, held captive and hopeless in our circumstances although Christ has set us free and brought restoration. He has released life.

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

Romans 8:1 NLT states, *“So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.”* Through Jesus Christ we are no longer condemned and declared unchangeable, uninhabitable or unusable because of our previous sinful state, but we are now ‘justified’—just as if we’d never sinned. *“And since we have been made right in God’s sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God’s condemnation”* (Rom. 5:9 NLT). We are now declared changeable, habitable and useable! How amazing is God’s restoration.

I believe there is one perspective that God wants us to receive and understand, and that is to no longer speak condemnation over ourselves, others or our circumstances. Because of Jesus Christ and our deliverance from the enemy, we are no longer—and our circumstances are no longer—declared unchangeable. Start speaking restoration over your life and circumstances and watch what God will do. *He will release life!*

Ask yourself today, *“Have you been declaring condemnation over your life and circumstances?”* If so, take on God’s perspective and declare that nothing is unchangeable or impossible with God and start speaking restoration.

Prayer Focus: Rom. 3:26 NLT, *“For he was looking ahead and including them in what he would do in this present time. God did this to demonstrate his righteousness, for he himself is fair and just, and he declares sinners to be right in his sight when they believe in Jesus.”*

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

June 29, 2014

Day Forty: Resurrected!

John 12:23-24 ESV, “*And Jesus answered them, saying, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.’*”

Something has to die before it can be brought back to life. When God asked Abraham to sacrifice his promised son, Isaac, he had to let the promise of descendants die. However, Abraham knew that somehow God would bring to life the promise even if it meant he had to resurrect Isaac. We of course know that God provided a lamb for the sacrifice, but God needed to know that Abraham feared him and would obey him no matter the cost—even if it meant the seeming death of a promise. What really died that day was the idea of bringing about God’s promises by one’s own power—so *self* had to die.

Unbelief had to die in the desert through a generation of Israelites that just couldn’t seem to shake the Egyptian slave and captivity mentality enough to worship, follow and obey God—and believe for the promise of a new land and a new life. It was only Caleb and Joshua who were able to enter the new life of the Promised Land because of their belief and of course, a whole new generation of Israelites.

The story of Ezekiel prophesying to the valley of dry bones in Chapter 37 reveals a symbol of being spiritually dead and an inability to bring one’s self out of captivity and oppression. The nation of Israel was once again in bondage and unable to save themselves. There had been a promise of new life and restoration but they were unable to do it themselves. The thoughts of *creating life and bringing about restoration* had to die, as it was only by the Spirit of God that one could be made alive again.

How one heard the word of the Lord had to die during the transition from the prophets of the Old Testament to Jesus Christ in the New Testament—the anointed one arriving on the scene and bringing forth the Word of God in the flesh.

Israel’s *spiritual sight had to die* as God brought about the deliverance of the Jewish nation and the world in an unexpected time and in an unexpected way. It was so unexpected that even to this day, many of God’s own people continue to reject their Deliverer! It is only God that can open their spiritual eyes to see and believe. Life and salvation came, only for those who were willing to let their original thoughts of God’s deliverance die, so they could perceive a new way.

As mentioned, something has to die before it can be brought to life; therefore, Jesus had to die that we might all be brought to life. Jesus is the resurrection (the way), the truth and the life; “*no one comes to the Father except through him*” (John 14:6 NIV). Through Christ’s death and resurrection we can *rely on and believe God* to bring about His promises of *new life and restoration*. We can *believe for His word to be spoken* in our hearts *bringing forth spiritual sight, which leads us to deliverance* in any and all circumstances.

If we pick up the analogy of the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly again, the caterpillar had to die so the butterfly could emerge and come to life. The old has to die, so the new can *release life*. Let the past go, look to the future. Allow the old form to die so the new form can emerge.

Breakthrough to Transformation ~ A 40 Day Journey

What is God speaking to you about today that needs to die in your mind, heart or in your daily life? Do you know that sometimes, before a relationship can change and transform, we need to acknowledge that we can't resurrect it ourselves but need God to do it? Today, does a promise from God need to die so it can come to life? What do you need to let go of or let die today, so it can be *released into life*?

A Promise: I believe God wants to speak a promise to you today from Joel 2:25, "*The LORD says, 'I will give you back what you lost to the swarming locusts, the hopping locusts, the stripping locusts, and the cutting locusts.'*"

Many of you have had lives and circumstances stolen from you over the years. Things that the enemy has lied to you about, stripped you of, and areas that he has tried to kill, destroy and devour. He has stolen years of your life, prosperity, increase, influence, relationships, even talents and skills. But I believe God would declare to you today, that He is a breakthrough God, and he transforms and restores beyond what we could ever imagine or think. He will rebuke the devourer and bless your future as you let go of the old and look to the new.