

## OVERCOMING IMPOSSIBILITIES

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Mark 4:35-41

Today, we're continuing our series on "Breakthrough". Many of us have seen the movie already. We've seen how God can break through our most difficult circumstances if we just exercise our faith and become more prayerful.

Like today. I'm sure I'm not the only one who is facing a challenging circumstance. I don't know when my face is gonna clear up. Well, it's kind of cleared up already as you can see. My doctor has given me an oral pill to address my autoimmune problem. He cannot put me on this medication forever, however, because of its side effects. The pills are temporary because the shots I've been taking haven't taken effect yet. Three more months of the shots and I should be good, I was told. I really hope so.

Many of you are facing challenging circumstances, too. It might be your job, or your marriage, or your family, or your friends, or your health. Maybe your doctors have said the words, "There is nothing else we can do."

I want to assure you we serve a God who can still break through. We serve a God who still performs miracles. We serve a God who loves you greatly and knows where you are and what you are walking through.

For others in the room, life is going pretty good. You have money in the bank, a nice house, a good family, and a good job.

Thank God everything is going good for you. But it's amazing how fast that can change. One phone call can turn your world upside down. I have heard it said we are all either in the middle of a crisis, walking into a crisis, or coming out of a crisis. So, what happens when crisis strikes?

Folks, we can overcome every crisis, every circumstance and every impossibility that we are facing, no matter what it is. Why? Because Jesus overcame death on the cross.

That's why we celebrate Easter. It's why we can experience a breakthrough in our lives. We believe God raises dead things to life, even today! We can stand on and rely on the promise in Romans 1:4 that says the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to us through the Holy Spirit.

As you know, our world can turn upside down in an instant. Without warning, we can be rocked to our core and find ourselves in the midst of a storm.

Storms are a great example of what life can feel like in that moment. These impossible situations can feel like we're out on a boat in the middle of the ocean when, suddenly, a storm hits. We're tossed and turned by a storm that came out of nowhere. We weren't expecting it. We weren't prepared. How do we regain our footing to position ourselves for a miracle?

It reminds me of a story in the Bible when the disciples faced a storm. In the passage I read earlier, Jesus tells His disciples He wants to cross the lake with them. As they make their way to the other side, a storm comes up.

This storm, however, is no surprise because this "lake" is the **Sea of Galilee**, which is notorious for ferocious, unpredictable storms — similar to how life can be. It's located about six hundred feet below sea level and is virtually surrounded by mountains. The topography acts like a giant funnel, drawing cold air down from those mountains and blasting it onto the sea. The frigid air hitting the water can stir up instant and violent storms. In fact, it is typical for waves during a storm to reach 20 feet high.

The storm was serious. Their boat could capsize, and they could die.

Jesus's friends, the disciples, panicked when the storm hit. What is interesting is that several of them were experienced fishermen. They had been

through all kinds of storms, but apparently this one went beyond their ability. They were desperate.

This reminds me of life. Even though you might be a seasoned Christian, it doesn't mean impossibilities and storms in life won't shake you and bring a paralyzing fear. There are times that we also are desperate.

As the storm rages, the disciples allow fear to take over instead of overcoming fear and overcoming the storm. They forgot Jesus was in the boat with them. They forgot desperate situations are covered by Jesus. They are losing it because of the storm, while in the boat with them rests the ruler of the storms. Finally, they turn to Jesus and He is sleeping. How could Jesus be fast asleep at a time like this? The disciples seem confused that Jesus is sleeping. Jesus's disciples, even today, can be confused when storms hit. They pray and nothing happens. It seems as if Jesus is sleeping.

In the first message of this series, I told you the story of John Smith and showed you the clip from the movie. John had fallen through the ice and been dead for over one hour when his mom was called in for time of death.

All of a sudden, she was facing the worst kind of storm a parent can face — the death of her son. She walked into the room and prayed, “Holy Spirit, I need you now. Bring my son back to life.” At that moment, after an hour of no pulse and no oxygen, John had a pulse.

The storm wasn't over yet. It had only just begun.

They airlifted John to a children's hospital in St. Louis, where the doctor, an expert on hypothermia and drowning, met Brian and Joyce. They were facing an incredible impossibility.

Here is the clip in the movie where Brian and Joyce receive the news that John was brain dead and wouldn't survive the night. [\(Show sermon clip #2\)](#)

I love Joyce's response when she faced one of the biggest storms of her life. The reality of just how big an impossibility they were actually facing hit her. She thought for just a moment. You can see the battle between being overcome by the impossibility or overcoming the impossibility. In that moment, she chose to overcome the impossibility by choosing faith over fear. This is evident when she said, "Doctor, I hear you're the best at what you do. World renowned, in fact. Is that true?" The doctor answered yes and Joyce responded back with, "Then you do what you can do, and we will let God do the rest." The matter was settled.

Back to the disciples.

How did it end on the Sea of Galilee? Jesus was sleeping through the storm. How did it play out? Mark 4:38-41(NIV) tells us the rest of the story. Let's turn there.

**"Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, 'Teacher, don't you care if we drown?' He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be Still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, 'Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?' They were terrified and asked each other, 'Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him?'"**

Folks, I'm thankful that, even in our moments of lacking faith, Jesus still shows up to help us and bring a breakthrough. I'm also thankful God's ability to break through our situations is completely based upon Him and who He is and doesn't rely upon us and what we do.

So, how do we overcome our impossibilities and not let them overcome us? How do survive when storms come?

Here are three points that I believe will help you overcome impossible situations and circumstances in your life:

**Point #1-Decide what your go-to is.**

The storm on the Sea of Galilee rages. I'm sure the disciples immediately start trying to save themselves. They think, '*We have this, ' but it quickly becomes obvious they don't.*

What you do when a storm comes says a lot about you. What's your go-to position? Is it fear, worry, and anxiety? What's your first response? What's your immediate response? Do you try to fix it yourself? How long does it take you to admit you don't have this?

The disciples realized they were in trouble, and they panicked. They forgot that Jesus had this all covered. All they had to do was go to Him. It took them a while to figure that out. It wasn't their first go-to.

They had forgotten the promise God made to them a long time ago. It's a promise you need to be aware of and possibly know by heart. David wrote it when he was facing impossibility. It's a promise that is still true today. It can be found in **Psalm 34:17-18 (NLT):**

**“The Lord hears his people when they call to Him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted; he rescues those whose spirits are crushed.”**

That's a promise you can hold onto.

God is close to the brokenhearted. He rescues us when we cry out to Him for help. The issue is that too often we ignore our brokenness and refuse to ask for help. We allow our situation and impossibilities to overcome us, instead of overcoming our impossibilities.

My prayer is that your first response will be to position your heart and mind to receive a breakthrough, and that you will allow Him to exchange fear for courage.

How you respond may very well dictate the outcome of that storm in your life. This is where believing big and praying big comes in.

When people are facing impossible situations in their life I have heard them say, “I have done everything there is to do. I guess all I have left to do is pray.” I want to encourage you....pray first! Let that be your first response. It will change your situation.

### **Point #2 – Realize it’s spiritual.**

There is a physical world that we are well aware of, but there is also an unseen world we may be ignoring. That unseen world is the spiritual world. Everything you are facing in the physical realm comes from the spiritual realm. Not vice versa.

**The Bible tells us in Ephesians 6:12 (NIV), “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”**

We have to remember that we face an enemy named Satan. The Bible tells us he came to rob, kill, and destroy us. He is the one that turns our life upside down with lies, sickness, death, and situations that seem impossible.

You have an enemy and it’s not a person. We are not fighting against flesh and blood enemies. Your enemy is not the person standing right in front of you. Look past that and see into the spiritual realm to see your real enemy. Your enemy is not your mean boss, or ex-spouse, or parent, or the guy who cut you off in traffic, the negative doctor, or the overbearing co-worker.

Your enemy is Satan. Satan hates God and everything God loves. God loves you, so Satan hates you. He wants to prevent anything good from happening in your life, and he wants to take you out. Paul tells us to be aware of his schemes. What are his schemes?

- **Satan will try to blind you.** He’ll try to keep you from seeing, accepting, or remembering God’s truth.
- **He will seek to steal from you.** His purpose is to steal, kill, and destroy.

- **He will seek to stop you.** Paul wrote, “We wanted very much to come to you...but Satan prevented us” (1 Thessalonians 2:18)
- **He will seek to destroy you.** Peter says to Christians in his letter, “Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8) Don’t be that someone. He wants to destroy friendships, marriages, kids, health, finances, and most of all, our relationship with God. He uses anything he can to destroy us.

The battle we are engaged in is spiritual, and it is being waged in the unseen world. There are examples of this in the Bible:

- Daniel prayed but received no answer. Finally, an angel arrives with the answer and an explanation. The reason for the delay was a spiritual battle raging in the heavens. The angel was blocked from reaching Daniel.
  - Have you ever considered that the answers to your prayers are being influenced by spiritual forces warring against each other?
- When Elisha and his servant faced Aram’s army, the servant was afraid. But Elisha prayed that his eyes would be opened, and he was able to see that they were surrounded and supported by a great spiritual army.
  - Do you realize you are not fighting alone? That’s good news!

We see our issues as physical issues, and we treat the battle as a physical battle, but our problems are not really physical in nature. What happens to us physically comes out of what is happening in the spiritual realm. Not the other way around.

That’s why we have to fight this battle in the spiritual realm with the spiritual weapons God has given and Scripture talks about.

So, how do we battle? It is only through our connection with God that we can do battle with the forces of darkness. We can’t fight this battle in the physical.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4 tells us, **“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.”**

We can't fight this battle with our own power; we need God's power. The Bible encourages us to **“be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power.”** (Ephesians 6:10)

God will give us the power to fight, and He loves us so much He has equipped us with spiritual armor for the battle. I would highly recommend you study the spiritual armor found in Ephesians 6. This armor needs to be put on at the beginning of every day.

Your spiritual enemy is scheming against you. He's not concerned with your past, but he's very concerned about your future. He is doing his best to make sure you don't make it. He knows the kind of impact your life will make.

He has a strategy he uses against you every day to keep you from God and the abundant life God has for you. To stand against this enemy, you need to put on your spiritual armor. Make putting on your spiritual armor a thing you do first thing in the morning as you start your day. As the saying goes, **“Be a warrior, not a worrier.”**

Let me tell you a story. This happened many years ago, in 1990. I was working in Australia then. I started going to a church and I began to make friends. One Sunday, there was a special occasion, I think we were welcoming missionaries from our church who came back for furlough. After service, many folks went down to the basement to have lunch together. I shared the table with a few folks. There were cookies and crackers on the table and seeing that others took a piece or two, I also grabbed a piece and put it on my mouth. I was now chewing the cookie when somebody shouted, “Hello, everyone! I know the cookies are tempting, they look

delicious, but we haven't prayed yet. Pastor Jim is now going to say a prayer for our lunch."

As soon as he said that, I stopped chewing and feelings of guilt washed over me. I couldn't look at the other people who were sitting around the table where I was. In fact, I overheard a couple of them making rude comments about those who ate without saying a prayer first. I'm sure they saw me grabbing a cookie earlier. I really felt so small and just closed my eyes with the cookie inside my mouth beginning to melt.

The pastor prayed and throughout I really felt bad and ashamed. After the prayer, I immediately swallowed the cookie, lifted my head and pretended I wasn't eating. But I remember not enjoying the food and conversation throughout lunch.

That evening, I was still bothered by the incident at the church. In fact, I was so anxious and worried that I got a headache and felt sick. I said a little prayer and went to bed hoping I'd feel better. But I couldn't sleep. It took probably an hour before I finally was able to sleep.

At around 2 am, I woke up. But my head was still heavy. I was crying. I asked the Lord to give me his peace. I was fearful and very anxious because of my experience at the church. Most people would have just taken it in stride but I was a natural worrier. I often wondered about what others thought about me.

Suddenly, the Lord spoke to my mind, "Be a warrior, not a worrier". After that, the verses from Ephesians 6 beginning in verse 10 came to my mind, "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power" and on and on until verse 18.

Immediately, my mind cleared and my fears and worries were gone. I felt like a big burden was lifted off my shoulder. I praised and thanked God so much. And I realized how he really cared for me.

So, next time you feel afraid, think of those words, "Be a warrior, not a worrier" and recite or read Ephesians 6:10-18.

And Remember the Bible says, 1 John 4:4 “**You belong to God, my dear children. You have already won a victory....because the Spirit who lives in you is greater than the spirit who lives in the world.**”

### **qPoint #3 – Overcoming despite the outcome.**

We can't worry about the outcome of the situations we are facing. That's God's job.

First of all, it's a sin to worry. If we are worrying, we aren't trusting God.

It's easy to overcome an impossibility when it appears God is doing exactly what we want Him to do and answering our prayers exactly the way we want Him to answer. The problem with this is at the first sign God's not answering our prayers the way we want, we start to be overcome by our impossibilities.

Our job is to pray, believe God and His promises, and trust Him with the outcome. To position ourselves for a miracle we have to align our will with God's will. That means, however things turn out, we are going to trust Him. We will not be moved.

Even if God doesn't answer our prayers the way we want, we can't be overcome by our impossibilities. We must overcome impossibilities and trust God for the outcome.

Today, maybe you are completely overwhelmed by the impossibilities you are facing. Maybe you are in the middle of the storm, and you are panicking. Maybe you are even afraid you're going to drown.

I want to remind you that Jesus is in your boat. You are not alone. It's time to believe big and pray big. It's time to overcome the impossibility you are facing. God wants to help you!

Earlier, I mentioned how Jesus overcame death through his resurrection. That is a huge impossibility. But you know what, he died for you because he, the God of

the universe, loves you. The Bible says that “God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” We are all sinners, we have fallen short of God’s glory. Our punishment is death because of our sins. But Jesus took that punishment. He wants to reconcile us to his Father. What do you need to do? If you have never given your life to Him, I want to encourage you. Today is the day to give your life to the Lord, and it’s so easy. The Bible says that all you have to do is confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord and you will be saved.

And it gets better. You too will overcome death like Jesus. A huge impossibility. But with God nothing is impossible. He will raise you from the dead both literally and figuratively. He will give you a new life on earth and eternal life in heaven. So, will you come to Jesus today?