

Stretching Beyond Science and Religion to Experience Jesus as Jehovah Rapha

Weakened to the point of exhaustion by years of loss, she sat hoping to regain strength. Few in the crowd glanced at her as they passed. Those who saw her either looked at her with pity or disgust. As she stood and began to shuffle forward, the words of the last doctor rang in her ears, "We have tried everything and with no improvement. Sorry, but you may have a month left to live."

The words had relieved her. For the past 12 years, she had spent her fortune searching for a cure. The things they had done to her and prescribed for her were more dreadful than the horrid disease that drained her of her blood. At least, now she knew. Weakened by illness and now by the pronounced death certificate, she headed for home. It was a long journey back to Caesarea Philippi, but she determined to make it. She refused to die along the way. No! If she must die, it will be in her home.

Though she kept to herself as she traveled, she could not miss the buzz of excited talk about "The Jesus." This was the term given to distinguish Jesus of Nazareth from a multiple of other men with the same name. They said this Jesus was a rabbi with extraordinary power. He taught as one with actual authority, and He exercised that authority over demons and diseases. She felt strangely warm on the inside as she listened from the edge of the crowd. One by one they spoke of the things they saw and the words they heard from Jesus. Someone loudly declared, "He is certainly a prophet! Like Elijah and Elisha of old." Most in the crowd nodded their agreement. Others shook their heads in disbelief, but then another voice cut through the cacophony, "I am not sure who

He is but this I know, I once was blind, but now I see!" Something leapt inside of her and as she listened hope gave birth to faith!

She began to speak aloud to herself in a soft whisper what her heart was now saying, "If I can just touch the hem of His garment I will be whole." In her mind, she questioned the reality of such an idea. But she somehow believed it to be true! "If I can touch the symbol of the promise (the tassels of His prayer shawl), the promise of Jehovah Rapha will become real in me!" The idea took root in her, and she began making her way to Capernaum where the crowd said Jesus made His home.

"Oh my! Heaven is smiling on me today!" She whispered to herself as slipped into the large crowd following the Rabbi. So many people pushing to keep up with Jesus made her feel as though she would suffocate. Weakness washed over her like an unwelcome yet familiar guest. She said again and again to herself, and anyone who happened to hear, "If I can just touch him, I will be healed." It would be so easy to give up. Only turn around and vanish into the day. Voices of reason, voices of religion, voices of doubt, voices of self-pity jumbled together in her mind until she almost stopped and sat down. But she kept talking to herself, "If I can just touch Him, I will be whole!" She knew she must stretch for the change. She must stretch for her miracle. She determined to stretch to touch Jesus or die in the process!

A lady whose name we do not know is first identified to us only by the issue she struggled with in life. But by an incredible act of faith, she becomes forever known to us by her miracle! She chose to believe and stretch her faith to touch Jesus. Boom! Her faith released His power, and His power rewrote her story. Thankfully, He is the same today as He was then (Heb. 13:8). As we touch Him in faith, He gladly helps us rewrite our story. To touch him we need to do what she did!

Stretch Beyond Science

She had gone to “many physicians” and tried all they prescribed for her. The text indicates that the treatment proved to be more painful than the disease. She spent all the money she had, which must have been substantial since it lasted 12 years. Yet, she didn’t improve at all but only grew worse. The best of the best told her there was no medical cure for her. They sadly but matter-of-factly instructed her to go home and prepare to die. But when she heard the things concerning Jesus, faith rose in her spirit to go beyond the scientific community and reach out to God. While we are thankful for medical science and are not ignorant of its value in our lives, we must stretch our faith beyond the limits of science. We must dare to believe that God is greater and in the name of Jesus, “All things are possible to him who believes” (Mark 9:23).

Stretch Beyond Religion

To get her breakthrough, she had to break with the traditional understanding of the religious protocol. It was risky to stretch beyond the confines, and she knew it might result in harsh punishment, but what did she have to lose? She is one of the few people in history who tried to steal a miracle from God. We must let God stretch us out of the box of our religious understanding. He will never move us beyond the boundaries of His truth, but far too often we confuse His truth with our flawed knowledge. Jesus is the word of God made flesh. So although she seemed to be breaking the law, she did so reaching out to the one who fulfilled every letter of the law. When Jesus is genuinely your target, you will not go wrong.

Stretch Beyond Issues

Perhaps the most difficult thing she did was to stretch beyond her issue. To say she was weak would be a massive

understatement. Twelve long years of blood loss plus the painful treatments had taken a tremendous toll on her body, her mind and her emotions. All of her money gone in the process and not one little improvement to show for it all. If anyone ever had a valid reason to “sit this one out,” she did. If anyone could ever feel justified in thinking it must not be God’s will to heal her, she could. If anyone’s excuses were valid, hers were. Yet she chose to stretch beyond her issue and stretch her faith. It is time to stop making excuses and stretch. If this unnamed woman can do it, so can we.

Stretch to Jesus

Stretching is futile if the goal is anything or anyone less than Jesus! He must be the object of our faith! “For whoever is born of God overcomes the world, and the victory that overcomes the world is our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world, but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4-5). She refused to stop short of Jesus. She pressed her way through the suffocating crowd. She pushed past everyone, including the great disciples, to touch the garment of Jesus. When her faith touched His character, His faithfulness, the explosive power of God flowed out of Him and into her. Healed. Free. Whole!

Whatever you are facing today, stretch your faith to Jesus and receive heaven’s best for your life. {eoa}

Keith Nix is the founding lead pastor of a thriving congregation, The Lift Church in Sevierville, Tennessee. He has traveled as an international evangelist since 1993 carrying a unique prophetic message of awakening to this generation. He and his wife, Margie, have one daughter, Isabella. To learn more and get a free audio download you can visit: . You can connect with Keith on Twitter, Facebook and other platforms @KeithNixTV