“God Uses Ordinary People”

JOHN 6: 1-13 (NKJV)

Please turn with me your Bibles to the GOSPEL OF JOHN, chapter SIX, and let’s read verses 1-13.

JOHN 6:1-13 (NKJV)

1 After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.

2 Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased.

3 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

4 Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.

5 Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, “Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”

6 But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

7 Philip answered Him, “Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.”

8 One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him,

9 “There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?”

10 Then Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.

12 So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, “Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.”

13 Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten.
INTRODUCTION

The world is full of ORDINARY PEOPLE. The kind of people who go about their daily lives, pay their bills, do their jobs, without ever accomplishing anything substantial enough to warrant making the six o’clock NEWS or getting their name in the daily newspaper.

As a matter of fact, the vast majority of the 7 BILLION PLUS people in this world are ORDINARY, EVERYDAY KIND OF PEOPLE.

Chances are........you are AN ORDINARY PERSON.........I know I certainly am.

But one truth we learn from God’s word is that God loves ORDINARY PEOPLE.

 Someone once said, “It’s obvious God loves ordinary people; that’s why He created so many of them.”

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Sometimes ORDINARY PEOPLE become GREAT PEOPLE.

- Before becoming the Governor of California and later the President of the United States, RONALD REAGAN was a sportscaster at a little radio station in Illinois.

- HARRISON FORD was a carpenter.

- SEAN CONNERY was a milkman.

- DANNY DEVITO was a hairdresser.

- BRAD PITT dressed up like a chicken to promote a fast food chicken restaurant.

- DUSTIN HOFFMAN was a waiter in a restaurant.

- STEVE MARTIN was a vendor at Disney Land.

- GEORGE CLOONEY was a door-to-door insurance salesman.
Nothing about the ORDINARY BEGINNINGS of these people would have ever given anyone the slighest hint they would one day become famous.

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But this evening, I don’t want to talk to you about ORDINARY PEOPLE who became GREAT IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD...........I want to talk to you about ORDINARY PEOPLE who are GREAT IN THE EYES OF THE LORD.

God Loves Ordinary People.
God Uses Ordinary People.
God Accomplishes His Greatest Work through Ordinary People.

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Let’s go back to our scripture text in JOHN CHAPTER SIX and see how THE LORD used AN ORDINARY BOY to do something truly EXTRAORDINARY.

EXPOSITION OF JOHN 6: 1-13

This had been a very difficult day for JESUS. He had learned earlier in the day of the BEHEADING OF HIS COUSIN and FORERUNNER of the Gospel, John the Baptist.

Verse 1 tells us..... After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.

The scripture doesn’t tell us WHY he headed for the far shore of Galilea, but I don’t believe it is too unreasonable to believe that JESUS wanted to get to a less populated area, in order to have some time to grieve the loss of John the Baptist.
But as we see in Verse 2.........Jesus wasn’t afforded that needed time of grieving.  Verse 2 tells us “Then a great multitude followed Him .  We learn in Verse 10, that the number was about 5,000 .  Matthew, Mark and Luke all state specifically that that number just represented the men present.  When you factor in the number of women and children...........there possibly could have been upwards of 10,000-15,000 people.

Late in the day.....perhaps around 5:00 to 6:00 o’clock, stomachs are starting to growl..............(perhaps like some of yours are right now) ........the people were getting hungry.

Jesus asked Philip in verse 5............“Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?”

You can almost see Philip’s jaw hit the ground in disbelief!

Why Lord, even if we had eight month’s of wages, we couldn’t buy enough food to even give each person one bite.

I love Verse 6............ But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

Brothers and sisters, the LORD always knows what HE will do.......the Lord always has a plan.  No matter what your dilemma, no matter what your circumstance.........no matter how overwhelming your situation may seem to you............The Lord already knows what he’s going to do.............He just wants to see if you have enough faith to trust Him.

So Jesus sends His disciples scouring through the crowd to see what food is available.  Out of those thousands of people, the only thing they could come up with was the sack lunch one little ordinary boy had brought.

- The loaves were small , flat little pieces of unleavened bread, probably no more than four inches in diameter.

- The fish were probably little pickled fish like sardines, which he would place on his bread to make a little snack.  That is all he had!  It was just enough to satisfy the hunger of one ordinary little boy........certainly not enough to feed 10,000 - 15,000 people.
Jesus took the loaves and the fish, gave thanks to His Heavenly Father. And with some ordinary bread... and ordinary fish... provided by an ordinary little boy... JESUS miraculously produced enough food to feed the giant multitude. And after every one was filled, twelve baskets full of leftovers were gathered.

TRANSITION

I believe a lot of CHRISTIANS are under the false notion that unless one can PREACH... or TEACH... or LEAD... or SING IN THE CHOIR... that they’re not much good to THE LORD or HIS CHURCH. But nothing could be further from the truth!

As we think about this LITTLE BOY in John chapter six, we can see three character traits GOD looks for when He wants to accomplish EXTRAORDINARY THINGS through an ORDINARY PERSON.

First of all..................

I. GOD LOOKS FOR HUMILITY

1. Can anyone here tell me the NAME of the little boy with FIVE LOAVES and TWO FISHES?

2. The little boy’s NAME is never given is it. He didn’t seize this opportunity to BE IN THE SPOTLIGHT........... He didn’t say: "I’ll give you my lunch if you’ll mention my name in the Bible pages."

3. The fact that the little boy’s name is never mentioned reveals A HUMILITY that is so characteristic of the kind of people God uses.

4. JAMES 4:10 says........ "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up."
5. It has been said, \textit{“GOD can do great things through the person who doesn’t care who gets the credit or glory.”} (Listen to that again and let it sink in........)

6. Each Lord’s Day, when we come here to worship, we just take for granted that everything is going to be as it should be. But let’s stop and think for a moment about all the ordinary, humble people who have worked outside the spotlight to make everything ready for us to worship each week.

- For one, we worship in a nice, clean building each week without thinking about twice that someone came out here and spent several hours vacuuming and dusting and cleaning the bathrooms. But boy, we would sure notice if she didn’t do it, wouldn’t we?

- And every week the lights are on when we come here. Do you think those lights just turn themselves on? NO! A humble servant has come here several hours before any of you even arrive to make sure you don’t walk into a dark building.

- And each week in the hot weather months the air-conditioner is on when we get here and in the cold weather months, the heat is on. Do those things turn themselves on automatically? No! A humble servant has made sure the AC or HEAT is on for your comfort when you get here.

- And each week, when you walk in here, one of the first things you do is to pick up your Sunday bulletin. Those bulletins don’t just “magically appear” do they? No! A humble servant has taken her time to type up the bulletin information and run the bulletins on the copier and fold them.

- And when you walk in here each week, you don’t smell the stench of trash, do you? The trash doesn’t “take itself out” does it? NO, some humble servant makes sure the trash is taken out each week.

- Each week, bills arrive in the Church mailbox. Do those bills pay themselves? Absolutely not! A humble servant spends hours of her time each month paying the Church’s bills and keeping the Church’s financial records up-to-date.
-I’m sure you have seen that Christmas Tree, or should I say, “All - Season Tree” over in the multi-purpose building. Do you think a bunch of little elves come in here to decorate that tree? NO! A humble servant takes a great deal of her time to do all that decorating.

-And have you ever noticed how the building isn’t run down and everything isn’t broken or in need of repair? Do you think those things just “fix themselves?” No! A humble servant or two has devoted a great deal of their time to the upkeep of the building.

-Every week the messages are recorded and put on our website for people all over the world to listen to. Do you think those messages just record themselves? No! We have some humble servants who sit in the back and operate our audio equipment.

  7. Think what it would be like if we came here one Sunday and all those humble, ordinary people who do so much behind the scenes decided they weren’t going to do what they do any more. We would have absolute chaos wouldn’t we?

  8. Brothers and sisters, listen! If you will HUMBLE yourself before the LORD, and not care who gets the CREDIT or GLORY, GOD can use you.
Secondly........

II. GOD LOOKS FOR AVAILABILITY

1. THE LORD was able to use this ORDINARY LITTLE BOY because HE WAS AVAILABLE. He was at the RIGHT PLACE at the RIGHT TIME to be used by THE LORD.

2. Listen carefully! “Your AVAILABILITY is far more important to GOD than your ABILITY. “

   You can have all the TALENT and all THE ABILITY in the world, but if you aren’t available for GOD to use you, then what good is all that talent and ability?

   Many Christians are so wrapped up in worldly interests and worldly obligations , that when a choice has to be made between their worldly obligations and their obligations to the Lord and His Church, the Church almost always comes up on the “short end of the stick.”

3. Oh that all of us could have the attitude of Isaiah, who when GOD needed someone to do a job said, “HERE AM I LORD, SEND ME!”

4. It is those who have that “HERE AM I, LORD” spirit ……that God always gets the most mileage out of!

5. Just remember, “Your AVAILABILITY is more important to GOD than your ABILITY.”

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GOD LOOKS FOR HUMILITY
GOD LOOKS FOR AVAILABILITY

And finally.........
III. GOD LOOKS FOR GENEROSITY

1. One of the beautiful attributes of this ordinary little boy in *John 6* was his **GENEROSITY**.

   The little fella didn’t have much........but what he had he was willing to sacrifice for the good of others.

2. Did it ever occur to you that this little boy **RECEIVED A BIGGER MEAL IN RETURN than the ONE HE GAVE UP**?  What he received was far greater than what he gave up.

3. There are some people in this congregation who are so generous with their resources, and their time and energy.

   And the secret they have learned is “**They truly can’t outgive GOD.**” They just keep giving and giving and giving and God keeps blessing and blessing and blessing.

4. Brothers and sisters, GOD can and will do extraordinary things through your ordinary life, when you come to him with a spirit of generosity, realizing you are just a steward of all that GOD has entrusted to you.

CONCLUSION

Many years ago, a young 13 year old boy named BOBBY HILL read a book about the medical missionary ALBERT SCHWEITZER. Young Bobby Hill was so moved by the book, he developed a passion to do something to help Dr. Schweitzer in his work in Africa.

He sent a letter and a bottle of aspirin to General Richard Lindsay..... who at that time was the Commander of the Allied Forces in Southern Europe. In his letter, Bobby Hill asked General Lindsay if there was any way one of his military planes could fly over Africa and drop the bottle of aspirin down to Dr. Schweitzer.
Somehow........an ITALIAN RADIO STATION heard about Bobby Hill’s letter and began issuing a public appeal for funds. In just a matter of a few short weeks, over $400,000 in donations had come in that was used to buy all kinds of medical supplies. The Italian and French governments each offered one cargo plane to AIR LIFT the medical supplies to Dr. Schweitzer. Aboard one of the cargo planes was young Bobby Hill, who was given the opportunity of meeting Dr. Albert Schweitzer in person when the medical supplies were delivered. Just an ORDINARY BOY through whom GOD accomplished something EXTRAORDINARY!!!

Brothers and sisters, if JESUS could feed almost 15,000 people with AN ORDINARY LUNCH from an ORDINARY LITTLE BOY, imagine what the LORD could do through ORDINARY YOU if you came to him in A SPIRIT OF HUMILITY......A SPIRIT OF AVAILABILITY ........and A SPIRIT OF GENEROSITY.