

Sunday, March 8, 2026-INTENTIONAL BREAKTHROUGH: LETTING JESUS OUT-Pastor John Henry Raskin

Spiritual breakthrough is not a change in circumstances but a change in alignment. True breakthrough is always intentional—it happens when we remove the “self” that blocks Christ and allow Jesus who lives in us to be released.

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” Galatians 2:20

What Keeps Jesus “Locked In”?

Many believers have Christ within them but still live as if operating alone. We keep Jesus “in the basement” while trying to run life ourselves. Breakthrough comes when we stop imitating Jesus and start releasing Him.

Common “Shells of Self”:

- Fear – silences Christ’s courage
- Pride – blocks Christ’s humility
- Past Trauma – restricts Christ’s healing power

The Role of the Holy Spirit

It is the indwelling Holy Spirit who empowers us now to overcome sin and fulfill God’s will. When we allow the Spirit to lead, we allow the Jesus in us to break through.

“If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you...” - Romans 8:11

The Blueprint for Breakthrough (Mark 14:1–9)

The woman who broke the alabaster flask shows us what intentional breakthrough looks like. Her act was not emotional excess, but prophetic worship—recognizing that Jesus was about to be broken for the world. Key Insight: The flask had to be shattered to release what was inside. Likewise, self must be broken for Christ to flow freely.

Breakthrough Requires Breaking

- You cannot have breakthrough without the breaking of self
- God moves us from ritual to relationship
- The Holy Spirit is released not by rule-keeping, but by surrender

Barriers to Breakthrough & Jesus’ Response

1. The Logic of the Crowd – Calls devotion “waste” - *Jesus defends surrendered worship*
2. Fear of Not Having Enough – “What I have isn’t sufficient” - *“She has done what she could”*
3. Missing the Moment of the Spirit – Delayed obedience - *Breakthrough requires obedience in real time*

Final Call

Your “self” is the alabaster flask. You can protect it—or you can shatter it and let the fragrance of Christ fill the room.

Ask Yourself:

- What is my alabaster flask? Fear? Pride? Reputation? Past pain? Am I willing to break it today?

Today is your Bethany. The King is at the table. Breakthrough to Him today!

INTENTIONAL BREAKTHROUGH-LETTING JESUS OUT

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week we continued our series about spiritual intentionality.

We discussed how we can be more intentional in serving the Lord by serving those around us.

Today we are going to talk about how we can become more intentional about breaking through our spiritual, emotional and mental strongholds to achieve a better relationship with God and with those He puts in our lives.

Most Christians that I have known have found themselves in a season of spiritual stagnation at some point in their walk with the Lord.

Perhaps this has happened to you.

You had begun to serve, to pray each morning, you worked hard at being more responsive and less reactive, not letting the news or the little things that people did that hurt you get you down, and then suddenly...

You just got tired of trying so hard when nobody else seems to care.

At times like these maybe you prayed for a "breakthrough" as if you expected that it would be like a lightning bolt that strikes you from the outside-in and fixes everything. You

wait for a door to open, the check to arrive, or the other person to change.

But real spiritual breakthrough is rarely about a change in our circumstances; it is always about a change in our alignment.

True spiritual breakthrough is always intentional.

Breakthrough is the process of you removing the "you" that is in the way so that the Christ who lives in you can come out in a more purposeful and powerful way.

When you accepted Christ, you didn't just receive a ticket to heaven; you received a divine deposit.

The Apostle Paul describes the divine indwelling this way:

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

The problem is that many of us who have "Jesus on the inside" are still living as if we are operating on our own even as we are striving to be better Christians.

In a sense, we have kept the King of Kings in the basement of our hearts while we try to run the lobby.

An intentional breakthrough happens when we stop trying to imitate Jesus and start releasing Him.

What keeps your "Inner Jesus" locked away?

For most of us it's usually the "Outer Shells of Self".

1. The Shell of Fear:

Jesus is courageous, but your fear mutes His voice.

2. The Shell of Pride:

Jesus is humble, but your need for credit blocks His grace.

3. The Shell of Past Trauma:

Jesus is a healer, but your focus and reliance on the wound keeps you from His perfect peace and stops His power from flowing through you to others.

Now that we have focused on the shells of self that keeps Jesus locked in the basement, let's be clear that it is not actually the Person of Jesus who is locked in His room in your heart, but it is the Spirit of God through which we can access the Mind of Christ.

Paul describes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 8:11

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

We know that this scripture speaks to a future resurrection but it also describes present empowerment.

The indwelling Holy Spirit currently grants spiritual vitality to believers to overcome sin and to fulfill God's will today.

When you allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you in any given moment, you are effectively allowing the Jesus in you to break through.

It is only then that you become fully who you were made to be in the world where God has placed you.

Even those of us who have seen the Spirit of God move through us in the past, will admit that at times it is still difficult to allow the Spirit of God to break through.

That is when we need encouragement and we will find it in God's Word if we know where to look.

As it happens, we are getting close to Easter, Resurrection Sunday, so let's look at the Gospel of Mark for a moment.

There is a story there, at the very beginning of the Passion narrative where we see the ultimate blueprint for an intentional breakthrough.

Mark 14:1-9

After two days it was the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by trickery and put Him to death. 2 But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people."

3 And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly oil of spikenard.

Then she broke the flask and poured it on His head. 4 But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they criticized her sharply.

6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. 7 For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; but Me you do not have always.

8 She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. 9 Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this

gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.”

Now just as a side note, this story is also told in the gospel of John, where it is revealed to us that the woman is Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus and that it is Judas who rallies the disciples to chide her about wasting the spikenard.

In Mark’s Gospel, this story occurs after Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem when He is hailed as King.

The disciples however, did not yet understand that their King would be going to His death.

This portion of Mark’s Gospel is designed to be a journey from ritual to revelation.

The Chapter begins, setting the stage by showing that it is the Passover in Jerusalem and what was happening behind the political scenes where the Pharisees were already plotting to kill Jesus.

It connects the ancient shadows of the Passover to the visceral, broken reality of the Alabaster Flask, leading us as believers to the picture of an intentional spiritual breakthrough.

The timing of Mark 14 is not a coincidence; it is the structural spine of the entire Gospel.

By placing the story of the woman directly against the backdrop of the Passover, Mark is showing us that her breaking of the alabaster flask was actually the first act of the New Covenant.

The chapter opens with two contrasting plots:

The Religious leaders are plotting how to kill Jesus.

The woman is showing us how to honor Jesus.

While the Jews in Jerusalem were preparing the traditional Passover Lamb for the celebration of their deliverance from the Angel of Death and slavery in Egypt in centuries past...

By breaking her flask and anointing Jesus during this specific week, the woman was signaling that a new "Passover Lamb" was being prepared as a deliverance from the fear of death and the slavery of sin once and for all time.

This woman's act of worship was not an emotional outburst; it was a prophetic recognition that Jesus was about to be "broken" for the world.

There is a profound connection between what the woman does in the house of Simon the Leper and what Jesus does at the Last Supper in the same chapter only a few verses later.

The woman broke the alabaster flask.

Jesus broke the bread that represented His body.

The woman poured out the expensive ointment.

Jesus poured out the wine that represented His lifeblood.

Here is why that connection changes everything for a believer seeking a breakthrough today.

The fragrance of the perfume filled the room.

The offer of the New Covenant would fill the world.

Spiritual breakthrough in this, our day and age, is true freedom from the norms not only of worldly behavior but also religious bondage.

Much of the world we live in has enmity towards our faith and even within some Christian religious circles there are those who are doubtful of true spiritual breakthrough.

But here is what I want you to take away from this story.

Alabaster was a translucent, brittle hard stone. The flask was sealed. It was designed to keep the air out and the oil in.

The only way to release the contents was to break the container.

In this Gospel Mark uses a violent Greek word, Syntripsasa, which means shattered.

She didn't unscrew a cap; she destroyed the vessel.

Your "Self" is the alabaster flask.

It's what you've used to protect your heart, your emotions, and your "precious" things from other people.

Here is the Breakthrough Connection: You cannot have a breakthrough without a breaking, a shattering of self.

The woman understood that to get to the "breakthrough" of the Resurrection, there had to be an intentional "breaking" of something precious.

She modeled the sacrifice of Jesus before He even reached the cross.

Our Heavenly Father sent His only begotten Son to be broken for us to restore our relationship with God and save us from the wrath we surely deserve.

If there is to be a spiritual breakthrough in our lives, there first must be a shift from "Ritual" to "Relationship"

The Passover was a rigid, commanded ritual of the Old Covenant.

In contrast, the woman's act was an uncommanded, spontaneous eruption of love.

The Ritual of Passover focused on past deliverance.

The Breakthrough of the broken flask focused on the present Person of Jesus.

Here we see that real spiritual breakthrough happens when we move past the religious ritual of "doing church" and move into the relationship of extravagant daily devotion and worship.

The Holy Spirit isn't released through the keeping of rules, but through the breaking of self.

Yet if we are honest, it is hard to find the will to surrender enough to allow God to break through those shells we talked about earlier of fear and pride and especially past trauma.

Even if we find the faith to believe that God is able to break through those shells and trust Him enough to allow the inside to come out, we will usually get pushback from those who knew us before the change and that can be discouraging.

When the woman broke her alabaster flask, the room filled with two things: the fragrance of the perfume and the stink of criticism.

Let's look at the interactions between the people in the room and how they reveal common barriers to breakthroughs and how Jesus responds to those barriers and intercedes for us.

1. The Barrier: The Logic of the Crowd.

The disciples calculated the cost (300 denarii—about a year's wages) and they called it a "waste."

When you intentionally become more in tune with what the Spirit is doing and decide to follow His lead with true abandon of self this is what the world sees:

Wasted time, wasted money, or "too much" emotion.

Other Christians will sometimes use this logic as well.

An intentional breakthrough will always look like "too much" to people who are comfortable being comfortable.

If we are not careful, we will sometimes go along with the crowd to our own detriment.

We may then try to "budget" our breakthrough.

We may then say, "I'll give God my Sunday morning, but not my free time," or "I will make an offering, but I can't afford to tithe", or "I'll give Him my worship, but not my wound."

Let's face it, if your devotion doesn't offend someone's logic, or cost you something, you probably haven't broken the flask yet.

But when you do, Jesus intercedes and is your defender...

Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me".

Know this... when you truly do break your flask of fear, of pride, or past trauma, and become one with the Spirit of God that dwells in you and let Him out, Jesus will intercede for you.

He will give you courage.

He will honor you in your humility.

He will heal your mind and emotions and give you peace.

He will supernaturally supply everything you need.

2. The Barrier: Fear That We Don't Have Enough

The woman couldn't stop the crucifixion.

She couldn't out-preach the Apostles (or maybe she could, we don't know).

But she had a precious jar. And she broke what she had which may well have been all of her livelihood.

And Jesus Says: "She has done what she could."

This phrase is transformative for us because it removes the pressure of "perfection" and replaces it with the power of "capacity."

Breakthrough isn't about having the most oil; it's about breaking the whole container.

This should encourage us.

You don't need to be a Bible scholar to have a spiritual breakthrough.

You only need to seek God with a whole heart and release 100% of what is currently in your hand.

Breakthrough is not about having more or doing more than others; it's about holding nothing back from the One who held nothing back from you.

3. The Barrier: Not Being Aware of the Movement of the Spirit

Intentional breakthroughs require Spiritual Urgency and spiritual sensitivity.

There are some "flasks" that must be broken when God says the time is now.

Jesus noted that she anointed His body "beforehand for burial."

While the disciples were arguing about the budget, this woman, who we know to be Mary, Martha and Lazarus' sister, was the only one in the room who was sensitive in her spirit to the great thing that God was doing.

We should go to the Gospel of Luke for reference here, to see why Mary was more sensitive to God's movement than the apostles. In Luke chapter 10, while Martha is busy preparing food and serving Jesus and the disciples, Mary was sitting at Jesus' feet listening to His teaching and worshipping Him.

Perhaps because of her consistent desire to hear from Jesus, she recognized that the window for this specific act of worship was closing.

If she had waited until after the crucifixion, the opportunity for the blessing would have been gone.

Breakthroughs require our obedience in real time.

They happen when we agree to drop our "not nows" and agree to God's "suddenlys".

An intentional breakthrough is the deliberate act of breaking your "container" so that the aroma of Christ who lives in you can break through your shells and be smelled by the world.

The Holy Spirit's "way" in your life is always toward the Cross.

A breakthrough isn't just a "blessing"; it's an unveiling.

When you intentionally allow your flask to be shattered, you are finally participating in the New Passover.

You are escaping the Egypt of "Self" and entering the Promised Land of "Spirit-Led Living."

So today, ask yourself... What is your Alabaster Flask?

Is it your "good reputation"?

Your "need to be right"?

Your "past pain" that you've sealed up so tightly that no one can touch it?

Today is your Bethany. The King is at the table.

You can leave with your flask intact, and God's Spirit contained, or you can intentionally shatter the alabaster flask of your self-image and let the fragrance of Jesus out.

Let's Pray