

## **BREAKTHROUGH-Part 2**

**Week #2 of a 2-Week Series**

**August 14, 2022**

**With Rev. Richard Rogers**

Alright; you guys ready? Richard's on his last Sunday. Let's see him sleeping in and enjoying his last Sunday off. He will be with you next week. And I'm going to go back to my quiet little life. Thank you, God! Okay; you ready?

So here's my question for you this morning: How are you being asked to change in your life? You know, I've wanted to do this series on breakthroughs. And we started last week. And the whole concept is: How are you being asked to have a breakthrough in your life?

Because for most of us, we have stuff going on. Do you have stuff going on in your life? And for some of us, the idea is that we almost believe that, spiritually, if there's any rough waters, somehow we're doing it wrong. We have believed that, *"If I'm doing my spiritual work, then everything is going to be smooth and easy and just peaceful."*

And yet, when I look at my own life [laughs], and when I look at some very spiritual people, I don't see that that's really the case. And I'm not sure it helps us to believe the idea that if I'm doing my spiritual work, everything should be smooth and easy. I really believe that your soul is here to grow; to expand; and to embrace the change that is before you.

The question I asked last week was: Do you ever feel overwhelmed by life? And last week I gave you the idea -- if you were here -- about being the buffalo. And the idea of the buffalo is that: When there's a storm coming on the horizon, the buffalo run toward it, and the cows usually run away from it or gather under a tree. And that's when the tree gets hit by lightning, and a dozen cows are killed. It's because the buffalo run toward it.

And I really want you to see that, in your life, are you running toward the issues? Are you running toward the problems? Are you running toward the situations? Or are you trying to run away from them?

And today what I want to focus on is the power of change. And that change is a necessary part of our spiritual life. And that every problem; every challenge; every opportunity is literally here to change us. And we get to decide how it changes us.

Like, when you look at your life right now, where are you being asked to change? Anybody being asked to eat differently? Or drink differently? Or exercise differently? Or live differently? Anybody's family inviting them to make a change like, that the old act may be getting a little tiring?

Over and over again, we're being asked to change, and in that change, we're either going to express more God -- to live more of our spiritual truth -- or we're going to anchor into more and more of living from our ego.

And one of the quotes I gave from last week was from Eckhart Tolle. He said, *"You can use a challenge to awaken you, or you can allow it to pull you even deeper into sleep."*

And that's what I want us to look at today! Like, how are you being asked to change? And can you allow that change to awaken your soul? Or are you going to be in resistance?

Because do we have a God-given right to be in resistance? Yes! Because we were given free will, we get to stay in resistance for as long as we want! Until our hands our bloody pulps from hanging on to the old way of life! And we get to hang on for as long as we want, but it's not spiritual. When we're hanging on, are we glorifying God or are we glorifying our ego? I think we're glorifying our ego! We're trying to keep the world the way that we know it. We feel safe; we feel secure. And we want everything to never change so we never have to grow or progress or transform in any way.

*"I am here to change."*

Will you say that with me? [With congregation]: *"I am here to change."*

Now let's get excited about it! Just a little bit, right? You don't have to be, "Whooooo!" But maybe just, "Woo!" Right?

Ready? [With congregation] *"I am here to change."*

One more time, and get excited: [with congregation] *"I am here to change."*

Now, if God is changing things on you in your life and in your world, is it because God wants to play with you? Is God just kind of messing with your mind and hoping that you'll have a big old freak-out about the transformation that's in front of you? I would say, "No!" That the reason that we're being asked to change over and over and over again is because God knows the full presence and power that is within us. And only in the process of transformation can we let go of our old ideas; our old beliefs; our old ego and really morph and transform into truly the glory of God.

Audre Lorde said it this way: *"When I dare to be powerful -- to use my strength in service of my vision -- then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid."*

See, for so many of us, the moment our ego gets afraid, we want to stop. We want to go back in the old ways. We think about the good old days; the good old times; the way it used to be. And we want to go back to those times.

And over and over again, what I want you to see is that every time life asks you to change; to evolve; to grow; to transform; to be more than you've ever been before, it's because God knows that it's in you to do it. Those details of change and transformation are not here to take you out; they are here to lift you to a higher level of life.

And as spiritual people, we have to embrace change. We have to! We have to be the model of change for the world so that every time the world wants to go back into the old ways, that we are banging the drum that it's okay to move forward. That we can move forward with a faith in God and a belief that, with God, all things are possible.

This is not our time to go backwards! This is our time to go forward! To be willing to embrace the day that is before us and change and transform and become more and more and more God-like. Through change, we can become more God-like!

In James 1:2-4 we read this: *"Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials. For knowing that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete and lacking in nothing."*

I love this verse! *"Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trails. For you know the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete and lacking in nothing."* Lacking in nothing! That you were created in the image and likeness of God!

Sometimes we need a fastball thrown at us. Right? And in that activity, we think, "Why me?" And we go to our victim place, and we think, "Life isn't fair! Look at that person or look at that person or look at that! They don't have to change!" And we have no idea what they're actually going through. But from our little victim place, we tell ourselves that, "It's not right; it's not fair that I should have to change. I've been a good person; God, you can't expect me to be more than I am right now."

And the answer is: Yes! God can! God did not create you for your current level of limitation. God did not create you for your current level of "stuckness." God created you because you were created in the image and likeness of God, and you are here to be perfect and complete and lacking in nothing.

*"I have come to be changed."*

Will you say that with me? [With congregation]: *"I have come to be changed."*

One more time like we mean it: [with congregation] *"I have come to be changed."*

So everything that is coming into your life at this moment is coming into your life to perfect you; to change you; to transform you; to lift you higher than you've ever been before. And the moment we quit

fighting it, we can actually go with it! We can actually allow the grace of God to lift us higher than we've ever been before. That the more time we spend in time to resistance to change; to resistance to new ideas and beliefs and possibilities, then the more time we actually spend fighting the activity of God. That we are here to be deeply and powerfully transformed. And I wish it could happen without change.

How many of you would be willing never to change again? I would! If I could fully express the glory of God without change, I would be willing to do it. If God could just kind of slap it on my head and just pour it in, and I would just walk out as the full realization of God, I'd be willing toward that. But it doesn't seem to work that way! It seems to be change after change after change.

And every moment -- in every change in every experience -- I can either get in line with that transformative power or I can let it be. Whether it's in the church; whether it's in our community; whether it's in our families, everywhere we look change is knocking at our door. And we shouldn't be afraid of it! If we say we believe in God, then we should not be afraid of change. For change is the way the Holy Spirit is moving us to a higher level of good.

*"But I don't like this change!"* Okay; are you a victim to this change? Or can you create it in a way that glorifies God for you? Yes! We're not here to keep living the old ways over and over and over again. We're here to stand in the glory of God because we have been perfected from the inside out.

*"Call it all good, my brethren, when you meet various trials. For you know the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete and lacking in nothing."*

CNBC recorded a study that was done. And they did an article called, "Can't Decide How to Change?" And it was written for people that feel sometimes overwhelmed by change -- by making decisions on how to change and making decisions at all.

And it says, *"Making a decision, especially a big life decision, can be like switching jobs or moving; it can be stressful. And if you agonize over decisions, it can lead to unhappiness, according to experts. But a new study suggests a good rule of thumb in decision-making is: Whenever you cannot decide what you should do, you should choose the action that represents the greatest level of change."*

Can I say that again? *"You should choose the action that represents the greatest level of change, rather than staying in the status quo,"* says University of Chicago economist Steven Levitt, who conducted the study. Levitt studied over 22,000 people to make a decision on a dilemma by simply tossing a coin. You know: flipping a coin?

So they took 22,000 people, and they asked them, *"What decision are you contemplating in your life?"* And they said, *"Would you be willing to participate in this study? And what we're going to do is: Heads represents the biggest level of change; tails represents the status quo."* And they invited people to flip a coin. The questions ranged in seriousness from *"Should I start a new job?"* and *"Should I propose?"* to *"Should I grow facial hair?"* For the coin toss, heads meant to make a change; tails meant to do nothing.

The study found that, for the most important decision -- quitting your job; ending a relationship -- individuals who were told by the coin to make the greatest change, and made those changes, were the most satisfied with their decisions. And they were the happiest six months later, as opposed to those who maintained the status quo.

In other words, overwhelmingly people who made a change were more content than those who did not. And, indeed, the study participants who made a change were more likely to say that they would make that change again if it came up.

Also they found that people flipped to tails, and decided not to make any changes, were happy in the short-term -- less than two months. But by the six-month mark, they were much less happy.

How many of you would get excited if you didn't have to change? I would! Right? And for the first two months, we're so excited! *"Look, I didn't have to change! I get to keep doing it the way I've always done it! Pooy pooy on everybody else; I don't have to change! Na na na na na; you can't make me. I don't have to; I don't want to!"* Right? And we get really excited! Our ego is winning in that moment. And we

love it when our ego is winning! Our ego wants us to stay exactly the way we are. And when our ego is winning, we feel happy in the short-term.

But long-term -- month after month after month -- when we didn't have the faith to change, it begins to wear on our soul. Because we know we came for more than being stuck. And we have a God-given right to die stuck! We do! God has no timetable; God is eternal! God will wait for you as long as you want to be stuck!

But there's a moment when your soul says, *"Enough! I'm not going to do this anymore. I'm not going to be afraid of my own life. I'm not going to be afraid of this situation. I am not going to be afraid of changing and transforming and being the best version of myself. I must change."*

And in that moment, heaven and earth begin to move on your behalf. Windows and opportunity open to you, because at that moment, you are acting from faith. We can actually move our lives forward. We can actually transform and actually glorify God in greater and greater opportunity. Every problem -- every opportunity; life itself -- is asking us to change.

So here are five reasons why I think you should change. [Laughs] And you may say, *"Richard, those are not enough."* Right? *"I need about 50 more. So when you come up with 50 more reasons, then come back to me and talk to me about change."*

The first one is ... And this may not really be a ... Well, I'll just say it. The five reasons to change. The first one is: **IT PUSHES YOU OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE.** *"But I like my comfort zone! I like my blanket! I'm toasty warm right here; I don't want to be pushed out of my comfort zone! I don't want to grow! I don't want to change!"*

But in the act of changing and being pushed out of your comfort zone, I believe it builds faith. It builds faith! It's very hard to build faith if you never have an issue. It's hard to build faith if you never have a need. It's hard to build faith if everything in your life is always smooth and easy. It's in those situations where things are hard, and you do it anyway -- and you find out that you can! -- that you are empowered to take on the next great challenges of your life. So it pushes you out of your comfort zone.

**IT INVITES YOU TO EXPERIENCE MORE OF LIFE.** When we get in our little comfort one -- when we don't want to change -- we just assume that life is always like this. [Laughs] Have you ever tried a food that you were sure you weren't going to like? And then you tasted it, and it was, *"Well, that's kind of good!"* Right? But it just sounds gross!

Any sushi eaters? How many of you, the first time you tried sushi, it took everything you had to put that little slimy thing in your life and swallow it? Anybody else? And then you realized, *"It's not bad!"* Right? *"It's actually good! I love sushi!"* And if you told me that I was going to eat raw fish, like ... I've been fishing! I don't cut those things up and drop them in my life. It's like, *"Ewwwww. No!"* And then, if you put enough sauce on it, it's good! Right? [Congregation laughs]

Number three: **IT MAKES YOU FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTABLE.** Your family will hate it! [Congregation laughs] Right? As you become more flexible and adaptable, your family's going to wonder what happened to you! Where did that cranky person go? Where is that person who was stuck in their old ways? As you become more flexible and adaptable, life becomes easier. You begin to flourish in every situation. That it allows you to overcome everything!

And four: **CHANGE ALLOWS YOU TO HAVE MORE FUN.** Because if you can have fun with change, you can have fun with anything!

The Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:31, *"I die every day."* Some verses say, *"I die daily."* And I want you to really hear that! Was he talking about his spirit? No! Was he talking about his personality? Yes! Was he talking about his limited humanity? Yes! That over and over again, the Apostle Paul had come to the point where he realized that every day he had to die to the old days so that he could be born again.

The whole message of Jesus Christ is about dying to the limitation so that we can be born again. He never said, *"You'll never have to change."* He demonstrated with everything that he was that if you change -- if you give up the limitation; if you're willing to let go of your humanity -- you were born into

the fullness of Spirit. And as spiritual community -- as people of faith -- we have to embrace the change that is in front of us. Individually and collectively, we have to be willing to embrace the change that the world is going through.

Because there's people around us who are profoundly scared right now. And when you act in faith -- when you're willing to undergo the transformation that is before us -- the people around you will sense it. They will know it; they will feel it. And they will be willing to be transformed, because you model that it's safe to be changed. If spiritual people run into the closet, pull the blanket over their head, and don't come out until it's over, we miss the opportunity to model during this time of change.

Am I saying that this time of change is easy? No! But what I am saying is that you can do it! But it has to start with your own life. Where is life asking you to change right now? If you stop arguing with it; if you stop denying it; if you stop resisting it and actually look where life is asking for you to change, would you be willing to trust God? That God is going to get you to the other side? God is going to move you to greater and greater good?

John 3:3: *"Jesus answered, saying, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'"*

Like, unless one is born anew; unless one is willing to be changed; unless one is willing to be transformed; unless one is willing to express the fullness of God within us, we can't enter the kingdom of God! Your ego will never get you into the fullness of God! Your ego -- as much as it would love to -- will get you enlightened. It will just, at the best, try to keep you safe.

But your soul didn't come into this world to be safe. Your soul came to express and know the glory of God. Whatever is going on in your life today, are you willing to trust God? And let it change you at depth?

*"Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials. For you know the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete and lacking in nothing."*

Will you pray with me?

Holy Spirit, we open our minds, our hearts, our soul to the activity of God that is right here, right now. Change me! Change me at depth! God, I hold nothing back from you! I give you all that I am! I give you my hopes and my dreams; I give you my fears; I give you my impurities; I give you my life; I give you my loved ones. I give it all to you! Change me at depth that I might glorify you in greater and greater and greater ways. Change me at depth! In the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

Thank you!

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