

Breakthroughs Rejected

I. Understanding Our Opportunities

- ❖ Breakthroughs often begin with an invitation.
- ❖ Breakthroughs may be disruptive . . . to calendar, relationships, plans.
- ❖ Breakthroughs are experienced incrementally.
- ❖ Often unaware when rejecting breakthroughs — steps of faith/obedience/cooperation — these lead to God's best . . . learn to say "yes" to God's invitations.

Hebrews 13:2 (NIV®)

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

Luke 5:4–6 (NIV®)

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." ⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." ⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.

II. Accepting & Rejecting

A. Barnabas & Saul

Acts 13:1–12 (NIV®) *Barnabas and Saul Sent Off*

In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ² While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

On Cyprus

⁴ **The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit,** went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. ⁵ When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

⁶ They traveled through the whole island until they came to Paphos. There they met a Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-Jesus, ⁷ who was an attendant of the proconsul, Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he wanted to hear the word of God. ⁸ But **Elymas the sorcerer (for that is what his name means) opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul from the faith.** ⁹ Then Saul, who was also called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight at Elymas and said, ¹⁰ "You are a child of the devil and an enemy of everything that is right! You are full of all kinds of deceit and trickery. Will you never stop perverting the right ways of the Lord?" ¹¹ Now the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind, and for a time you will be unable to see the light of the sun." Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand. ¹² When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

B. Jesus' Admonition

Matthew 23:13–15 (NIV®)

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the kingdom of heaven in men’s faces. **You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.** ¹⁵ “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when he becomes one, you make him twice as much a son of hell as you are.

Matthew 15:12–20 (NIV®)

Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?” ¹³ He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴ **Leave them; they are blind guides.** If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit.” ¹⁵ Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.” ¹⁶ “Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. ¹⁷ “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? ¹⁸ But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean.’ ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰ These are what make a man ‘unclean’; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him ‘unclean.’ ”

C. Opposition is Expected

Acts 19:8–12 (NIV®)

Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. ⁹ But **some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them.** He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord. ¹¹ God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, ¹² so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

Prayer

Heavenly Father,

I acknowledge that I am a learner, growing in the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ. My intent is take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. With the help of the Holy Spirit, I will forget what is behind and strain toward what is ahead. I choose to press on toward the goal of my heavenly calling. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Philippians 3:12–14 (NIV®)

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.