

Acts 1:1-3
Ordinary People, Extraordinary Savior
2018-02-25

Our extraordinary Savior works through everyday people to expand his kingdom

He was a poorly educated shoe salesman who felt God's call to preach the gospel and expand the kingdom. As he worked in Chicago he saw the *massive need for the saving work of Jesus Christ in the lives of the people of the city, and knew there was need for more gospel-workers*. It's estimated that, even before the days of television and massive stadiums, he preached to more than one hundred million people. His name was Dwight Lyman Moody. Some simple words spoken to him one morning by a friend had a profound influence on his life and ministry. His friend, Henry Varley said, "Moody, the world has yet to see what God will do with a man fully consecrated to Him." A biographer of Moody says that Moody understand that to mean any man. He didn't need to be educated, or brilliant, or anything else. From that time on Moody's preaching was different, depending on the work of God in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim an extraordinary Savior. The first time he preached following that occasion he had so many people respond to the gospel that he thought he must have been misunderstood and told everyone to sit back down so he could elaborate more. But there was no mistake. God was working through this everyday man. Moody's life is evidence that **our extraordinary Savior works through everyday people to expand his kingdom.**

Scripture Passage: Acts 1:1-3

This morning we begin the Book of Acts. We won't get very far in this morning, but we'll see from the outset of this book that it's about gospel proclamation and kingdom expansion. Through ordinary people the gospel is proclaimed, souls are saved, the kingdom of God is advanced, and the church of God is strengthened.

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Summarizing the Gospel of Luke (vv.1-2)

1. **v.1** "*In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach...*" - Whenever we begin a study in a book of the Bible, it's always good to understand a few things right away. Three that are basic are Author, Audience, and Purpose.

1. Author - The author of Acts is the author of the Gospel of Luke. In **Acts 1:1** we're directed back to **Luke 1:1-4**.

1. **Colossians 4:14** "Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas." Luke was a physician, educated, had a strong handle on the Greek language, on Jewish tradition, and was a travel companion of the Apostle Paul (**Acts 16:6-10**).

2. Audience - Both Luke and Acts are addressed to Theophilus, about whom nothing is known. The name means "friend of God." **Luke 1:3** he is called "most excellent Theophilus", which leads us to believe he was a man in high regard and standing (cf. **Acts 23:26; 24:2; 26:25**). He was a man that had been taught about the life and ministry of Jesus and the spread of the gospel through the early church. And here we find the purpose of these writings by Luke.

3. Purpose - **Luke 1:4**

1. Scope of Volume 1 (Gospel of Luke) - **Acts 1:1-2** tells us Luke is a careful and orderly account of Jesus' life and ministry up until the time of his ascension. It starts with the births of John the Baptist and Jesus being foretold, and ends with Jesus ascending into heaven after his resurrection. But Luke makes an interesting statement, that this was all that Jesus **began** to do and teach. His work didn't cease after his death, after his resurrection, or even after his ascension. His work continued right along, but through different means. This is what Luke Volume 2, the Book of Acts, is about.

2. Scope of Volume 2 (Book of Acts) - The continuation of the work of Jesus. It's an extraordinary Savior that works through everyday people to expand his kingdom.

2. **v.2** "...until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen." - The apostles were the twelve men chosen by Jesus during his earthly ministry. We know them more commonly as the disciples of Jesus.

1. **Matthew 10:1-4** "And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every affliction. The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him." Fishermen, tax collectors, brothers and sons; everyday people. But they were men, like Theophilus, like Luke, that had come to know an extraordinary Savior and, with the exception of Judas, consecrated their lives and were used for the expansion of the kingdom.

2. Everyday people - **Acts 4:13** “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.”
3. Expanding the kingdom - **Acts 17:6** “And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, “These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also,”
4. Through an extraordinary Savior - **Romans 10:9–15** “because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”
5. Our extraordinary Savior works through everyday people to expand his kingdom. It’s not about status, position, rank, occupation, family history, socio-economic standing, gender or race. It’s about a powerful gospel and a gracious gift to redeem you and empower you for service. **Romans 12:6–8** “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Transition: Next, in **v.3**, we see that Jesus was setting the stage for kingdom advancement.

Setting the Stage for Kingdom Advancement (v.3)

1. **v.3a** “He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs...” - **Verse 2** talks about Jesus teaching until the day he was taken up. Not just until the day he was crucified, but after his crucifixion, which points to the fact of his resurrection.
 1. The resurrection is central to the Christian faith and gospel preaching
 1. **1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 17-22** Paul makes clear that if there is no resurrection, there is no Christian faith. The resurrection shows that the sacrificial death of Jesus satisfied God’s wrath. His offering was accepted, so he was raised and we were declared righteous (**Rom. 4:25**).
 2. As we work our way through Acts we’ll see that the resurrection was integral to their preaching, and was often the point of dispute (among Jews and Greeks). **Acts 1:22; 2:23-24, 31-32, etc.**
2. **v.3b** “appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.” - Jesus spent these 40 precious days preparing his disciples for what would come next. What came next is what we have recorded in the book of Acts. **This is like the drawing back of the slingshot, loading, setting aim, and preparing for release.** He spent these 40 precious days preparing them and speaking to them about what? The kingdom of God.
 1. The book of Acts is about the preaching of the gospel and the establishment of churches. What does this have to do with the kingdom of God? In **Matthew 16:16-19** Jesus shows that the church and the kingdom are connected together. They aren’t the same thing, but they are related to each other.
 1. One of the difficulties that hinders our understanding of the kingdom of God is our linking a kingdom to land. When I think of a kingdom I think of a king, a people, and a land the people live in that the king rules. But this isn’t the way the readers of the NT would have necessarily understood a kingdom. The Greek phrase would lend itself to understanding the kingdom of God as the rule of God, the reign of God, where the focus is more on the act of ruling than it is on a place.
 2. **Luke 17:20–21** “Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The kingdom of God is not coming in ways that can be observed, nor will they say, ‘Look, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.” Also **Luke 10:8–9**
 3. The kingdom of God is exercised in the hearts and lives of believers, which then make up the church. That is to say, the kingdom of God establishes the church. Then, the church preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news of the kingdom, and through that preaching the rule of God is advanced and the kingdom expands.
 2. **Acts 1:8** - The apostles would see the kingdom of God advance as they preach the gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit; in Jerusalem (**Acts 1-7**), Judea and Samaria (**Acts 8-12**), and to the end of the earth (**Acts 13-28**).

1. At Pillar Bible Fellowship this is one of our Core Values, Living the Great Commission, to go into all the world, preach the gospel, and make disciples. That means we pray for and financially support the Millers who are advancing the kingdom in Alaska. It means that we take an interest in world missions and God's working around the globe. It also means that we participate in advancing the kingdom in our own living rooms, and across the street, in our classrooms and cubicles, or wherever we are. It means that we live as kingdom-citizens, living under the rule of a just and righteous King. Not self-governed, but governed by God. We are to live as ones dedicated, committed, consecrated to God.

Conclusion: Our extraordinary Savior works through everyday people to expand his kingdom. Jesus began the work of kingdom expansion during his earthly life, through what he did and taught, and has passed on that great privilege and awesome responsibility to his disciples. The need is no less great today than it was in the days of Jesus and the disciples, or the days of DL Moody. Will you consider today how God can use you, an everyday person, but consecrated to an extraordinary Savior? Will you yield your will to his rule, to speak when he calls you to speak, to serve when he calls you to serve, to give when he calls you to give, to be cheerful in mercy when he calls you to mercy. This extraordinary Savior gave himself for you and rose in triumph, and calls you, today, to live for him.

Family

Table Talk



February 25, 2018

Family Discussion ?s

1. Have you ever been chosen to represent something or someone to people around you? Maybe a club or an organization, even a family project or mission? Were you given tools to fulfill your role in that group or mission, or maybe instructions on how to rightly represent it?
2. The disciples of Jesus experienced something like this! Through our extraordinary Savior, they were chosen for a huge and wonderful task, as a part of an empowered and holy group. As we begin the study of the Book of Acts, we will see this unfold. Let's look back... What did Jesus do that was SO extraordinary?
3. As Jesus shared with the disciples, what did He tell them should now happen? Who were these men identified as? How were they going to fulfill this prophecy?
4. Wow! Ordinary men- fishermen, tax collectors, brothers, sons- were being sent out for a mighty task! Can you imagine being in that room? The excitement continues as we read the Book of Acts! This working of God's power was not only for these men- it is for you, too! Our Savior is working in the life of every Christian, desiring for the proclamation of Jesus and the expansion of His kingdom to happen through us! Does your life give evidence to this mission and work? How are you participating in such a work?

GOD'S TRUTH

Our extraordinary Savior works through everyday people to expand His kingdom!

Key Verse

"He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God."

Acts 1:3 (ESV)



TABLE READING

Lead your kids further into God's Word...

2. **1 Corinthians 15:3-8; Luke 24:36-49**
3. **Luke 24:46-47**
4. **Acts 1:8**

Scripture Memory: Acts 1:8

"And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." - Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (ESV)