

Psalm 65:11

“You crown the year with your goodness; your carts overflow with plenty.”

If you did a year in review of 2018... what would the theme of 2018 be? What kind of STUFF was 2018 full of for you?

A New Year never really seems new to me... so much **STUFF (sad, tragic, ugly, fears and failures)** overlaps from last year that it doesn't feel... new.

A few days ago someone asks me this question... “Do you think this (2019) will be a good year?”

Interesting question... My answer was rather simple but it's still evolving, still clearing room in my spirit... but I answered this way...

I always think the New Year will be good... because God is good.

I think this way because of my journey with Christ... I believe this way because God has always has proved to be good... even if parts of my year weren't.

I have this spiritual exercise at the start of every New Year... I muse, pray and ask God for a theme for my year. Sometimes it's a phrase... in 2018 the theme was 3 words. **Focus, Fight, Fierce... God was telling me to focus because the fight was going to be fierce...** and it was.

I'm sharing my theme for 2019 with you because I believe and sense that it's a theme for BBCC as well. Something I believe will benefit all of us as we travel together this year. This year the theme is a word that I think is misunderstood... and has taken on a meaning far too tame... the word is...

Breakthrough

That word sounds so good doesn't it? Breakthrough... I want breakthrough... you want breakthrough... but what does it really mean to have a breakthrough in my life? What does it look like? What does it feel like? What does it cost? Wait... you mean... there's a cost? Yes, real breakthrough will cost us... unless we want to settle for the tame version... the “go through the motions” version... the version that never delivers freedom.

I believe there are answers to those questions today but first, let's pray!

If God crowns (crowns are symbols of authority) the year with goodness and His paths and His ways are overflowing with provision and promise... than we need to understand that **Breakthrough is part of a much larger equation...** a deep process... and it's not so neat and tidy or tame.

This process is a common theme throughout Scripture and gives insight to how human beings work... how we tick... how we process life.

This process is... Breakdown – Breakthrough – Breakout

First there is a breakdown; this can be defined as a failure to function, to lose one's resolve... to give in... to fail in strength. **Breakthroughs begin with breakdowns...** the **STUFF (sad, tragic, ugly, fears and failures)** that cause us to breakup, come apart, go into a tail-spin and crack up. We've all been (are) there and will be there again... life on this planet produces these breakdowns.

Breakdowns require a Breakthrough, this may surprise you but here's how the dictionary defines Breakthrough: An **offensive military assault** that penetrates and carries beyond a defensive line. That's huge... a breakthrough involves an attack on any barrier that keeps us broken down!

Breakthrough mode is transitional... it's meant to move us out of a spiritual foxhole, fiercely and intentionally. It's a battle we join, a fight we engage in... it means going on the offensive and with a mindset to take on the enemy on the front lines. We penetrate the enemy's position and go beyond the barrier holding us captive... we head towards a battle for our freedom... not stay/run away from it.

Breakthroughs lead us to Breakouts...the moment of freedom we long for. **Here's how the dictionary defines Breakout:** A violent or forceful separation from a restraining situation, a sudden or smashing success.

Who doesn't want smashing success in their lives! None of this seems easy or neat and tidy... does it? Thankfully we have a Lord of the Breakthrough... a God who helps us breakthrough and leads us to a breakout.

2 Samuel 5:20

"And David came to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there. And he said, "The Lord has broken through my enemies before me like a breaking flood." Therefore the name of that place is called Baal-perazim."

Provoked by the Philistines, David asks God (prays) on what he should do, God tells him to take the fight to the enemy and promises him the victory. David wins the battle and calls this battlefield... Lord of the Breakthrough!

Micah 2:13

"He who opens the breach goes up before them; they break through and pass the gate, going out by it. Their king passes on before them, the LORD at their head."

This is a God who wants to breakthrough for us and with us... leading us all the way!

Breakdown – Breakthrough – Breakout This is NOT a passive fight!

It may look passive at times because most of this battle is fought on our knees... praying fasting and waiting on God... fighting against unseen foes.

Ephesians 6:12 reminds us

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

Psalm 27:14

“Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take courage; Yes, wait for the LORD.”

Waiting on God is not passive... waiting on God is an active pursuit of His will which readies our heart, our will for **action (obedience)**. To look intently and be ready when God instructs us to and how to move... and then move!

Breakthroughs are faith in action.

In the book of 2nd Kings there's an awesome story of a man in search of a huge breakout in his life. Read 2nd Kings 5:1-15

Immediately we find some important facts about Naaman... He's a leader of a great army; he's a man of courage, he's had loads of victories and because of all this... he has favor with his king.

BUT... he had leprosy... the first thing I noticed is...how we allow what comes after the word “But” to stop us in our tracks.

“Buts” are poor excuses to stay small! Excuses are barriers to breakthroughs

How many times have you allowed people or yourself, to use what comes after “but” to describe you? **Telling ourselves excuses is handy; they give us somewhere to hide.**

Example: I would trust God with my _____ BUT...

To live freely, and breakthrough the barriers of **STUFF**... we need to drop the excuses... and believe God's Word over the words that follow the word “BUT”... unless God's name follows.

Genesis 50:20

*“You intended to harm me, **but God** intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives.”*

Naaman is an amazing dude though... he's such a great military man that not even this awful disease (which made you unclean, subject to being cast out) can keep him sideline... or out of battles. He retains his rank and his position... Yet his approach to this battle for his breakthrough is not unlike our own... let's look deeper.

(Read verses 5-7)

Naaman brings gold, silver, new clothes and a letter from the king of Syria to the king of Israel... expecting to buy his breakthrough... to use his favor, his position as the reason for being healed.

**You can't negotiate your way out of trouble... (God if you do this _____, then I will)
... you have to fight through it!**

The king of Israel (Joram) freaks out, tears his clothes (good thing he just got new ones) and thinks the king of Syria is trying to start a war... basically not offering any help whatsoever!

Sometimes, we go to the wrong source with the wrong expectations... this is where disappointment grows into despair... Because we don't go to God first... and then stay with God throughout the breakthrough process.

In verse 8

Thankfully Elisha the prophet heard what happened and sent a message to his king saying,

"Why are you so afraid? Send the man to me, so that he will know there is a prophet in Israel."

We have no idea how Elisha heard the news... but when Naaman shows up at Elisha's house, the prophet sends someone else out to give instructions.

"Go wash seven times in the Jordan River. Then you'll be completely cured."

Back to the story...verses 11-12

Naaman gets angry, he walks off, grumbling, "Why couldn't he come out and talk to me? I thought for sure he would stand in front of me and pray to the Lord his God, then wave his hand over my skin and cure me. The rivers in Damascus (my home, my stomping grounds) are just as good as any river in Israel. I could have washed in them and been cured." This isn't the way I planned this going down!

What you choose to step into matters!

I get so frustrated when I negate the power of my choice and the fruit it produces... when I make excuses for myself

The fight may make us angry, frustrated... so much so that we may not want to do what God asks us to do **but we don't get to pick the river (the method) to our breakout...** because we have no clue to what is best for us. I think I do... but I don't!

Proverbs 14:12... *there is a way that seems right BUT the path leads to death*

We will fail every time we attempt to rationalize the path from breakdown to breakthrough and to breakout. **It requires faith... We must continuously learn to trust God's way and His timing.**

God doesn't always make sense but He always makes a way

Psalms 34:19

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all."

Next week... Naaman's servant's challenge and his response!

