

God bless you. How you doing? What's going on Trinity? How y'all doing? Everybody good? Everybody feel good? Everybody warm? Come on. I'm not. I didn't bring a coat. It was rough. I got ashy real fast outside, but it is so good to be in God's house and I am pumped. No better place to be tonight than God's house. Come on. How many of y'all are happy that you're here today? Amen. And I am just extremely honored to be a part of what God is doing here at your church. And I tuned in online yesterday and watched the message and heard just all that God is doing with changing some direction and hitting things head on. And we're going to pursue what's been pursuing us and moving forward. And I love the thought that Pastor Jimmy [Witcher] talked about taking ground and I just want to echo some of that in this sermon.

But can we, before I start, just put our hands together and honor your amazing pastors, Pastor Jimmy and Kim and all that God is doing in you and through you, and Irene and I are so honored to call you friends. And y'all just good looking. I just want you mimic me and Irene, come on, y'all just good looking and I'm excited. Also, I got a church planter with me, my friend Luke, can y'all give it up for Luke? He's planting a church in Mineannapolis, Minnesota. Let's go Luke. And so we are excited about all that God is doing not just here locally but also around the world. And yes, Irene and I get the opportunity to serve together. Y'all pray for our marriage in ministry together. Come on. It's real. It's real. I'm always right and she's getting there and I'm joking, I'm joking, I'm joking.

But she's actually watching right now. So she texted me, said, be careful. Be careful. You got to come back home. Amen. And I'm excited tonight because I believe it's a night tonight that the trajectory of the kingdom of God can be established in the city. I'm excited about tonight because marriages have the opportunity to come back together. I'm excited tonight that wayward adult children can find the freeing power of Jesus Christ. I'm excited on a night tonight because many of us have been in seasons where we've been between a prayer and a promise, and tonight God can move us from just praying for something into the reality of grasping something. It's in moments like these where hope is regained. It's in moments like tonight when it's cold outside, come on in the national championship, come on TV tonight that somebody might not be winning in the spirit.

And tonight you can find what you need to win in the Spirit I'm excited about tonight. Come on, I'm going to make y'all preach with me tonight that God, that in a moment like this, that the presence of God can change everything about our lives in a moment like tonight. And as I welcome those who are watching online and in all of our other campuses, I believe that God is not a respecter of places. That God can meet you right where you are tonight, that the power and the presence of God can make itself known in the place that you are in. And so tonight I want to preach a scripture that's very dear to my heart. When I was a youth pastor, this was like my first message out of this passage of Scripture almost 30 years ago. And after I got done preaching my dad who was the senior pastor, I walked off the stage and he put his arm around me and said, son, that's the worst sermon I've ever heard.

Come on somebody. And so tonight I pray that I do a little bit better than I did almost 30 years ago. And 2 Samuel 5:17-21 is an amazing passage of Scripture and there's many things that we can draw out of the life of David, but as we look at this passage of Scripture, I want you to see yourself as David or Davina. Come on somebody if you're female. And it says this, "When

the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they mobilized their forces to capture him. But David was told by the Spirit that they were coming. So he went into the stronghold. The Philistines arrived and spread out across the valley of Rephaim. So David asked of the Lord, should I go out and fight the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me? The Lord replied to David, yes, go ahead, I'll certainly hand them over to you. So David went to Baal-perazim and defeated the Philistines there. Then he gave God a praise." I love this. "The Lord did it. David exclaimed, he burst through my enemies like a rage and flood." I love that. "So he named the place Baal-perazim, which means the Lord who breaks through."

David named the place Breakthrough. David gave it a different name after he was finished than when it was named before he got there. Trinity, tonight I want to preach to you from the idea it's time to call it something different. It's time to call it something different. Years ago as we, me and Irene pastored a church and we founded a church in Baltimore, Maryland. We had this idea, this God-given vision that we would start a track and field club to reach people that nobody was reaching. And so we started a youth track and field club.

And I know what you're wondering. Were you the sprint coach? No, I ate my way out of that position a long time ago. And when we started this track and field club, God put his hand on this thing and as we were doing it, God began to elevate it and God began to let it win. And I remember we were training other churches on how to do this and we ended up from Baltimore in LA and we were in LA and we partnered with the Dream Center and we were training about 300 kids on how to run. Well, they were training on how to run. I was training them how to eat, come on somebody. And as we were training them, it was going so well and everything that we had set out to do was happening. And I remember I was so purpose filled and at the end of the day our team got together to debrief and we started asking everyone, how do you think the day went?

Everyone was super excited. Everyone was talking. My wife, her face was just a little discouraged. And so it came to her turn and she's like, guys, it was a great day, but there was just one kid. He wouldn't listen to a word that I was saying. And I was like, really? Show me. Come on somebody. I'm that dad. I'll beat him. Come on. Ain't no timeouts in my family. And she said, no, no, no, no. She goes, I don't know why, I was calling him all day. And I said, well, what was his name? And she says, "Sovauge Tonnay." To somebody say "Sovauge Tonnay." And I said, really? I didn't see a "Sovauge Tonnay." And she says, it was so disrespectful that he wasn't listening to me all day. And I was like, okay. And I was going through and all of a sudden something occurred to me, I said to her, you mean Savage Tony, S-A-V-A-G-E, Savage, Tony?

And she goes, oh my goodness. And I said, what? She goes, I was calling him the wrong thing all day and he never responded to what I was calling him. And as I begin to think about that story, I was thinking about discouragement when it comes to our lives. And I begin to think about all of the marriages that are in disarray and I begin to think about people who have been plagued with financial debt. And you ask someone, ask them how is it going? And they says, man, I'm just in debt. And my wife is always tripping, come on somebody and my husband acting just like his daddy. Is there anybody out there tonight? Right? And what we do is we start calling something that God wants to do the wrong thing. And the Bible says that out of

the heart. Come on somebody. The abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks, and what you say is what you get. Could it be that God wants to break through in your life? Could it be that God wants to do a miracle in your life? You've just been calling that miracle the wrong thing?

I believe we have to stop telling God how big our problems are and start telling our problems how big our God is. It's time to break through. I'll be 50 years old in two weeks. I know what you're thinking. No way black don't crack. My back fills it, my knees feel it.

And as I was thinking about how many times have I been addressing an injury with painkillers, I've been addressing something that's going wrong, dealing with the symptoms, but not with the main thing. And I've been addressing the right thing the wrong way. And I think as we pray, many of us have prayed in seasons for God. God give us relief. God doesn't come for relief. God wants to give you resolve. Come on somebody. God, we've been praying to God talking about the pain and I get it, the pain is real and I get it hurts. But maybe we need to stop praying about the pain and start praying for God to God, for God to reveal the purpose through the pain. I came to tell you, Trinity, that God doesn't want you to get a break from it.

God wants you to break through it. And I believe that as the clock hit midnight and, come on somebody, and turn to 12:01 in 2024, I'm going to break the strongholds that have been over my life in 2024. Come on somebody. It happened in my great granddaddy. It happened in my granddaddy, but guess what? It happened in my daddy. But tonight somebody needs to have an attitude. It stops with me. I'm breaking the cycle of addiction. I'm breaking the cycle of insecurity. I'm breaking the cycle of anxiety. Call it something different. So easy to complain, so easy to have a woe was me mentality. So easy to talk about our triggers and our trauma, but maybe instead of talking about our triggers and our trauma, we need to get a picture of our triumph.

Maybe instead of talking about our discouragements and our disappointments, we to start talking about our destiny in God. Maybe we need to start speaking those things that be not as if they already are. What you say is what you get. And maybe I just need to start talking about it a little differently. You see, as I read this passage of Scripture, we find David, King David in a place of a new beginning. He's in a place of transition. You see 2 Samuel starts with the death of King Saul chapter 2 in 2 Samuel is David's second anointing to be king over Judah. The first anointing was done in secret in Jesse's house. David is asking God what should he do? And God asked him to move to Judah. First, after David's anointing as king over Israel, there was a civil war between David and the king of Judah.

And in chapter 4 in 2 Samuel, two rogue soldiers kill the king of Israel. In chapter 5, all of the other tribes of Israel are coming together to anoint David as king in public. And just when all of the infighting was over, this enemy called the Philistines had raised their head once again against Israel and King David in 2 Samuel 5:17, this passage of Scripture starts out very poignant. It says, when the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they mobilized all of their forces to capture him in his infancy. They mobilized all their forces to oppose him in his rookie season. They mobilized all their forces. Before David really knew who he was. They knew what was on him when they heard before Twitter, when they heard before Instagram, David's anointing went viral before there was internet. Come on somebody.

And they decided maybe we should take David out before he finds out what he really is. Can I offer to you Trinity that tonight that the pressure that you've been feeling is not God mad at you but the enemy heard what God has on your life in 2024. Can I offer to you Trinity that the enemy does not fight who he does not fear? Can I tell you right now that if you're experiencing high pressure, it could be because you've got a higher calling and a higher purpose. I came to tell you that opposition is not always resistance, sometimes opposition. What you feel is God on the verge of redemption, God on the verge of restoration and God on the verge of doing something new in your life, the enemy heard that David had been anointed. The enemy heard that David, come on. Somebody was a warrior and a worshiper.

The enemy heard that David had a new beginnings anointing on his life. The enemy heard that your marriage is about to be in its best days ever. The enemy heard, come on, that you don't have a good resume, but you're about to get an upgrade or a promotion on your job. The enemy heard that the best days of Trinity are ahead of you and the worst days are behind you. And I love when Pastor preached that this season we're going forward towards the fight. We're not shrinking back. And it's not somebody say, I ain't scared no more. I ain't scared no more. Guess what guys? There are more for you than against you. And if God before you who can be against you, the enemy heard, he heard that on a cold night you decided to get in your car and come to service anyway. Could it be that God has more in store for you? Could it be Trinity that your best days are ahead of you and your worst days are behind you? Could it be that the enemy knows that you are the head and not the tail? Could it be that the enemy knows that no weapon that is formed against you is going to prosper? Could it be, come on somebody. I feel God don't make me get a B three organ and do a Jericho march around this round stage tonight by myself.

It's crazy to me. Pastor says sometimes the enemy believes in our calling more than we do. He heard I got to start calling myself something different. I'm going to be honest with you. I stand here tonight with dyslexia. I stand here tonight with a learning disability. I stand here tonight and got pushed through high school. I was a troubled teen and I used to think, man, the enemy, he's all against me man, and God ain't for me. And why was I born this way and why do I feel like I'm different? Maybe you're a teenager watching this and you don't feel like that God has much purpose on your life. And I'm telling you right now, I'm not here to brag on anybody but Jesus. But I can't believe that somebody who can't read barely or write barely, wrote a book. I can't believe that someone who grew up with a stuttering problem and used to stutter so bad I wouldn't even talk in crowds. Isn't it funny that God would put a microphone in my hand and allow me to preach all over the world?

Can I tell you, I can't tell you the day that I heard what the enemy heard. I heard that I am anointed. I heard that greater is he that is in me than he that is in the world. I pray tonight that you start hearing the voice of God and what God has said over your life, that you have a purpose and a destiny. Come on somebody. I believe tonight that God is waking something up in the room. Come on. Somebody that you're going to hear the voice of God. Come on. You are at your computer with some bad speakers, but the Holy Spirit can speak to you in a see nothing season. I'm a living, breathing, walking, talking testimony that God doesn't use us because of us, but it uses us in spite of us. Is it okay if I preach, preach a little bit. He heard

Pastor, I get it. So how do I call it something different? How do I get to the place where I can call a hard marriage breakthrough?

How do I get to a place where I can call anxiety breakthrough? How do I break the cycle of saying the same thing? I'm glad you asked. Number one, it's time for you to pursue what has been pursuing you. Your pastor preaching, he says, we're going forward. We ain't running from the fight, we're going towards the fight. We're going to take ground instead, come on. Like I would say in my church back in the day, I ain't no punk. God's with me. If God before me who can be against me, we got to pursue what has been pursuing us. It says in 2 Samuel 5:17 when the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they mobilized all their forces to capture him. Watch this now. But David was told that they were coming. So he went into the stronghold. I'm talking about old school Ron Cannoli.

"I'm going up to the high places, I'm going up to the high places." The young people are like, what? That's not Maverick City. There's these other things called hymns. "I'm going up to the high places to tear the devil's kingdom down." Come on if you don't know that one. "I went to the enemy's camp and I took back what it stole from me, took back when it so for me took back when. So for me, I went to the enemy's camp and I took back what it stole for me. He's under my feet. He's under my feet." Y'all remember that? "He's under my feet, he's under, Satan is under my feet."

It says that David was told that they were coming. So this time he goes towards the fight and not away from the fight. But if you read in 1 Samuel, you'll see that when King Saul was after David, David ran from Saul to the cave of Adullam. And I did a little bit of studying. Hey Siri, I'm joking, I'm joking. The cave of Adullam is located in the same place where the Philistines mobilized their forces against David. In other words, this time David ain't running from his enemy, he's running towards his enemy. This time David is pursuing what is pursuing him. So he went into the stronghold.

Stronghold. What's a stronghold? That sounds like a King James word. Where's that at? I think Ron Cannoli had a good idea. Where was that? Let's see what Paul has to say about the stronghold in 2 Corinthians 10. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh for the weapons of our warfare, not carnal but mighty. And to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down every argument and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God bringing every there it is thought into captivity, to the obedience of Christ and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled." Stronghold, where is it? It's right here. It's a way of thinking.

A stronghold is a lie or accusation that the enemy plants in the minds of believers that are contrary to the word of God. Before anyone ever gets addicted to a substance, they first are addicted to a thought. I know this because my wife battled alcohol addiction and this November we celebrated eight years of her sobriety. Come on.

But as we dug deep into what happened, we realized that she did not believe scriptures like you are fearfully and wonderfully made. She didn't believe scriptures that no weapon that

formed against her is going to prosper. She called it something different. She called it that God forgot about her. She called it that she had just been born into a family of abuse and that followed her. And so before she was ever addicted to a substance, she was first addicted by a stronghold that she believed was contrary to God's word. And that's where many of us are struggling with today.

And it's not a substance that we're addicted to. It's a thought, a thought that nobody loves me, a thought that I'll never be good enough, a thought that this always happens to me. And instead of praying, we start complaining to the thought that we've been addicted to. But I came to tell you that you cannot break a stronghold with a strong effort. This time I'm going to do a fast and I'm going to only eat this, or this time I'm going to work out. And maybe I've been overweight a long time. And that was me because during my wife's addiction, I got addicted to food and addicted to this emotional that this is happening to me. And in 2017, I weighed 420 pounds.

I know you're wondering how did Irene even love you? Come on somebody. I know you were thinking, but I was addicted to a thought preaching, addicted to a negative way of thinking, anointed, traveling, addicted. That my wife will never love me the way I need to be loved. And because I was addicted to a thought, I came addicted to something other than the presence of God.

Are y'all hearing me? Until I went to the high place to tear the devil's kingdom down? Paul says, we have to make this thought and bring it into captivity. Come on somebody. We have to cast down the argument that the enemy has caused us to believe that we'll never be good enough. And I came to tell you, you are good enough. I came to tell you, Jeremiah 29:11, that God says, I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you, not to harm you, to give you a hope and a future. It's time to start pursuing what has been pursuing you. I thought like five people would clap right there. It's amazing. So when I was a trouble teen, I got in a few fights, I won.

And I remember being in this basketball game and I was a teenager and we were talking trash in the wrong community. And after the game I thought I was just going to face our 11 versus their 11 for a fight in the parking lot. Can I just be honest? It was me. Don't judge me. God is still working with me. Come on somebody. And when I came out in the parking lot, it wasn't their 11 against our 11, their aunties, their uncles, their cousins. And we, if you don't know what this is, we were about to get jumped. Jumped is you're going to get beat up by a whole lot of people. So as I saw what was happening, I was the fattest and I was the slowest. So I ran first, come on somebody, and I'm running and I turn around and there's a guy chasing me. This Baltimore now with a baseball bat. Yep. I, that's why I love this church because security is all around. I feel so protected here. I ain't going to lie. Bring your bat. Somebody will shoot you. Come on. I was in the lobby, somebody had a gun. I'm like, what? I feel safe.

I ain't felt safe around white, white people with a gun before. Come on somebody. I'm joking, I'm joking. Just make sure some of y'all in the room, make sure you were here. Don't send an email. And all of a sudden I'm running and the dude did something crazy. He threw the bat at me. So he threw the bat and he missed. And I heard the bat hit the ground. Oh my God, there's

a bat. So what did fat slow Jimmy do? I picked the bat up and I started to pursue what was pursuing me. I dare you Trinity Church, the enemy has thrown accusations at you. The enemy has thrown your past at you. The enemy has thrown your history at you. How? But you put down shame and you pick up your story and you turn around and tell the devil you've pursue what has been pursuing me. I'm going to call it something different.

Number two, pursue what's been pursuing you. Number two, pray until his present shows up. Pray until his presence shows up. It says The Philistines arrive and spread out across the valley of Refraim. So David asked of the Lord, should I go out and fight the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me? And the Lord replied to David, yes, go ahead, I'll certainly hand them over to you. Another version says, so David inquired of the Lord and the Lord responded to David.

Can I tell you something? Guys in my life, I'm nothing outside of his presence. I'm not talking about a popular song. I'm talking about. I have found that in his presence there's fullness of joy. I was wrecked and ruined for the presence of God as a young boy, watching my parents preach and have altar calls and watching people get restored and watching miracles take place. And I don't care how fancy church gets, I don't care how many hit songs are written around the world. I have learned that the presence of God is not found in the lyrics of a song. The presence of God is found in the lifestyle of his children. And I'm telling you right now, young people, if you're in this room, if you're watching online, I want you to listen to me. You'll never find your confidence in the presence of the right boyfriend or the right girlfriend. It's in the presence of God. It is sitting in service.

There's a young lady here, I was watching you doing worship on your knees broken before God. And I'm telling you it's in God's presence that I find my confidence and I have come to discover in my life that what is birthed in the spirit can only be maintained in the spirit. And many of us, we come to the altars and we come the church and we pray for God's presence and God shows up and he does miraculous things in our lives. And what happens is we're so we've been praying for God to move, but if we're honest, we have sought his hand and not his face because when he gives it to us, I've come to discover that we leave the sweet spot of God's presence. And what I've been praying for 2024 is God, will you allow us to encounter your presence more? God can we see miracles and signs and wonders in your presence because the people didn't wait for worship service for you to show up, but they came God because they've been in the presence of the almighty all week. God, will you reveal yourself to us again?

David inquired of the Lord. And the Lord responded to David what David had, what knew is he knew how to worship. He knew how to have a cadence of consecration. That's what the beginning of the year is all about; it's about consecrating yourself for God to do something new. And what happens is when you consecrate yourself and you say, God, I'm going to be a worshiper, what you're saying, God is I'm going to give up things I love for you because I love you even more. David inquired of the Lord and Lord replied to David, my friend Mark Batterson says something that I'll never forget. He says, the greatest travesty is not the prayers that go unanswered, but rather the prayers that go unasked. What have we stopped asking for? Because we've been in the presence of fear. We've been in the presence of discouragement. We've been in the presence of doubt. We've been in the presence of disappointment. We've

been in the presence of betrayal. I'm telling you right now, I'm in a place of my life. I'm an empty nester. It's weird. My kids are gone, but they still want money. But every morning I wake up to a woman that for eight years, every single day has began her day with an hour in God's presence. And she says something that is pastoring me. She says, honey, if I'm not working on my recovery, I'm working on my relapse.

Every day in God's presence every day. What God is going to say every day, what God is going to do. And I know I'm supposed to be the spiritual head, but I think we got a secondary head because that woman has created an atmosphere that I love to wake up in. I'm telling you right now, I don't even know how to preach this. It's just, it's God's presence. It's his anointing. I'm telling you, David started out his life anointed in secret and now he's got to figure out how to stay anointed in public. My mom and dad used to tell me this, sometimes your anointing will take you where your character can't keep you. And all over the world, we're seeing some of the greats fall. You know why? They've left a sweet spot of God's presence. God, I don't want to leave your presence. I can't do this without your presence. I need your presence to show up in my marriage. I need your presence to show up in my finances. I can't pastor and parent these adult children without your presence.

I got to check this anger in your presence. And I was watching us doing worship and I don't ever want us as the body of Christ the cheap or to treat God's presence as common. Man when he shows up. God, I want to be in the move of your presence, guys. I'm telling you right now, I could preach that point on and on and on and on and on. But the Lord just told me to make sure that the people understood what first took courage. Now, what first took courage to get requires consecration to keep. That's what God wants to say to us tonight. The last thing I want to leave with you before I go eat a steak is pursue what's been pursuing you pray until his presence shows up in number three. Put a praise in place of the problem, put a praise in place of the problem.

So David went to Refram and he defeated the Philistines there, the Lord did it. David exclaimed. He burst through my enemies like a raging flood. So he named it break through. There's no such thing as "Savage Tonay" only Savage Tony.

And I have come to discover in the midst of a diagnosis in September when I was just getting blood taken and the nurse called me the next day and says, as you're sitting down your PSA numbers are 8.9 and your dad had prostate cancer and you are showing traits of prostate cancer. I have been reading this passage of Scripture and you know what I did pastor? I said, please don't use that word to me again. She goes, what do you want me to call it? I said, call it breakthrough. I came to tell you don't call it cancer. Call it breakthrough. Don't call it anxiety. Call it breakthrough. Don't call it fear. Call it breakthrough. Don't call it addiction. Call it breakthrough because what you call it, come on somebody, that's how the enemy is going to see it. I'm calling it something different, man. And pastor, I got a call two weeks ago from the same nurse and she says, are you sitting down? I said, I am. She goes, what you called breakthrough. This does not happen, but I retook your blood and your PSA number went from 8.91 to 0.76

Because of what I called it. I triple dog dare you, Trinity, to start speaking those things that be not as if they already are. And the word that the Lord gave to me that day when she called, he said, don't pray for a miracle that you can live. So I've been in a gym, I've been eating salads and green stuff and working out and sweating way too much. And now I got to buy new clothes because of what I called it. Could God have something in store for you but you can't see it because you've been calling it the wrong thing?

Start calling it breakthrough. When you call it breakthrough, what you're doing is your testifying. The word testimony means God, do it again. And every time you call it something other than what it is, what you're saying is God, do it again just like you did in the Bible. And God, if you can part a red sea, then you can break through my life. Trinity, can you stand with me? I believe it'd be a good idea that all of us in God's presence would just raise your hands. And from you are our things. Until you are our things, you deserve the glory.

Can we just worship together for a little bit? Come on. Come on. You're worthy. Come on, let's worship.

Come on Jesus. I want y'all to listen to me for a second. I want to show you what you just did. So my wife has been sick. She was supposed to be with me and she's sick or she's lying because she just didn't want to hang with me. But I got this app on my phone. It's called Nest. And what Nest is, it's a thermostat. And Irene loves the house cold. But right now I'm hundreds of miles away from her. But because of what I'm connected to, I can change the temperature where she is. So I just decided during worship to turn the temperature up to 80. And what you did when you worshiped just now is you connected to something that you cannot see to change the temperature of a place that you are not at.

And I want you in this moment to never forget that your worship changes the temperature of wherever. So somebody right now, we're going to sing that one more time. And I want you to think of that wayward child. I want you to think of that diagnosis. I want you to think of that. Come on somebody, that situation, I want you to think of that job you need and I want you to worship one more time. Come on, come on, come on. Let's raise your hands.

Father and Jesus, I pray for every person under the sound of my voice and every person that is watching online. And I pray, God that you stir us in 2024. God, I pray that we would pursue what has been pursuing us. Father, I pray that we would pray until your presence shows up. And Father, I pray that we would put praise and praise of the problem, God, because you are worthy. I'm not calling it doubt, I'm calling it breakthrough in Jesus' name. And everybody gave God some praise. God bless your church.