

THE



"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)

May 2016

No. 365

ORDINARY PEOPLE

In the early days of the church, Peter and John were brought before the high priest and many other unbelieving Jews because they had been preaching the resurrection of Jesus in the temple. When asked, "*By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?*" they preached Jesus unto them also (Acts 4:1-12).

In Acts 4:13, we read the Jews' reaction:

*Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John,
and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant*

THE HARVESTER

141 County Road 474

Woodland, AL 36280

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

They inferred that Peter and John were ordinary people. Is that bad? We usually don't like to be thought of as "ordinary." It's insulting. We brag about our children being extraordinarily talented or smart; we write fancy resumes and try to exaggerate our good points in order to win the job. But, is there such a thing as an ordinary person? Who is ordinary? What is the definition of ordinary? Is it "average"?

Yet, the Bible is full of characters who were considered ordinary people. They were not outstanding. Men and women who did not shake up the world in a worldly sense. They were not political powers or sophisticated characters. Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David do not usually appear in secular history books.

Peter and John were ordinary people, but they caused quite a commotion. What led to this confrontation with the religious leaders? How did two ordinary men accomplish such a thing?

They were illiterate persons, untrained in schools, uneducated, common men – people from whom very little was expected. Peter could not be depended on, since he denied his Lord three times, and John, whom the Lord loved, was very quiet and needy. Yet here they are getting arrested, curing the lame, causing trouble for the authorities. What accounts for this change of circumstance by two ordinary people?

Peter preached a sermon. He preached about the doings of Jesus Christ in the world and the great miracle that God himself was in the form of Jesus Christ. He told the audience that Jesus was the head cornerstone of whom the Jews had been waiting for and in none other could salvation be secured! He was preaching the Gospel! (Acts 3 - 4)

We see here how Peter became extraordinary. It is the Word of God that makes an ordinary person special. Those who hear it are transformed, emboldened, and encouraged. It is the Word that changes and transforms us when we are born again by it and when we preach it. Likewise, we must recognize that although we are ordinary in the sight of the world, God's Word can transform us into the greatest people – members of God's kingdom! Words do make a difference. Words can influence people, for good or for evil.

- *A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.* (Prov. 25:11)
- *A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.* (Prov. 15:1)

Words have incredible power and none more than the Word of God.

But just preaching the Gospel will not help us go beyond ordinary. We must meditate on his Word, study it diligently, absorb it and think about it all the time! *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Tim. 2:15).

They gave (shared) of their faith. Peter and John on their way to the temple were confronted by this man who asked them for spare change. Peter answered, *“Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee.”* And he gave the lame man the only thing he could give him: faith! He shared the faith he had in the power of Christ. *“In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up:...praising God”* (Acts 3:6-8).

It is when we share our faith in Christ with others that takes us from being ordinary people to *“a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people”* of God (1 Pet.

2:9). We should feel honored because we are Christians, and as Christians we will spread the Gospel to lost and dying souls. If there is someone we really care about, we will mention the church of our Lord. That is what makes us special! Our ability to share our faith with others!

Deeper yet: It is WHO they are that made the difference: ordinary people who were changed by Christ! Ordinary people doing the extraordinary. They had been transformed. How? They had been with Jesus (Acts 4:13b). They had been in the presence of the living Christ. They walked with Him, they talked with Him, they studied with Him, they followed Him. They were His disciples, His learners, His pupils. As disciples of Christ, we too will go through the changes that makes an ordinary person into one who can turn the world upside down. In Christ we have a chance to do extraordinary things, to take nothing and make something, to go from nobody to somebody. *“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”* (Rom. 12:2).

Throughout the Bible we read of God’s people who were ordinary – shepherds, tentmakers, fishermen, etc. They were ordinary in the worldly sense, but special in the spiritual sense. Peter and John were ordinary people just like you and me.

Based on a sermon by RAY MCMANUS
(Deceased)

HOSPITALITY

You are instructed in Romans 12:13 to be *“given to hospitality.”* That implies that you should be known as a hospitable person. What is hospitality? It literally means to have a love of strangers. *“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for there-*

by some have entertained angels unawares” (Heb. 13:2). In other words, don’t forget hospitality; the strangers you show hospitality to could be angels.

We have two examples in the Bible of individuals who provided hospitality to strangers who were angels. The first example is that of Abraham in Genesis 18:2-5:

And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, and said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.

He quickly prepared a meal for them before they went on their way.

The second example is that of Abraham’s nephew, Lot. Genesis 19:1-3:

And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.

Both Abraham and Lot are good examples of showing hospitality. They had a love for strangers. They made them comfortable, provided meals for them and, in the case of Lot, provided a night's lodging.

Jesus describes His judgement in Matthew 25:34-36:

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

Part of the judgement He describes is based upon showing hospitality to the stranger and those in need. Obviously, it is important to be hospitable.

Hospitality doesn't have to be to strangers. It can be to your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. "*Use hospitality one to another without grudging*" (1 Pet. 4:9). You shouldn't complain about providing a meal or lodging for your fellow Christian.

One of the qualifications for elders or bishops is that they be hospitable. "*A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach*" (1 Tim. 3:2; See also Titus 1:7-8). The

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

The Harvester

141 County Road 474 * Woodland, AL 36280

Phone: (256) 449-9221* Email: raymcmanus@hotmail.com

Web Page: www.churches-of-christ.org

elder/bishop should have a love for the stranger and his fellow Christian and want to help them along their way. Besides providing a meal or lodging, it is a good opportunity to share the Gospel or a word of encouragement. Even if you are not an elder, you should want to be hospitable.

Maybe you don't think you have the resources or the ability to provide hospitality. Be eager to find even small things you can do for the stranger or your fellow Christian. "*And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward*" (Matt. 10:42). Maybe all you can provide is a cup of cold water. Be willing to provide what you can.

Be eager to show hospitality both to your fellow Christian or a stranger. The stranger could be an angel or messenger sent by God.

ED ANDERSON
(Sierra Vista, AZ)

WHAT DOTTH THE LORD REQUIRE OF THEE?

(MICAH 6:6-8)

Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
April 29 - May 1	Van Lear Van Lear, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 2 - 7	Load Ashland, KY	Joe Hill & J.D. McDonald
May 8 - 11	Goose Creek Neon, KY	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
May 13 - 15	Oak Grove Eubank, KY	Hunter Bulger (Fort Deposit, AL)
May 16 - 18	Hopkinsville Hopkinsville, OH,	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 27 - 29	Verona Verona, KY	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
May 27 - 29	Willow Oaks Russell Springs, KY	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, KY)

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What kind of animal was killed for the Passover?
2. What country was Ruth from?
3. Which son of Saul was David's friend?
4. Which minor prophet wrote concerning the destruction of Nineveh?
5. Which two prophets did Peter see speaking with Jesus?