

Anything But Ordinary 3
April 22, 2018

We are in the third week of our series Anything But Ordinary. We started out on Easter Sunday and reflected on the fact that Easter was the most unique event in history. On Easter Jesus rose from the dead and conquered the grave. The extraordinary power of the resurrection is available to ordinary people like you and me.

So over the past few weeks we have been looking at the ordinary practices that are available to ordinary people like you and me that connect us with the same power that raised Jesus from the grave. What are things that can help us live extraordinary lives?

Two weeks ago we looked at the power that comes simply when all of us get on the same page. When we come here with the purpose of connecting with God, a momentum is created that carries us further faster. As we come and forget about us and focus on the common goal of connecting with God, we are changed and transformed. We see God get to work in our lives.

Last week, we looked at the importance of God's word. God's word has the power to change our life. God's word is living and active. And when you apply God's word to your life, you can raise to life things that you thought were dead. You can breathe life back into dead relationships. Applying God's word has the power to breath life back into all circumstances of your life and change them from ordinary to extraordinary. **But we said that reading and applying God's Word are both necessary.**

Today, I want to start off with a question. How do we make sure our lives really matter? All of us desire to matter and to make an impact on our world. We want our lives to mean something and yet we so often can get caught in a rut. To help us answer that question, we are going to take a look at a Scripture story we referenced a few weeks ago to give us a little context.

Peter and John go to the Temple to pray. At the Temple, there is a crippled man who begs Peter for money. Peter looks directly at the man and tells him, he doesn't have any money. Then he says to the man, **"I don't have any money but I will give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise and walk."** Immediately, the man gets up and walks. Acts tells us, **"And all the people saw him walking and praising God."**

Everybody sees that this guy's life has been changed. This guy has been restored. A crowd gathers around and so Peter starts preaching about Jesus. The Jewish leaders who about 6 weeks earlier had just arranged for Jesus to be crucified don't appreciate it very much. So they arrest Peter and John. Peter and John are now put on trial.

So on trial, the Jewish leaders ask them, **“By what power or what name did you do this?”** Peter responds boldly here. He says **“Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a cripple.”** Peter says, let’s just get this straight, we have been arrested because we did a good deed. Wait, you are upset that I did a good deed. Are you kidding me?

Then Peter goes on he says, **“By what means that this man has been healed.”** So Peter goes on and says, so if your question is how did this happen. Was it us? Did we do it? Peter says, we didn’t do this. We don’t have the power to make a lame man walk. **But Jesus does.** It was through his name and his power, the same guy you crucified that we have been given authority and are now exercising that authority.

Acts tells us that the leaders were amazed by Peter’s boldness. How could this Peter and this rag tag group of people do anything so noteworthy? They weren’t anything special. And here they were doing great things, all because they had been with Jesus and had teamed up to be with Jesus and got involved in what Jesus set out to do – bring healing to a broken world.

Our world is broken.

We’re living in a broken world where our society, and culture, are all affected by sin. There is a lot of pain and a lot of hurt in our world. Like the man in the story there are many crippled people – many are emotionally and spiritually crippled. We live in a broken world. That’s the bad news.

The good news is that God wants to do something about it. God sends his Son Jesus to redeem the world, to redeem human beings and to bring restoration to the world. **This is supposed to be the work of the Church.**

The work of the Church is to join with Jesus in the redemption and the restoration of the whole world. The Church is God’s plan for carrying the message of redemption and bringing restoration to a hurting world. We bring the message of redemption.

As Peter says in Acts 4, **“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”**

This is the message we share and believe as a Church. God bought us back through the death of his Son. It is a vital message of Christianity, but that is not the whole message. God has redeemed us and now he is working to restore us. God is working to heal our hearts and heal a broken world. Jesus came not only to redeem the world, but to restore. God want us to help Him fix the world to restore it to its original state.

God has already redeemed the world. Now God is in the midst of restoring it. And God wants to use you and he wants to use me in the ongoing redeeming and restoration process. God is in the process of bringing people far from him into a relationship with him. Even though he doesn't need us, God invites you and me to be part of the work. When we join him, our ordinary lives become extraordinary. That's what happened to the early apostles. They shared with others that Jesus had died for them and healed people as part of their restoration, so that 2,000 years later we are still talking about them and reading about them in the book of Acts.

It is called that for a reason. The first disciples actually acted, they did something to bring about the redemption and restoration of the world. God wants to accomplish great things through you and me. He has some good deeds he wants you to do to bring healing to a hurting world.

When we work with God, our faith grows. Our faith grows as we do the possible and see God do the impossible. To live an extraordinary life, to live above the ordinary you have to get to work with God. We have to get outside of our ordinary comfort zone and lean into a situation where we need him.

Maybe there were times when you are volunteering or doing a ministry and can say with Peter, **"That wasn't me, that was God."** I don't know what happened. Usually I wouldn't have the right word to say, but suddenly just the right words came out of my mouth. That must have been God. Through ordinary service, God can do extraordinary things. This is why at this Church I continue to preach about ministry and service.

Ministry is about volunteering here in the parish. We mean serving on one of our volunteer teams. By service, we mean going out into the community, helping people outside our walls. As we said a couple of weeks ago and observed this past Easter, ministry is a team sport. Ministry requires we partner together and work with one another so that people can experience the life changing message of the Gospel. When you and I get on teams and hear people's lives being changed our faith grows, our faith muscle is exhausted.

You know your life has meaning and purpose when you experience the power of God moving through you. Our ministry and service here is helping to restore marriages and help families succeed. Our ministry is about allowing God to heal people's hearts as they grow in a deeper relationship with his Son. Serving on the ushers team, cafe, leading children to Christ are creating environments that help people come to know their Savior.

In our ministry, God uses us to bring change in others' lives, but equally as important is the change that takes place within our own hearts. Think again about the story of Peter. Peter had denied even knowing Jesus in front of the crowds, the one who was locked up in a room because he was so scared. This is the

same guy who is now standing up to the authorities declaring that God raised Jesus from the dead. Ministry is what we do here. Mission is our service outside the community. How many of you remember our parish mission in Equador. Now we are looking to develop a strategic partnership in the middle east to assist persecuted Christians and help them to restore their lives and faith.

Anyone who would be interested in being part of our mission team see me after mass or call the parish office. A Parish is the tree that bears fruit, that can send missionaries. As our ministry here heals people's hearts and bring them into a closer relationship with Christ, we can then be sent out into the world to bring Jesus to the world.

We find redemption here and our hearts are restored here each weekend. Then we can bring redemption and restoration to the rest of the world. Together, we are making the Church matter by impacting the world for Christ. **Through ministry and mission** we are bringing healing to a broken world and impacting it for Christ.

My question to you is - are you helping to impact the world. Are you on a ministry team that helps heal hearts by making this Church an irresistible environment? Are you helping to make an impact on the world through missions?

If you are not on a ministry team sign up for Next Steps pick up a card at the welcome desk or sign up on our website. For those of you who serve, my sincere thanks for serving. We need your continued help. Carve out time in your schedule for serving. God has called us to join him in the redemption and restoration of the world. If we join him in that mission our lives will be anything but ordinary.