DEFINING MOMENTS THE MISSION SERIES

DAN INGRAM

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by

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INTRODUCTION

What is a **DEFINING MOMENT**? A **DEFINING MOMENT** is a point in your life when you have to make a pivotal decision, or when you experience something that fundamentally changes you. Not only do these moments define us, but they have a transformative effect on our perceptions and behaviors.

There are times in life that are crucial and can either make or break you, propel you forward and launch you, or cause you to miss out on God's best for your lives! I have had many such moments, but one, in particular, set the course of my life and still brings blessings to this day and will for all eternity!

It was September 5th, 1990! I was at the end of my rope in my addictions and despair. The Lord spoke to my heart and gave me direction! In that DEFINING MOMENT, I said "Yes, Lord," and I have never been the same!

The truths in this message are so important that I have shared them on mission trips to Cuba and Costa Rica, various churches and rehab centers (like Teen Challenge and Hope for Women), and even at a local bar where I had the privilege of ministering a few times.

One night, as I ministered this message at the bar, several received Jesus as their Lord and Savior and stepped into their **DEFINING MOMENT!**

Get ready. . . for your DEFINING MOMENT!

Pastor Dan

CHAPTER ONE

Jesus Saves, Heals, and Forgives The Paralytic Man

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12 NIV)

The Greek Word for salvation is *sozo*. It means saved, delivered, healed, made whole, and rescued. It also means to save, to rescue, to preserve, and to be saved and unharmed.

Mark 2: 1-12 tells a story of one man's **DEFINING MOMENT**.

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then

lowered the mat the man was lying on. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home."

He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!" (Mark 2: 1-12 NIV)

Jesus not only healed but pardoned the paralytic man. His sin and lifestyle had brought him to his present condition. This account displays that Jesus has the authority-power-to forgive sins and heal. Why?

All authority and power have been given to Jesus. Look what Matthew says:

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18–20 NIV)

Jesus saw their faith.

When the men chose to help the paralyzed man, the benefit of that action blessed the helpers as well as the one in need of healing! It was the **DEFINING MOMENT** for the men who brought him because it showcased their faith when they brought the paralytic to Jesus.

The men had brought their friend. No matter what the problem or obstacle, they pressed through. (The crowd was so large they couldn't get to Jesus. They dug a hole in the roof and by faith, lowered him down!)

Jesus recognized that those who brought the paralytic to him had faith in Him.

The paralytic man had a **DEFINING MOMENT** as well. When Jesus spoke to him and said, "I tell you, get up, take

your mat and go home," the man obeyed. The Bible says in the passage above, 'He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God.' The paralytic believed Jesus's word, stood up by faith and was made well. Plus, he was forgiven! This was his **DEFINING MOMENT!**

Jesus also discerned what was in the leaders' hearts.

When Jesus said, "Your sins are forgiven" to the paralyzed man, the teachers of the law were provoked and their unbelief was exposed! Jesus called their doubt and unbelief evil. Sometimes God will provoke you to reveal what is in your heart, and at other times, He will use other people to provoke you to action.

And Jesus proved His authority and power to not only heal but to forgive when He said, "Your sins are forgiven you." Realize Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost.

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (Luke 19:10 NIV)

And Jesus also came to destroy the works of the devil.

The one who does what is sinful is of the devil,
because the devil has been sinning from the
beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared
was to destroy the devil's work. (1 John 3:8 NIV)

So Jesus spoke the Word of God:

"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." (Mark 2:11 NIV)

In his **DEFINING MOMENT**, the man got up and he was healed!

Everyone was amazed and gave glory to God! And they said, "We have never seen anything like this." The crowd's declaration of faith in Jesus and what He could do brought them into a position of encountering their **DEFINING MOMENT**.

CHAPTER TWO Jesus Heals the Woman with the Issue of Blood

A large crowd followed and pressed around him.

And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

"You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." (Mark 24b-34 NIV)

This woman was in a desperate place.

She had suffered much at the hands of many doctors. She was broke. She had spent all she had on doctors. Instead of getting better, she had grown worse. She was without hope and without God in the world-a miserable place!

The woman had heard about Jesus and that people were getting healed, set free, and delivered!

When evening came, many who were demonpossessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases." (Matthew 8:16 NIV)

This was the woman's **DEFINING MOMENT!** The woman pursued Jesus and went after him! **She began to encourage herself and express her faith.**"If I just touch his garments, I shall get well!"

The woman pressed through the crowd, pressed through her doubts, pressed through her difficult circumstances and physical situation until she touched him!

Through her words and actions, she expressed her faith in Jesus to heal her.

Jesus felt her faith and she was healed!

When she touched Him, Jesus immediately felt power go forth and flow from Him. Her faith, trust, belief, and touch got His attention.

Jesus turned around and said, "Who touched me?"
She came to Him in fear and trembling, aware that she was healed, and told Him the truth and what happened.
She left there healed and set free of her issue!

So today, what is your issue? Is it spiritual, physical, family, or financial? Jesus can meet every need. You have heard about Jesus and what HE can do! This is your DEFINING MOMENT! Like the woman with the issue, press through the crowd and all the noise, then reach out and touch him.

CHAPTER THREE Blind Bartimaeus

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."
So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus goled.

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him.

The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."
"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you."
Immediately he received his sight and followed
Jesus along the road. (Mark 10:46-52 NIV)

Bartimaeus' DEFINING MOMENT!

He was a blind beggar. He could not see; he was disabled, an outcast. Because of his blindness, he couldn't work a regular job. He had a beggar's cloak: begging was a profession. If he wanted to beg, he had to wear a cloak. This was the beggar's uniform. It identified those who lived via begging to society. It was significant because it was their means of physical support and often their only possession!

Bartimaeus was broke, busted, and disgusted. All he could do was sit by the roadside and beg.

He heard Jesus was coming. He would not let Jesus pass him by. This was it! His pivotal moment- his DEFINING MOMENT. So he cried out, "Jesus!!! Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Though many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, Bartimaeus refused to be silent!

Jesus heard his heartfelt cry and called him.

Bartimaeus threw off his cloak; that is, he threw off his means of making a living, his life as a beggar, and his bondage, enslavement, poverty, and yoke! He threw off the old and stepped into the new.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, (Hebrews 12:1 NIV)

Throwing off his cloak showed faith and expectation. He was banking on Jesus!

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. (Hebrews 11:6 NIV)

Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And Bartimaeus asked for his sight.

For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" (Luke 11:10–13 NIV)

Bartimaeus received his sight because he would not quit, and because of his faith and persistence. Look again at the account in Mark:

"Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." (Mark 10:52 NIV)

And then:

Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. (Mark 10:52 NIV)

When the Lord touches you in your **DEFINING MOMENT** and changes your life, you have no choice but to let everything else go and follow him into your destiny.

Abraham is known as the Father of the Faith. He had many **DEFINING MOMENT**s in his life and encounters with the Lord. In one life-changing instance, Abraham is just sitting outside his tent minding his own business. Then...

The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day.

Abraham looked up and saw three men standing

nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, do not pass your servant by. (Genesis 18:1-3 NIV)

Abraham said, "Do not pass me by!"

This was a **DEFINING MOMENT** for Abraham, a surprise visit from the Lord. God brought forth the word that Abraham's wife, Sarah, would have the promised child by this time of next year.

Then one of them said, "I will surely return to you about this time next year, and Sarah your wife will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to the tent, which was behind him. Abraham and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah was past the age of childbearing. So Sarah laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I now have this pleasure?"

Then the Lord said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son." (GENESIS 18:10–13 NIV)

Sometimes the Lord will challenge our faith, but in our **DEFINING MOMENT**, if we choose to believe Him, God will make the impossible possible.

CHAPTER 4 The Children's Bread

From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know it, but He could not be hidden. For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little Dogs."

And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs."

Then He said to her, "For this saying, go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed. (Mark 7:24-30 NIV)

This Syrophoenician Woman was in a desperate place.

Her daughter lay sick in bed, bound up by the devil. She was possessed by an unclean spirit, possibly from generational sins, or perhaps it was from the lifestyle her daughter had been living. The woman hears about Jesus! Though Jesus is secretly hiding in a house, the Syrophoenician woman, driven by her desperation and faith to see her daughter made whole, set free, and delivered, goes to the house and falls at the feet of Jesus.

The woman's prayer of supplication...

The woman begs Jesus to drive the demons from her daughter.

Jesus says, "It is not right to take the children's bread and give it to the dogs."

Though she was considered a second-class citizen, she would not take "NO" for an answer.

She was at her nth degree of desperation! She had to have her daughter delivered!

To the nth degree of YOUR desperation is the place where you will have the faith to believe and receive a miracle. Look at verse 28:

And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs." (Mark 7:28 NIV)

This statement was her faith reply. It brought her the blessing! She stepped into her **DEFINING MOMENT!**

Look at the next verse:

Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter." (Mark 7:29 NIV)

Jesus is willing to heal the outcast!

Matthew 8: 1-3 shows that Jesus is willing to heal the leper!

When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. (Matthew 8: 1-3 NIV)

The leper's **DEFINING MOMENT** came as he worshiped the Lord and then spoke his faith, "If you are willing, You can make me clean."

Jesus is willing to go to the centurion's home to heal his servant!

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly."

Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?" The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of

heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matthew 8:5-12 NIV)

A centurion was an officer in the Roman army who was a commander of at least 100 soldiers. He was not an Israelite, but Jesus did not turn him away! His profession of faith is found in the 8th verse of chapter 12.

"But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed."
This revelation was the Centurion's DEFINING
MOMENT. He declared his confidence-faith- that all
Jesus had to do was speak a word, and then the
servant would be healed. Jesus told the centurion
that his servant was healed, without Jesus going!
The Bible says, "he was healed at the same hour!"

Jesus fulfilled what Isaiah prophesied;

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." (Matthew 8:16,17 NIV)

Jesus bids you to come if you are weary.

Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-20 NIV)

Come if you are brokenhearted.

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. (Psalm 147:3 NIV)

Come if you are weak.

Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary.
His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might, He increases strength.
Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isaiah 40:28-31 NIV)

Jesus cares for you!

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7 NIV)
If you are desperate today, Jesus is willing, and he bids you come!

If you are desperate today, if you are sick, if you are weary, brokenhearted, or even just weak, this could be your **DEFINING MOMENT!** Jesus is willing. He bids you come!.. Press into Jesus, call upon Him, and receive your breakthrough in Jesus' name!

CHAPTER FIVE MY DEFINING MOMENT

We have been discussing specific **DEFINING MOMENTS** that have happened in various people's lives from the Bible. There may be dramatic circumstances in your life right now. You may be going through hell and high water. But don't despair, the same God who heard the cry of Blind Bartimaeus, the woman with the issue of blood, and the Syrophoenician woman, will hear your cry and YOU will encounter the Lord as well because He is no respecter of persons!

In these times, God teaches us about Himself. We get to know Him better. We learn that He is a faithful God, His presence is abiding, and He will never leave us. We learn to trust Him.

He meets our needs concerning healing or finances. His Word about these issues becomes alive in our hearts.

To the nth degree of your desperation is the place where you will have the faith to believe and receive a miracle. The following chapter reveals some of the ways he breaks through our mundane lives and equips us to have

DEFINING MOMENTS in our own life, or to enable another, like Bartimaeus, to reach the Living Savior.

There is good news for you because the gospel is "Good News!" You don't have to be lost forever, you don't have to always be sick - spiritually weak with no power and lonely!

You don't have to be lacking.

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. (Psalm 23:1 NIV)

The Lord is your shepherd and you shall not lack!

And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19 NIV)

God shall supply all your needs!

He supplied you with a Savior.

For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NIV)

And it shall come to pass that whoever calls

on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord has said, Among the remnant whom the Lord calls. (Joel 2:32 NIV)

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12 NIV)

There is no other name given to men but Jesus to be saved!

God supplies you with healing.

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. (Acts 10:38 NIV)

"He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been Healed." (1 Peter 2:24 NIV)
Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God,

stricken by him, and afflicted.
But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds, we are healed.
(Isaiah 53:4,5 NIV)

 God supplies you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Matthew 3:11 NIV)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (ACTS 1:8 NIV)

He equips us with the fire (enthusiasm, zeal, clarity of thought) to accomplish purposes that He has ordained for us to do. He also gives us the firepower to witness and serve!

For our advantage, the Holy Spirit is with us.

But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. (John 16:7)

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. (John 16:13 NIV)

You are never alone. The Lord is always with you. The Holy Spirit is leading, guiding, and directing you into all truth, speaking only what He hears, telling you what is yet to come. And isn't it wonderful that he will never leave you? He will be with you until the end of the age.

We are sealed by the Holy Spirit!

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a

deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory. (Ephesians 1:13–14 NIV)

The Holy Spirit is your guarantee of redemption and your down payment of all that is yet to come! Your greatest days are ahead of you!

God supplies you with provision.

So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided. (Genesis 22:14 NIV)

Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. (3 John 2 NIV)

The blessing of provision is in the phrase that all may go well with you and that you may walk along a good road!

• God gives you the promise of increase as you give to Him!

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (LUKE 6:38 NIV)

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:33 NIV)

 The blessing of the Lord not only rests on you but on your children as well!

I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging for bread. (Psalm 37:5 NIV).

You may be in a desperate place, a bad situation, or circumstances that seem impossible and out of your control right now!

All of these gifts and promises await you. What can you do?

Ask Jesus to be your Savior - the first step in your **DEFINING MOMENT**.

Cry out to Jesus to help you or your loved one or friend that needs help.

Reach out to him to heal, deliver, and provide for you.

Know that He will hear and answer your prayer. Look at what the Bible says. . .

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

(1 John 5:14,15)

These promises are for you.

Know in your knower that Jesus' power is not subject to time and space constraints. He can speak a word, then someone's healing or deliverance can spring forth and be accomplished "at that very hour." What will be the result? You will look back on your divine encounter and realize that the instant you expressed your faith and trust in Him, the blessing began to flow. Then you will realize that you have stepped into YOUR **DEFINING MOMENT!**

So, Lord, I come to you at this time with my whole heart-with faith and trust in you. I believe I receive all that you have for me. I ask for your salvation. I ask for healing. I ask for deliverance. I ask for your provision in every area of my life and that every need will be met. I believe that all of your promises to me are "Yes and Amen." I believe I will see your glory in every situation, circumstance and need. This is my DEFINING MOMENT, in Jesus' name, Amen!

About the Author...



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Preaching, Teaching and Reaching and Equipping the Saints for works of Service

- Ordained A.G. Minister.
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