

TRANSFORMED: Stretching Our Faith

(John 11)

Introduction.

A) A rubber band isn't very useful unless it is stretched. Similarly, a Christ-follower must be stretched by God occasionally to remain fully useful to God.

B) There are countless stories in the Bible of God calling people out of their comfort zones and stretching their faith to new dimensions. And with each one, the stretching brought blessings they'd never imagined.

Abraham trusted God for the child he was promised, despite his and his wife's advanced age. His faith-stretching ended with a little baby in his arms named Isaac.

Jesus' disciples feared for their lives when a violent storm threatened to sink their boat. But Peter's faith to step out of the boat at Jesus' invitation resulted in Peter's human feet miraculously walking on water.

Jesus told a crippled man, with muscles weak and atrophied, to get up and walk. The man stretched his faith as he stretched out his legs and walked for the very first time.

Joshua might have felt ridiculous circling the walls of Jericho seven times, but eventually the walls came crumbling down.

Joseph spent more than 10 years in a dark dungeon, but it was his unwavering faith which eventually landed him on the throne.

God calls us all to do some faith stretching now and then. Whether we are called to leave our comfort zones to obey and act, or to rest and trust God during a difficult season of life.

B) Contextualize this message in the series, TRANSFORMED.

C) Contextualize John 11

I. Faith Challenged

***Principle:** Because we believe in a sovereign God, we must trust that He is lacing together life events into a meaningful purpose and pattern.*

A) A Meaningful Difficulty (11:4)

(Romans 8:20-22; James 5:15; John 9:1-3)

B) A Purposeful Delay (11:6)

C) A Powerful Reference (John 11:11-15)

II. Faith Stretched

***Principle:** Because we are not naturally spiritual, God must challenge and stretch us in our faith in Him, so that we will grow and progress in our spiritual journey.*

A) Dire circumstance (John 11:17-20)

B) A Limited View (John 11:21-22; note v. 22 & v. 39)

(She believed Jesus could have healed Lazarus, but did not conceive of Jesus resurrecting him that day.)

C) A Stretched Faith (John 11:23-27)

Application:

What is living by faith?

- Faith is believing God's promises and responding to them.
- Faith is obeying God's Word. Faith is prioritizing God's plan. Faith is trusting God to do what he promised.
- Faith is not reckless abandon. Faith is not irresponsible living. Faith does not negate planning.

III. Faith Realized

***Principle:** God uses life circumstance to show himself strong in the lives of His children.*

A) More doubt (v. 28-36)

B) Moving of God (v. 40)

C) Divine Intervention (v. 41-44)

Conclusion