

Extraordinary Living: Lessons in Faith from Ordinary People

“Ordinary is who God uses”

Part 1

Intro: We live in a culture that idolizes the superstar. From athletes / to musicians / Hollywood actors / to superheroes – Marvel and DC comic movies – Avengers – Captain America was my childhood favorite. Guardians of the Galaxy. All these people do incredible things because they are all exceptional people with extraordinary skills and talents...or superpowers. The rest of us...well we are just ordinary.

In the Kingdom of God though, Ordinary is who God uses. God isn't looking for exceptional and He doesn't need superheroes. He is looking for you. God wants to do extraordinary things through ordinary people. For the next 6 weeks we are going to be looking at examples throughout God's word of this truth. The bible is filled with ordinary people doing extraordinary things.

- Joseph – teenage kid who became second only to Pharaoh
- Gideon – scared nobody who delivered Israel
- David – lastborn shepherd who became a giant slayer and the king of Israel
- Jeremiah – Teenager called to be a prophet (Many other OT prophets were just ordinary people God called to follow.
- The disciples – (Ordinary fishermen / tax gathers / angry anti-roman dissidents.

God can use you more than you can imagine because it is not about you. It is about following Him. When ordinary people follow Jesus, extraordinary happens. Today I want to lay a foundation for the next few weeks.

1. Reject the Lies

We must become people who are more influenced by the truth rather than the lies we are assaulted with on a daily basis.

Jesus talking to the religious leaders of His day. *John 8:44 “For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.” (NLT)*

The last thing Satan wants you to start believing in is God's desire and ability to use your life to do extraordinary things. Therefore, he peppers our minds with lies to keep you from living an extraordinary life.

- Identify the lies

Here are some of the common lies the enemy tells us and we can tell ourselves.

- You are nothing

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- You can do nothing right
- The obstacles are too big
- You don't have what it takes
- You are a failure and will continue to fail
- Others are much better than you
- You're too flawed for God to use
- You're past is too bad for God to use
- You're not smart enough / talented enough / skilled enough
- You're too young / You're too old
- You will never change

Sometimes the lie is community wide

- The town will never change
- The city is too broken to ever be something good
- We're just Molalla – Great things can't happen here
- We're too small to expect anything extraordinary
- Our past will forever define our future
- You can't do that in this town

There comes a time when the followers of Jesus must choose which voice they are going to listen to.

John 10:27 "My sheep hear my voice; I know them and they follow me." This is the key to extraordinary. Which voice will we allow to influence us the most?

- Choose to believe the truth

John 8:32 "And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (NLT)

10 essential extraordinary truth statements. (On screens) – Card in your bulletin

- I can do all things through Christ
- I am more than a conqueror through Christ
- I am filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit
- Greater is He who is in me than he who is in the world
- I have unlimited resources in Christ
- I am a child of the Living God and citizen of heaven
- I am an Ambassador for Christ
- I have the presence of Jesus with me wherever I go
- I am created in Christ Jesus to do God's work
- No spiritual weapon formed against me shall prosper

We reject lies by embracing truth. For so many people their lives are far more controlled by lies than truth. What about you? In the bulletin there is a little "truth card". Today I choose to believe the truth. Ordinary people can do extraordinary things because they believe extraordinary truth.

2. Give Up Control

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What do I mean by this?

- Understand how God's Kingdom works

The Kingdom of God works off of radically different values than our fallen world. This is why many believers in Jesus experience so much confusion and defeat in their Christian lives instead of extraordinary.

- Control is what limits our ability to do extraordinary things with Jesus. As long as you are in control you can only produce the results that you can do alone. They will be human results. They may be good / help others / but there is nothing really supernatural about it. They don't bring God much glory because it is typical of what people can do. No one is surprised.
- The more of a control person you are the less you will see God do in your life. You literally limit His involvement and the flow of His power in and through you.
- We love control because it is predictable, it makes us feel safe and it appeals to our pride. When we can control outcomes we feel pretty good about ourselves. "Look what I did,"
- The Kingdom of God is not anything like this. Following Jesus is not predictable; doesn't always feel safe and Jesus controls the outcomes not us. In His Kingdom, we must give up control to see the extraordinary.
- **Illustration:** Ropes course and 40 ft. pole jump
- Control makes us want to hold on while Jesus asks us to jump. Control is rooted in fear not faith. It is faith that Jesus blesses. Faith jumps!

- Surrender your life to a new agenda

Listen to Jesus how the Kingdom of God works.

*Luke 9:23-24 "Then he said to the crowd, "If any of you wants to be my follower, **you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.** ²⁴ If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it." (NLT)*

- As long as your life agenda is the driving force of your life, you limit the extraordinary. Spiritual power comes through surrender. Surrender is not saying that you believe in Jesus. Surrender is changing life agendas.
- Let me ask you a question: Do you believe you get to do whatever you want with your life? Most people believe so. BUT, as a follower of Jesus, this is precisely the thing he asks us to give up.

I Cor. 6:19-20 "Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, ²⁰ for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body." (NLT)

- The reason we forfeit the extraordinary is we are so often chasing after our own personal life agenda instead of God's Kingdom agenda. The supernatural power of God is not reserved for our thing. It is reserved for God's thing.

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- Have you ever truly surrendered your life to Jesus? Have you ever humbled yourself before Jesus and said; “I will be whoever you want me to be.” “I will do whatever you want me to do.” “My greatest life priority is following You!”
- Some of you are scared to death to do this. WHY? You are afraid of giving up the control of your life. YET it is precisely this choice that unleashes the extraordinary. You are still stuck on top of the pole hanging on for dear life.

Until you let go of your agenda you will never be able to do this next action.

3. Embrace a Life of Following

Believers in Jesus simply do not understand the power of following.

- Power in the Kingdom comes through obedience
Kingdom power and influence do not come through talent / skill / education / money / influence / human understanding. This is how ordinary people can do extraordinary things. They simply follow.

Josh. 1:8 “Study this Book of Instruction continually. Meditate on it day and night so you will be sure to obey everything written in it. Only then will you prosper and succeed in all you do.” (NLT) This theme is all throughout the bible.

- God looks for people who will simply obey regardless. Obedience = Blessing. Jesus said...”Follow Me.” It’s not even about understanding...it’s about following. If ordinary people follow fully, the extraordinary happens.
- This is why the vision statement on the wall reads the way it does. “Following Jesus Fully...Transforming the city completely.” Some look at this statement and think: “How is that possible?”
- Even our understanding can become a control issue. “I won’t follow until I understand first.” In the Kingdom of God, so much of it you can’t even begin to understand until you follow first.
- Obedience is not about God trying to control you. Obedience is what unleashes the power of God...the extraordinary in and through you.
- At the end of the day, God doesn’t owe any of us an explanation. He is the all knowing, all powerful, infinite God. We owe Him our obedience. You truly want to understand God and His ways more? That journey happens through obedience.
- Every story we are going to look at in the coming weeks will illustrate this. Every person experienced the extraordinary through simply doing what they were told to do.
- **Illustrate:** I remember teaching my kids how to drive a stick. The relationship between the clutch and the brake is pretty important. Trying to stop the car without the clutch doesn’t work very well. Driving a stick you must obey the rules for how a manual transmission works. Disobey the rules and you can’t enjoy the

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power and freedom of the car. (Understanding is irrelevant – obedience is everything!)

- Our relationship with God works the same way. Ignore obedience and you forfeit the power and freedom of your relationship with Jesus. Follow fully, and power and freedom is multiplied in your life.

Why would God fulfill His agenda this way?

- Ordinary people give God the greater testimony

I Cor. 1:26-29 “Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world’s eyes or powerful or wealthy^[a] when God called you.²⁷ Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world,^[b] things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important.²⁹ As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.” (NLT)

- Talented and gifted superstars doing great things do not surprise anyone. Ordinary people accomplishing extraordinary things simply because they obey and follow Jesus...this gets people’s attention.
- WHY? Because the power of God is not about us / our talent / our abilities – it is always about God. Ordinary people give God a greater testimony about His reality and His Kingdom. This is why God calls ordinary people just like you.
- This is why things like the **Global Leadership Summit** we are hosting is something you all should consider coming to. Many of you haven’t even considered this because you are convinced you’re not a leader. “I’m just ordinary.” Ordinary is what the Kingdom of God is all about!
 - God wants to challenge and grow your faith
 - God wants you to believe more is possible
 - God wants you to believe He has given you influence (that is leadership)
 - God wants to grow that influence
 - God wants to use our church to grow leaders in our community. If our city has better leaders we will have a better city. This year is a private showing (explain). Next year we are inviting city leaders to part of this. This is part of our long-term strategy of influence.
 - If you are a business owner please attend.
 - This Leadership summit will help us as a church to continue following Jesus into the extraordinary. Will you consider coming?

Will you embrace a life of following because this is what ordinary people are called to do?

Will you...

- Reject the Lies
- Give Up Control
- Embrace a Lifestyle of Following

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