

## Sermon Notes - 2/12/20

### Pastor Michelle Lee (Director & Associate Pastor of RRM) Stretch

#### STRETCHING EXERCISE:

Put your feet about a foot apart. No bending your knees. Bend over as far as you can go.

I want to make a point here. I want you to bend until you are **uncomfortable** and stay there for a second. Now, just go a little farther— push a little farther and stay there a second. Now, you can stand up move side to side and have a seat.

The parallels between the physical stretch you just did and stretching in our faith works the same way.

**Who decided whether or not you just stretched?** You or me?

I asked you to stretch, but you chose to obey, or you chose not to obey.

God requires us to stretch, and when he makes us stretch, it will also make us uncomfortable. **The key is not to allow your discomfort to stop you from obeying God but to continue obeying His command.**

**When a muscle is regularly stretched:**

It becomes flexible, versatile, efficient, strong, and it grows.

Wouldn't you like those applied to your spiritual life? I would; especially, when I consider the opposites weak, brittle, and inflexible.

**But does a muscle stay the same when it is not regularly stretched?**

No, it atrophies, which means to shrink from disuse. It's sad to say I know many Christians whose faith have atrophied because they weren't stretching their faith muscles in obedience to the written Word of God.

My hope for you all tonight is that this message will motivate you to start going to the gym of God's Word and start stretching your spiritual muscles.

God will never ask you to stretch farther than you are capable.

The staff knows that when I ask for something to be done, don't let your first answer be "I can't, or it won't work". I'm going to need you to at least TRY! The same goes for us with God, when God tells us to do something we can't just say NOPE IT WONT WORK.

God knows your capacity, He is going to stretch you so that you become flexible, versatile, efficient, strong, and you continue growing.

John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that he gave—

The word "gave" I was stretching out my hand out. That is God's posture. It implies... His hand is stretched outward toward you every moment of every day. Everything that you need is in His hand.

He's waiting for you to TAP HIM INTO YOUR WRESTLING MATCH.

Stretching is never comfortable it requires you to get out of your comfort zone.

What are your comfort zones? Netflix, your couch, Facebook stalking, comfort foods?

your relationships? (How many of you are stretching to become more flexible in your relationships? Serious question: Would you want your son or daughter dating the same version of you today? How you act? Think? 🤔)

Now think about your spiritual comfort zones;

What do you need to stretch in:

+your prayer life? (intimacy with God)

+speaking in tongues life, are you stretching it?

+your witnessing life, have you ever stretched ?

+or your financial giving life, are you consistently stretching it or maybe you've got a pulled muscle?

Were you uncomfortable the first time that you ever prayed out loud in front of someone? Are you still? If the answer is no, it's because you kept stretching, you got more flexible. Your comfort zone expanded.

Were you uncomfortable the first time that you ever spoke in tongues? If you're still uncomfortable, you're not stretching enough. You need your prayer language "expanded".

I want to talk about Moses one of the first Old Testament "stretchers."

1. ( first chapter of Exodus)The first 40 years of his life were spent in Egypt, learning first from his mother about God (for 12 years). He grew-up in the home as Pharaoh daughters son. He received amazing education learning from Pharaoh the skills needed to run Egypt.
2. When Moses was around 40 years old (**Acts** chapter 7) he saw one of his Israeli brothers being beaten, so he killed the Egyptian that was doing it. He then flees and hide out, and ended up being a shepherd for 40 years guarding the sheep met his wife and had two sons bible says he became the meekest (humble) man on earth (**Numbers 12:3**)
3. Now he is 80 years old (still very young he lived to be 120 years old). When God appears to Him at the "burning bush" (book of Exodus chapter 3) and said, "Moses, thanks for taking care of the sheep, but now the big day has come. My people are in bondage in Egypt, and you are the man who I have chosen to go and lead my people out of bondage." Moses said, "It is not possible. The sheep cannot get along without me. The Egyptians will never believe me. Who am I going to say sent me? Beside all that, I can hardly speak." God looked at him and said, "this man needs to be stretched. He is too brittle, inflexible, weak, etc..."

in **chapter 4 He gives Moses a warm up stretch on the spot** . Moses is standing there talking to God with his rod in his hand and God said, "What do you have in your hand there?" Moses said, "That is my shepherd's rod." God said, "Throw that on the ground?" Moses threw it on the ground, and you know what happened It turned into a snake! It says that Moses fled. in the next verse God said to Moses, "**Put forth [stretch out your hand]**, and take the snake by the tail." That is not how you pick up a snake. If you must pick one up, you get it right behind the head. **God said, "Moses, stretch out your hand and pick up this snake by the tail."**

Do you think that Moses might have been uncomfortable? I do, but he didn't allow his discomfort to stop him from obeying God.

The second that Moses' hand touched the snake's tail, it instantly turned back into the rod. Wow!

\*\*when you stretch in obedience to God despite your discomfort, you touch the power of God because He will never ask you to stretch farther than you can stretch.

In Exodus chapter 7, Moses finds himself next to the Nile River. He has his side-kick Aaron with him. They are standing before Pharaoh. (Pharaoh is the most powerful person on the planet at that time.) This would then be a challenging

situation here. Look at what they are going to do.

Exodus 7:19

The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Take your staff and **stretch out your hand** over the waters of Egypt—over the streams and canals, over the ponds and all the reservoirs'—and they will turn to blood. Blood will be everywhere in Egypt, even in the wooden buckets and stone jars."

**The physical act isn't the hard part, it's the stretch of faith in response to the Word of God that is hard.**

Exodus 7:20

Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded.

He raised his staff; **he stretched** and instantly the entire Nile River and every drop of water in Egypt immediately turned to blood.

If you continue reading the next three chapters, you will see that God gave Moses five more stretching exercises, and the Egyptians got locust, hail, lice, frogs, and darkness.

Moses is now getting flexible, versatile, efficient, strong, and his FAITH IS GROWING.

In chapter 14, I call this the Egyptian's splits.

They got out of Egypt. They took all the gold, money, and so forth, and then Pharaoh realized, "Yikes, what have I done?" So he starts chasing Moses with his whole army. Moses gets the people to the edge of the Sea. That is a pretty uncomfortable situation in itself. Moses is responsible for roughly two million Israelites—how much space would that amount of people need? It is a big group!

Exodus 14:15 and 16

(15) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on.

(16) Raise your staff and **stretch out your hand** over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground.

**Is that not a stretch?** Do you think that Moses may have been uncomfortable? I think that he may have been uncomfortable. he didn't allow his discomfort to stop him from obeying the Word of God. ( because he was flexible he trusted)

Moses may have been sweating from every pore of his body, but he stretched in faith and touched the power of God. How much noise do you think that the Sea made when it parted? I did not just go "phthp" and a two foot part for two million Israelites to single file line across one at a time! NOOO It was more like

“brrrrrrrrwwll” with tons of water beginning to move and go out of sight in either direction.

After the Israelites got across, the Egyptian’s said, “Well, we are going across too.” They got out in the middle of the Sea, and God said, “Now Moses, I got one more stretching that I would like you to do. **Stretch** out one more time and the water will cover the Egyptians.”

I think that Moses did a behind the back stretch here. I think that he was so limber—Moses stretched, and the Egyptians found out that chariots do not float!

God is going to ask you to stretch.

That means you may become uncomfortable, but if you refuse because of your discomfort, than your fear is larger than your faith and your fear is stopping you from obeying God, BUT if you stretch in obedience you will touch the power of God.

God has given you your very own personal trainer, He gave His son Jesus Christ.

+When we stretch we have the decision to quit or to keep going. Push through or give up.

+When we stretch we have the decision to deal with short term pain for long term growth.

+What do you need help in stretching tonight?

How limber, flexible, versatile, efficient, strong are you truly?