

3 Keys to Faith That Break Barriers Over Your Life

While in India on a ministry trip a number of years ago, I was in my hotel room, preparing for a healing crusade when a magazine caught my attention. Inside, an article titled "The Unalterable Course of Destiny" dealt with the subject of something we refer to as "fate."

According to the writer, we should understand that our lives are predetermined to be a certain way, and nothing can be done to change it. To accept this is to be governed by a fatalistic attitude that essentially says, "I am a victim of circumstances I cannot alter."

If we really accepted this as truth, then we have to say there is no use trying. After all, our destiny is unalterable, and our hands are tied. Why get up in the morning? You might as well stay in bed.

As crazy as this seems, we do believe these things in America—more than we are willing to admit. This is an escapist mind-set that discourages us from taking any responsibility for our lives.

When your fate is fixed, you have no hope for change in your circumstances. Consequently, there is no need to resist anything, even the social and religious systems that come against you as a woman with a ministry calling. If fate is at work, your destiny is set, right?

Wrong! I believe God is challenging our thinking on this subject. He wants to tell us something about how we view the circumstances that attempt to hold us captive in our lives.

In the Scriptures, the story of the woman plagued with an issue of blood is often told from the standpoint of the

woman's need for physical healing. However, when we take a closer look, we can see that her testimony also has to do with complete restoration and a breakthrough to a new level of faith and power. It's about the overlooked element of risk that is essential to the activation of faith.

What's Plaguing You?

According to The Message translation of this passage: "A woman who had suffered a condition of hemorrhaging for twelve years—a long succession of physicians had treated her, and treated her badly, taking all her money and leaving her worse off than before—had heard about Jesus. She slipped in from behind and touched his robe.

"She was thinking to herself, 'If I can put a finger on his robe, I can get well.' The moment she did it, the flow of blood dried up. She could feel the change and knew her plague was over and done with.

"At the same moment, Jesus felt energy discharging from him. He turned around to the crowd and asked, 'Who touched my robe?'

"His disciples said, 'What are you talking about? With this crowd pushing and jostling you, you're asking, "Who touched me?" Dozens have touched you!'

"But he went on asking, looking around to see who had done it. The woman, knowing what had happened, knowing she was the one, stepped up in fear and trembling, knelt before him, and gave him the whole story.

"Jesus said to her, 'Daughter, you took a risk of faith, and now you're healed and whole. Live well, live blessed! Be healed of your plague'" (Mark 5:25-34).

Jesus said to her, "You are healed and whole." He did not focus on physical healing alone, but on everything that was plaguing her.

Whatever plagues you today may not be physical. It may be mental, emotional, financial, or societal.

You may be convinced that you are a prisoner of your family. Some of you may have said: "I'm a prisoner of my church, a prisoner of the religious system in my church."

Just ask yourself, "Am I fated to sit in church and never attempt to do what God has laid on my heart and fulfill the destiny He has called me to?" God is saying it's time for you to realize you are not hampered and boxed in because of something called fate.

Whatever it is that holds you captive, Jesus says, "Live well! Live blessed!" Oh I like that!

Had the woman in our Scripture read that magazine article, she would not have agreed with it. Obviously, she did not believe in fate because she had gone to doctor after doctor, spending all her money to improve her physical condition. She believed that change was possible, and that she could experience a breakthrough in her condition and break out of her personal prison.

Imagine how she felt. She was declared "unclean" by Levitical law and could not have normal social interactions with others, nor touch anything without it's becoming unclean also (see Lev. 15:25-33). The nature of her physical sickness made her an outcast and cut her off from functioning in every area of her life.

Required to watch her husband and children from a distance, she could not be a proper wife or mother. She could not touch them or cook for them because if they ate the food, they would become unclean. She would have watched her children grow up without straightening their clothes, soothing their cuts and scratches, picking them up, holding them, or kissing them good night.

Although society and the religious system ostracized her, she was not going to agree with them. She rejected the notion of fate.

Many of you feel this woman's isolation. Different situations have caused you to feel pushed aside. Perhaps someone has told you, or implied, that you cannot be a part of what God wants to do.

You, too, must reject fate. Jesus said to this woman, "You took a risk of faith." In so doing, she shook off the shackles of bondage to sickness and tradition. By taking three steps, this woman affirmed what she believed and laid the groundwork for her deliverance.

Faith Is An Act

These three simple, truth-affirming steps took this woman's life and faith to another level: She heard, she came, and she touched.

She heard about Jesus. Perhaps she heard that He was the one who turned water into wine. Maybe she knew that Jesus delivered people from demons, healed a nobleman's son, a paralyzed man and Peter's mother-in-law.

Imagine this woman, walking down the road one day, just shaking her head and thinking: If only I could meet this man. If only I had an opportunity. Maybe my body could be healed. Maybe I could break out of this situation. Maybe Jesus could reverse this curse and do something in my life.

And then she hears the shuffling feet of a crowd approaching. Stepping aside because of her condition, she hears someone say, "Jesus! Jesus is coming to our village. It's Jesus!"

In her excitement, she may have remembered the things she'd heard about Jesus. We all need to remember the promises of God in His Word. He promises He would not leave His people in sickness or sin, or abandon them in their condition, leaving

them in the bondage of Satan.

She must have reasoned that God and His Word could not be separated. As she's walking, she possibly recalls the words of the prophet Jeremiah, "'But I will restore health to you and heal your wounds'" (Jer. 30:17, NIV). Suddenly, faith began to rise deep inside her heart. She knew there was no disability or circumstance in her life that was impossible for God to touch.

Faith in her heart said, "There has to be a way out—a breakthrough, a solution—because I do not believe that God can love me and then sentence me to misery and bondage. He is not that kind of God."

The apostle Paul wrote: "Faith comes from hearing the message and the message is heard through the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). It's time for us to hear the Word of the Lord, too. It's time for our faith to arise.

Because God and His Word are aligned, we are going to see breakthroughs. God has given us power and authority over Satan, over the spirit of infirmity and every problem that comes our way.

The outcast, as she was known, believed Jesus could transform her circumstances. And with faith arising in her heart, she believed He would. Jesus said, "'The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out'" (John 6:37, NKJV). Her healing began with her hearing, and based on what she heard, she took the second step toward complete restoration.

She came to Jesus. In fact, she could not stay away. Despite being told by her culture that she was an outcast, an unclean woman, she chose to come to Him. She dared to believe that the God of heaven and Earth could alter her situation, and that she would no longer be bound by circumstances, by society, or religious laws and traditions.

Coming to Jesus required, as The Message says, “a risk of faith.” She put her faith into action and dared to believe that when she came, she would not be rejected.

Faith led her to brave the crowd and come against the social and religious constraints of her day. She broke away from everything and followed what she knew God would honor—her faith.

When Jesus told the woman in Mark 5:34, “‘You’re healed and whole,’” the Greek word for “healed” is *sozo*, which means a number of things, including “saved.” He told her that there was more than physical healing available to her. There was also wholeness, provision and restoration.

When you prayed the sinner’s prayer and stepped into the kingdom of God, you believed that God made you whole—body, soul and spirit. You took a risk of faith. The faith you needed for salvation is the same faith you need for deliverance and healing. Believe for your total restoration because God hears your prayers, forgives sins and saves completely.

Just as you did when you were converted, confess with your mouth that the destiny God has for you is yours, and that the Word of God will bear fruit in your life and ministry. Establish your belief in the authority of God’s Word and claim His promises. He will restore you and everything the enemy has stolen.

The outcast had heard of Jesus and made her way to Him. Only one thing remained. The Scripture says: “She was thinking to herself, ‘If I can put a finger on His robe, I can get well’” (Mark 5:29).

She touched Jesus. Let me give you my short definition of faith: Faith is the hand that touches God. Luke 6:19 says, “And the people all tried to touch Him, because power was

coming from Him and healing them all" (NIV).

This word "touch" doesn't mean a light brushing. When the woman reached Jesus, she wasn't wanting to examine His robe to see what kind of fabric it was.

She must have been remembering the desperation of her life, all the limitations and the misery her family had gone through. And she grabbed onto Jesus because she knew that with one touch the power of God would be released to her and change her destiny.

This woman—this outcast—touched Jesus and was sent on her way, healed and whole. She was no longer boxed in by sickness and religious traditions.

Today, God's power to deliver is just as real for you. Whether it is sickness or systems, the moment you touch Jesus, a surge of His power will wash over you and break the shackles that bind your body, mind and spirit.

Declare What God Declares

The apostle John said, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8, NKJV). The bondages that limit you and stop you from walking in obedience to God's will are the works of the devil that Jesus came to destroy.

We have absolute authority to speak to our conditions. We can tell the chains to break and the doors around us to unlock in the name of Jesus! (See Matt. 16:19.) God and His Word are aligned and cannot be separated. Don't be a victim any longer. Lift your hands in victory and declare, according to the Word of God, "I break a fatalistic mentality off of my life, in Jesus' name!"

Are you ready to break out of your limitations? Are you ready to be healed and restored? Then hear His Word to you: "Daughter, take a risk of faith. Your faith will restore you."

You are not destined to stay in your circumstances when the God of the breakthrough—your God—is with you.

Naomi Dowdy *is a widely respected global leader and apostolic strategist.*