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*Dear Lord, too often we experience identity theft that results in behavior and emotions that do not make you recognizable in this world. Forgive us for following the shiny objects that end up imprisoning us in the vicious cycle of asserting our will over your will, our thoughts over the Holy Scriptures and our emotions over the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness and self-control. Break us free Lord from the sin that so easily entangles us and the yoke of slavery that restricts us in our small cocoon of fear, doubt and worry. We want to fly with you to the places you have prepared for us to go. Override our EGO, just as you did for Peter, Paul, Zacchaeus and Thomas and set us free from the prison of self: I, me, my.*

**Edge God In Podcast Week 23: A 3 Step Prison Break**

In Podcast 22: *Jesus was interruptible…Are You?* You learned the power of being interruptible in your thought life as well as your actions as you reflected on the Gospel of Luke and the numerous times Jesus was interrupted to accomplish God’s work and ministry on earth, in today’s Podcast: 3 Step Prison Break you will explore a 3 – Step Experience and Process of Breaking out of behavior that compromises the person God is calling your to be. Jesus was the ultimate ERR Doctor as you will see as we reflect on the lives of 5 people who were imprisoned by their life style and/or doubt: Peter, Mary, Zacchaeus, Thomas and Paul and the FREEDOM they gained as a result of an Encounter (E) with Jesus which led to Repentance (R) and a Resurrection (R) of purpose and identity, they experienced a break out of the cocoon of worldly restrictions and embraced the One who died to give them the ability to soar.

Learn:

*The caterpillar has the DNA of a butterfly yet the predators of the world too often snatch it up before it transforms and embraces its ability to fly.*

*You have the DNA of God as you are created in the image and likeness of God. You have the ability to soar through the storms of life, all things are possible for you when it comes to mastering your mind for transformation and revival. Jesus meets you and escorts you back into revival as you break down the interior damns that hold back the streams of life giving living water flowing within you.*

*Too often you play small, fueling lack and scarcity thinking. Similar to Thomas’s doubt that blocked his ability to trust and believe, you are often blinded by the trickery of smoke and mirrors that Satan uses to distract you from the way out of your slavery to fear, doubt and worry.*

*Similar to Peter’s outbursts of anger and frustration, you will get spun into the cocoon of EGO: Edging God Out of your perspectives, conclusions and plans, forgetting that the one who calls you is faithful, He will provide a way out as He did for Peter when He filled is empty net with fish. Jesus moved beyond Peter’s frustration to the ultimate goal: to set him free from the restriction of his desires and unmet needs so that he could fly.*

*Anger often rears its ugly head in the behavior of stonewalling, defensive behavior and unkind words (towards others and yourself). Frustration is fueled by the need to be right, liked and understood and chains you in the prison of the shadow side of your positionality and false beliefs. Have you had enough?*

*What predators are threatening your ability to fly in Christ’s strength and God’s will for you in life?*

Reflect:

Imagine a triangle and at the top of the triangle you have your Will the left corner of the triangle represents your Mind and the right corner of the triangle represents your emotions. Your Will directly influences your Mind (your, thoughts, perceptions, conclusions, assumptions, beliefs) which directly impacts your emotions (what you feel: sad, happy, angry, frustrated, all of which create your attitude. An emotion is your body’s response to your thought life. Your attitude is your closest friend or worst enemy and you get to choose it. How? By surrendering it up to God for His will to be done in and through your life (Edging God In) OR not. God has given us free will and you can choose to sit yourself on the throne of your Will as was the case in the Garden of Eden: deception, confusion, accusation and self-doubt all play in the space of a Will directed by self (Edging God Out). Will => Mind => Emotions => Attitude.

Five prominent players from the New Testament were all trapped in the cocoon of worldly strongholds: hunger for power, popularity, passion and position: Peter, Zacchaeus, Mary Magdalene, Thomas and Paul. They forgot they had wings to fly. Jesus being the prison freeing, chain breaking, cocoon freeing Savior meets them all in their restricted state of being and set’s them free. Once they encounter the humble love of Christ they relinquish control over their own Will and receive the key that sets then free: Surrendering their Will over to God’s will: Read Galatians 2:2.

Let’s take a closer look:

* **Luke 5:1-11:** **Peter’s** encounter with Jesus: Peter is a self-motivated entrepreneur who is dedicated to revenue producing behavior; however when his labor does not produce the desired outcome he is left wallowing in the cocoon of self-pity, victimization and frustration. Can you relate? When was a time when you cast your net out into the world only to pull in an empty net? Jesus, ignored Peter’s victimization and pity party and invited him to jump back in his boat.

The difference this time as Peter cast his net, is monumental: rather than by his own will and sheer determination to produce a desired outcome, Peter was now accompanied by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. *Jesus was in the “BOAT” and initiated the catch and the outcome was more than Peter could have imaged.”*

*Reflect upon a time in your life when you came out of a situation after giving it YOUR all, exhausted and defeated and you encountered Jesus. What was the outcome as a result of your encounter with Jesus? How did you repent from self-focus (I centered Will)? What did you resurrect? For example, Peter resurrected a faith-filled attitude of trust as he laid his will down and surrendered to Jesus as he proclaimed: get away from me LORD for I am a sinful man?*

Peter’s encounter with Jesus resulted in repentance from self-focused efforts that had their foundation on EGO: *I want this outcome for my own advancement and I didn’t get what I wanted so I am imprisoned in the cocoon of frustration.*

* **Luke 19: 1-9: Zacchaeus’s** encounter with Jesus: Zacchaeus had gumption (a shrewd or spirited initiative and resourcefulness). He wanted to see Jesus and knew he was too short in the midst of the crowds so he climbed a tree. As a result, Jesus recognized his gumption that overcame a physical limitation and entered into his life. He ate at his table, with his friends and won his heart over to repentance and a resurrect life. Zacchaeus was stuck in the cocoon of worldly power and possessions that damaged his moral compass. The love and acceptance from Jesus (*the encounter*), in the midst of his sinful small and restricted negative behaviors resulted in a prison break and resurrected life. Zacchaeus regained his ability to fly.

Reflect on the following excerpt taken from [Hearing His Whisper…*With Every Storm Jesus Comes Too*](https://www.amazon.com/Hearing-His-Whisper-Every-Storm/dp/0999417207/ref%3Dsr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1508282381&sr=1-1&keywords=hearing+his+whisper+lauren+e+miller+edge+god+in): Journal Entry: *May 20, 2001*

***Me:*** *I used to think that I knew the perfect way to get to you, Lord. I found myself judging others if they went another way. I am starting to see that every human being has some­thing to teach me . . . each soul reveals new insight into you and me. Show me how to touch every soul with love.*

***Jesus:*** *You cannot force yourself into the human heart. The hearts of my children are won over through unconditional love that is patiently poured out over time into their souls. To do this, you must first enter into their experiences . . . what moves their heart, no matter how worldly it may seem to eyes that have been enlightened to heavenly things. In order to win the confidence of man’s heart, you must first step into his world. Then you earn the right to speak the truth in love and he will listen because you have loved him where he is without judgment. Your love for them will increase within their heart the desire to do what is right in God’s eyes.*

*Because God is love, he moves souls into his heart through love alone. Take Zacchaeus for example, one soul living in sin . . . I went to his house, ate his food at his table with his friends. I entered into his life experience with great love and acceptance. My love entering into his life exposed the dark deeds of his soul thereby leading him to repentance and reconciliation and a resurrected life purpose.*

*You must do the same to win hearts for me. It is pride and ego that keep you from stepping into the lives of those who are entranced by the things of the world…Do I not enter into your worldly experiences? Is it not my great love and mercy in spite of your acts of disobedience that continue to draw your heart into mine? Do the same for one another.*

*Love first, then lead. Follow my example . . . meet everyone on the road just as the Father ran to meet the prodigal son. Go and meet others, love them, take time to listen, and experience their joys and sorrows . . . all with great love and mercy and in time you will earn the right to speak the truth in love. Through love and mercy their eyes will be opened to the condition of their soul . . . just as yours is.*

*Do not forget the depths from which you were saved so that pride will not draw you away from my love. It is the desire that I see . . . the desire always over the actions . . . offer the same grace to the souls around you . . . see others for what they desire to be apart from all the pain that causes them to act out . . . just as I continue to see you.*

* **John 20:** **11-18:** **Mary Magdalene** (most likely called Magdalene because she was from the town of Magdala, a fishing town on the coast of Galilee). Luke 8: 2-3 speaks of 7 demons that Jesus cast out of Mary which lead to her repentance and resurrected life following Jesus and traveling with Jesus and the 12 disciples from town to town.

In John 20:11-18 Mary encounters the resurrected Jesus at the tomb and her faith is flipped from despair and sadness around death to joy and excitement around the resurrection. Because of her original encounter with Christ, through repentance of former ways of living that resulted in the possession of 7 demon possessions, Mary experienced a resurrected purpose and mission in life.

Mary’s identity went from being hi-jacked to being anchored in the lover of her soul. Mary followed Jesus to the grave. In spite of her personal experience of deliverance, Mary experienced doubt even in the presence of the Lord, as she pleaded with the Risen Lord thinking he is the gardener to show her where Jesus was taken. Interestingly, Mary’s eyes were opened when Jesus

called her name.

* **John 20:24-31: Thomas:** Commonly known as “doubting Thomas.” In spite of the evidence and eye witness accounts of the resurrected Lord, Thomas defends his positionality (EGO), blocking his ability to believe. The result: no joy. His cocoon of doubt restricts his ability to grow wings and fly. Jesus crashed that party and offers the evidence Thomas declared: “Unless I put my hand in his side and my fingers in the holes of his hands I will not believe.” What ultimatums have you declared over your life: “Unless I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, I will not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.” For example: Unless I achieve this specific status, I will not feel successful…or enough/ Unless I get married I will not feel complete.

Thomas’s encounter is worth your reflection as it touches upon a shared human experience: doubt. Satan has been at this since the garden: “Did God really say that??” He is the ultimate spin doctor as he comes up with one liners that twist your Mind, compromise your Emotions and all flow from a leak in your Willpower to take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ.

Jesus invitation to all of us began with his command to Thomas: “Stop doubting and BELIEVE.” Give more authority to the strength of God’s Holy Spirit within you than to your circumstance.

After Thomas encounters Jesus, he fell to his knees in repentance: “My Lord and my God.” Jesus did not have to spend time edifying Thomas in the midst of his doubt and yet he did.

Jesus entered into Thomas’s lack of faith and trust and pulled Thomas in, through and out of his doubt. The result: Resurrected conviction and faith.

Thomas represents our shared doubt and lack of faith. Perhaps we can learn from his repentance and join the blessed group that Jesus referenced: *Blessed are those who believe and do not need to see.*

What are you resisting in your life that is flowing from your own self-doubt: Trust that God is good and has your best interests in mind. Belief that you are loved and adored by God? Worthy of God’s forgiveness? Part of a bigger plan, orchestrated by the lover of your soul? What is it that is keeping you back from breaking out of your cocoon? Perhaps you have not yet encountered the humble, persistent love of Jesus? Invite Him in today.

* **Acts 9: Paul:** Last but not least there is Paul, full of passion and conviction. Paul is the perfect example of a man who was imprisoned by his positionality. His cocoon of positionality was so tightly wound around his will that his moral compass was rocked. Killing Christians and destroying homes and families were just a few of the ramifications of his passion without Christ at the center of it.

Paul’s encounter with Christ offers us a crisp, clear witness of the transformation that can happen when the sinner meets the Savior, resulting in a 3-step prison break: An *Encounter* with Christ leads to *Repentance* and a *Resurrected* purpose and passion.

Filled with zeal, Paul was on the way to defend his positionality, as he was once again in route to kill more Christians and SHAZAM, Jesus jumps right between Paul’s will and God’s Will for Paul and knocks him to the ground. Perhaps it was the force of sin meeting the Savior…or the power of grafting a severed “shoot” (Paul) back into the Vine (Jesus). Either way the force from Paul’s face to face encounter with Christ was enough to rock Paul’s entire trajectory of who he was, why he was here and why it mattered.

Instantly Jesus began to retrieve Paul’s lost identity and restore it back to its original positionality: *“You are a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God for the purpose of declaring His praises to the ends of the world.”*

Paul thrust his will into his positionality and lost his identity in the world. Jesus was determined to get it back. God is the hound from heaven and as the popular worship song by Cory Asbury declares: No mountain you won’t climb up, shadow you won’t light up, coming after me… no wall you won’t rip down, lie you won’t tear down…coming after me.

Identify & Adjust:

Reflect on the following questions and explore times in your life that you failed to recognized the Risen Lord calling you back to your identity in Him. When have you exercised your free will in a way that imprisons your mind and negatively spins your emotions? Encounter => Repentance => Resurrection

* + When have you experienced an encounter with the Lord that resulted in repentance from negative behavior that compromised the person God is calling you to be? What were the ramifications of your choice to explore a change behavior that aligns with your identity in Christ?
	+ What behavior still blocks your ability to expand your identity in Christ? For example, the need to be right blocks empathy and compassion.
	+ Imagine and reflect for a moment what it was like for Mary to be freed from 7 demons? What a thick cocoon of restriction she must have felt. The Lord saw her ability to fly and set her free from bondage. What has the Lord freed you from? Do you have specific strongholds that keep your mind in the tomb of negative thinking, judgement and fear? Take a moment to bind, rebuke and cast out those strongholds as you resurrect the mind of Christ and experience transformation by the renewing of your mind (Romans 12:2).
	+ Similar to Thomas declaring doubt in his life, in what areas of your life are you imprisoned by doubt? What doubt are you declaring over your life? What specifically are you doubting? Where do you doubt? Who do you doubt? When do you doubt? What behavior occurs when you doubt? Thomas shut down in spite of being surrounded by joy from the good news: He has RISEN. Misery LOVES company. Gossip evokes gossip. Doubt evokes doubt. Are you harboring doubt in your cocoon and is it stunting the development of your wings so that you can experience a prison break and fly where God calls you to fly? Jeremiah 29:11

Maintain:

* + As a result of his encounter with Christ, Paul went on to be one of the most passionate and convicted followers of Christ to this day. Jesus’ gift of freedom is not confined by time or intensity. Paul went from killing Christians to proclaiming Christ in a matter of days. Now that’s a prison break worth reflecting upon. Paul encountered Jesus, repented of his sin and entered into a resurrected life that was so radical and instant that Jesus’ followers experienced fear when Paul knocked on their door after his conversion and jail break. Paul also experienced a physical jail break when an angel of the Lord entered his prison cell, released the chains that bound Paul and walked him out of prison. Are you sitting in a jail cell of your mind? Your own will? Your emotions? Invite the Holy Spirit to do for you what the Angel did for Paul: remove your chains and walk you out of bondage. What would you imagine that would look like for you? What would you call your jail cell? Here are a few examples: Self-pity? Judgement? Positionality that creates ugly behavior against those who do not share your position? Fear of what people think? Doubt that God has your back and your best interests? Lack of trust? Lack of belief? Fear of failure? What is the name of your prison?

Encounter Christ through intentional prayer and reflection on God’s word throughout your day. Pick one of the five prominent players we explored in this study a week. Reflect on their prison-break and how it relates to were you feel trapped in your life today. Focus on their encounter with Christ and how it led to repentance (turn away from).

What do you want to pivot away from in your life that is blocking your ability to fly with Christ in this world?

What do you want to expand in your life that supports your ability to step out of your will and into God’s will for you?

Write a mission statement for your life with Christ that reflects your commitment to love the Lord with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength and love your neighbor as yourself. Invite Jesus into the center of your will, mind and emotions.

For example: *I am committed to putting God’s will above my own. I want what he wants, when he wants it and how he wants it. I am here on God’s time for His purpose so that He can make his appeal through me for the sake of Salvation of Souls. Less of me and more of you sweet Jesus, for your glory…not mine. My joy and peace are complete as I surrender all that I am into all that Jesus IS. Just Jesus.*

**Surround yourself with people who make you a better person in life**