

Ordinary Men

You might be wondering why there is a guy in the pulpit wearing a hoodie this morning...it's to say that I'm just an ordinary man.

I grew up in this town, worked at the grocery store, Daryl's Dine In, Richardson Bros Greenhouse, Short Stop Card Shop. I didn't play a lot of sports but when I did I was never an all-star or MVP, in fact I was fortunate to get off the bench at times.

I got in enough trouble but was at least able to keep my name out of the papers. I wasn't an overly good person but I wasn't really that bad either. I graduated in the middle of my class (mostly due to lack of effort), I went on to work in factories and warehouses making good money. Living a good life...honestly it was pretty ordinary.

Now years later, being a pastor, I've found that I'm still pretty ordinary. And no, I don't have low self esteem. And I'm not looking for someone to tell me how great I am. I'm just being honest...I'm famous enough.

I exist for the fame of God's name. I'd rather be known by God than men. Love God. Love people. You are famous enough.

When Jesus began His earthly ministry, He chose twelve ordinary men.

Mark 3:13-19 (NKJV)

And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 Simon, to whom He gave the name Peter; 17 James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite; 19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

(Boa-nerges)

- Andrew, Peter, James, John - fisherman
- Matthew - tax collector for the Roman government
- Simon - Zealot - political radical determined to overthrow the Roman government
- Phillip, Bartholomew, Thomas, James 2, Thaddaeus - unknown - possibly fisherman, tradesmen, craftsmen, farmers
- Judas - thief

These were ordinary men. What I mean by that is that they were not the people that would have been highly distinguished or well thought of.

In fact they were likely the people that typically went unnoticed, unthanked, unappreciated.

That is until they were called by Jesus. These ordinary men with all of their faults and character flaws...were chosen by Jesus.

Have you ever considered the weight of that decision? Jesus had one job to do...save the world. And He had His pick of the litter. He could choose ANYONE. And yet He chose these twelve.

Not one was a rabbi. Not one was a scribe. Not one was a theologian. Not one was an academic, a priest, a Pharisee, a Sadducee – not one.

Ordinary Men.

Jesus wasn't looking for knowledge, He was looking for obedience.
He didn't need men who already knew everything, He needed men who were teachable.

When I use to hire people for a tech company, in most cases I'd rather have an inexperienced person than an experienced one. And that's because they couldn't be set in their ways...they needed to be teachable and do it our way.

You know the old saying "you can't teach an old dog new tricks"? That works on people too...unless they are teachable.

Look at Jesus' calling of these twelve ordinary men:

Mark 3:13 (NKJV)

And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him.

Jesus called these ordinary men up on the mountain. He elevated them as they responded to His desire...He wanted them. They came. He elevated them.

They didn't climb the mountain on their own...isn't that the problem with the American dream? Everyone is trying to climb the mountain. Well guess what? Lots of people die trying to climb mountains without ever getting to the top.

But if God calls you up and it's Him that you meet there...when ordinary men meet an extraordinary God...they can do great things.

Luke 1:52 (NKJV)

He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
And exalted the lowly.

Jesus doesn't see people the way people see people. He truly looks at the heart, not at the credentials.

Mark 3:14-15 (NKJV)

Then He appointed twelve, that they might **be with Him** and that He might send them out to preach, 15 and to have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons:

That they might be with Him

Jesus chooses ordinary men to be with Him. This is the first and the most important part of this call...BE WITH JESUS.

Church, the biggest hindrance to the church, the number one reason we are not making more of an impact is this right here...we've not been very good disciples. We've not spent enough time with Jesus.

It doesn't matter how much you KNOW. Jesus doesn't need more Pharisees, He needs more disciples. He needs more people that spend time in His presence. And until we can get that through our thick heads and our full schedules...the church is going to have minimal impact in this dark world.

The rest of it just doesn't matter if you don't start by being with Jesus. Not just wearing a Jesus t-shirt or having a Jesus bumper sticker...be with Him.

The greatest gift you can give someone is your presence. And the greatest gift God has given us is His. I know...technically it's salvation...but WHY did Jesus die on the cross?

In the beginning Adam and Eve walked with God...presence. And it was supposed to be like that forever, but sin caused that divide, separation. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin SO we could be reconciled to God...presence. And He sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and in us...presence.

It's all He's ever wanted. To be with you.

So Jesus appointed the twelve (and calls you and me) that we might be with Him.

That He might send them out to preach

Don't you all be looking at ME!

What is a preacher? Someone who proclaims. And their message is to proclaim the Gospel of the kingdom. It is a commission to proclaim the Gospel.

Jesus wants you to be with Him FIRST....then go and proclaim the gospel. Tell people the good news.

Why is it good? Because the alternative is bad. That Jesus offers salvation to all who would call upon His name. From the fishermen to the tax collectors to the anti government believe it or not for both the left and the right and all in between.

Jesus doesn't care about the world system...He cares about the kingdom. At the end of the road...only one thing will remain Jesus' kingdom. Where HE will be king.

And there will be perfect peace, unending joy, healthy bodies and minds!

But you only get to enjoy the benefits of heaven if you have been with Jesus...and there are people out there who need ordinary men to tell them this extraordinary news.

To have power to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons

How many of you have the courage to do this right now? This is not something reserved for the proud, the few, the Marines.

It's for ordinary people. Ordinary people who have been with Jesus. And proclaim the gospel.

Every single time I pray for someone who is sick. I expect them to be healed. Because I've been with Jesus and I know the gospel. I know that part of the gospel is that He paid for healing with the stripes He bore on His back. Spiritually the work has been done. And we can receive healing in our bodies and minds.

Now maybe you'd pray for the sick but would you cast out demons? Some of you are looking at me like I'm crazy. Some pastors would look at me like I'm crazy and it's a shame...

Most pastors don't even know where to start. I've had people come to me and say they've been to other churches and the pastor has said "we don't do that here"...that breaks my heart

Jesus came to set the captives free! Free from sin. Free from strongholds. Free from addictions.

It's HIS might power. All we have to do is be with Him, share the gospel, then pray and believe!

What we lack is courage.

Acts 4:13 (NKJV)

Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

I like the NIV because it says they were unschooled and ordinary men.

Ordinary men with great boldness...great courage...because they had been with Jesus.

I take great delight in being ordinary.

This Greek word for ordinary is idiotes (idi-o-tays), yeah that's what it sounds like...

- A private person as opposed to a king. A common soldier as opposed to an officer.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (NKJV)

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence.

God has chosen you idiotes....to be a private person submitted to a king...to be a common soldier under obedience to his commanding officer

He calls you to be with Him, to preach the gospel, to heal the sick and cast out demons.

You might be ordinary people...but He's no ordinary God.