

The Power of Being Ordinary

by Carter Conlon

This sermon emphasizes the power of being ordinary, highlighting how God often chooses to reveal His truth and work through ordinary, nondescript individuals. It challenges the notion of seeking grandeur or titles in ministry, encouraging a shift towards embracing one's ordinariness as a vessel for God's power and manifestation. The speaker reflects on the humility and simplicity of Jesus Christ's earthly appearance and ministry, illustrating how the power of God is found in the everyday acts of kindness, comfort, and encouragement towards others.

Scripture: Isaiah 53:2, Philippians 2:5, Luke 4:18, Luke 24:13, John 21:1, 1 Corinthians 1:26

Topics: "Embracing Ordinariness", "God's Power in Simplicity"

Description

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Transcript

You know, there are certain things in the Bible that are truths we know, but we don't see. Does that make sense? Or we see, but we don't know. It could be said either way.

For example, in the village of Capernaum, if you would have asked people there saying, do you know the man Jesus Christ? They would say, yes, we know him, but do you see him? And they'd look at you and say, well, what do you mean by that? What do you mean, see him? We know him. You see, we know certain truths in the Bible, but there are times and seasons in our lives where God chooses to lift the veil and we start to actually see the truth that can actually set us free from things. And I'm hoping that's going to happen today because I'm going to talk to you about the power of being ordinary, the power of being ordinary.

Father, I thank you, God, for your word today. I thank you for these men, women, and young people you have brought into your house today God, that you're going to speak to all of our hearts in what I believe to be a profound way. Thank you, Lord Jesus Christ, that there are certain times and seasons where you unveil the depths of what is in your word and you give us the eyes to see it and the hearts to embrace it.

Father, thank you, Lord. Thank you. Thank you that you've hidden these things from the wise and prudent in their own sight and you revealed it to those who simply are longing for you.

God, thank you so much for what you're doing today. We give you praise and glory for it in Jesus' name. Isaiah chapter 53, the power of being ordinary.

Isaiah starts out with these words, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness. When we see him, there's no beauty that we should desire him.

He's despised and rejected by men, and men of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised and we did not esteem him.

Isaiah could start this chapter 53 with these incredible words, Lord, who has believed our report? Isaiah had been, in chapter 6, in his younger years, he had been drawn into the presence of God. He'd seen the magnificence of God. He'd seen worship of God that you don't find anywhere on planet earth.

He'd seen the manifestation of God's glory, his filling of the temple, all of the angelic beings moving in perfect unison with the presence and the will of God. He'd seen the power and the holiness of God, and it caused him to draw back and declare himself and all of his associates to be corrupt, not only in body, but in speech as well. And Isaiah could say, God, I've seen your glory.

I've personally witnessed and been touched by your power. But the way you've shown me that you've chosen to reveal this on the earth is so ordinary. Who will believe it? Who will believe that this is God? Who will believe that this is the power of God? Who will believe that this is the plan of God? And to whom will this strength of God be revealed? Who will find the strength of God? May I put it that way? There is a strength in this revelation of God that's coming to the earth through his son, but who will discover this strength? Who will see it for what it is? And who will believe it? And who will actually find the strength that you've chosen to reveal through your son, Jesus Christ? Now history shows us that sometimes in the flurry of religious activity, that the words in the ways of God, though present, can still be lost from view.

You think about it when King Josiah in 2 Kings chapter 22 set out to rebuild the temple that had fallen into ruins. Suddenly one of the workers or one of the priests at that time runs to him and says, hey, we found something when we were repairing the house. We found the word of God that they had at that time.

We found the book of the law. It's amazing that you can actually lose the words of God in the presence of God or in what we think is the presence of God. And what happened to the people that they lost an understanding of the words or the ways of God? What was it that gripped their attention or their imaginations? Was it the glitter of the temple? Was it the glory of the priesthood? Was it just the manner that they prescribed of worship? Was it the, I don't know, was it just the way things were conducted around them? Was it unbridled ambition, in a sense, in people's hearts to come in, everyone looking to be something and nobody willing to be ordinary? Isn't it amazing? Somehow they lost sight of God.

They lost sight of God's word in all of their activity, because I believe they allowed their imaginations to take over. And perhaps everyone coming into the temple imagined themselves to be something other than what they were. Imagine that God was going to do things a certain way, and certainly not in this way.

It's amazing when you begin to think about it and look at it. In the Gospel of John, chapter 1 and verse 14, the scripture tells us that the word of God became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory,

that's those who understood or saw him, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. But in chapter 1, verse 10 and 11, the scripture says, he was in the world, the world was made by him, through him, and the world did not know him.

For he came to his own, and his own did not receive him. So that's a good question. God sends his son into the world.

And you think about the people at that time, they lived and breathed this coming of their Messiah. That was their whole *raison d'être* as a people. They had this incredible promise given that they were going to be so blessed and so changed and challenged that they would become a blessing because of God's presence to the peoples of the whole known world.

So everyone had a vision in a sense of what that's going to look like. Isn't it true that when you came to Christ, you begin to craft in your own heart a vision of what your life was going to be? You started reading the scripture in the context of what you thought your life should be, not necessarily what it was going to be, but what you thought it should be. And how disappointed we can become when it doesn't go that way, and it turns out that we're just ordinary.

We don't rise above our own self-view, our own view of what we thought our life should be. We don't rise above it, and subsequently we become discouraged. Matthew chapter 13, verses 54 to 57, speaking of Jesus, it said, when he come to his own country, he taught them in the synagogue, and they were astonished and said, where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, and his sisters? Are they not all with us? Where then did this man get these things? So, verse 57, it says, so they were offended at him.

They were offended at the thought that this was the plan of God. They were offended because his job was an ordinary job. Have you ever been offended because you don't have a superposition in a big executive company in New York City? He was a carpenter.

Surely, if God's going to send his son into the world, he's going to be more than a carpenter. Wouldn't he be building palaces? Wouldn't he be building magnificent bridges? Wouldn't he be the architectural design wonder of the world? A carpenter, building tables, fixing chairs, maybe making fences. Sometimes for the odd neighbor.

And they said, we know his family. Now, we know his mother. Her name is Mary.

There's nothing royal or noble about his family. And it's assumed at this time, at some point in the history of Jesus Christ, he came from a single parent home. His father died.

We don't know when Joseph died. Sometime after Jesus was the age of 12. And so you could say, and people would look and say, well, we know his mother.

His father is gone. He's from a single parent home. We know his brothers.

We know his sisters. And it's interesting that there is no record of his appearance. Isn't that amazing in the Scriptures? If you look at other persons that were used of God in the Scriptures, for example, Saul was head and shoulders above the people, and he was of a goodly countenance.

And you have David, who was described as being handsome and such like Esther, was beautiful. But Jesus, you think the one thing the writers of the Gospels would do is give us a description of how tall was he? What did his hair look like? What color were his eyes? What were his facial features? I wonder. I wonder sometimes if they found it hard to write it down.

That's only conjecture on my part. Maybe he was just so ordinary looking. You know, there's some historical accounts.

Some are credible, and some are questionable, and some might be more accurate than others. Of people around those seasons that after the resurrection of Jesus wrote to each other, and the one thing they all have in common, that they say the man Jesus Christ was rather nondescript. Wasn't tall, wasn't handsome.

There was nothing about him that stood out. Isn't that amazing? He was just ordinary. I wonder if the disciples had a problem with that.

Like, God, couldn't you do better than this? Like this is supposed to be your son. Shouldn't there be like a glow about him or something? Or shouldn't his hair be full and bushy and his eyes like a flame of fire? Or shouldn't he have huge muscles or just something that distinguishes him? They were offended. They were offended because he was ordinary.

You see, that's not what they wanted to see. They knew him, but they didn't see him. There are truths that we know, but there are truths that we don't see.

And I'm wondering if it's just hard for the disciples to write down a description. Obviously, the Holy Spirit forbade it or they would have possibly done it, but it's only conjecture. Like, it would be hard.

Maybe they feel they were doing a disservice to God by actually describing him the way he looked. Ordinary. Nothing.

Listen to what Isaiah said. He's like a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness.

In other words, he's not taller than the crowd and he's not handsome. He's not any more good-looking or perhaps even less looking than others. And when we see him, there's no beauty that we should desire him.

There's nothing about him that physically would attract us to him. And you know, the disciples may have thought, and I say it again, God, surely you could have done better than this. Have you ever looked in the mirror and thought that in the morning? Did you look in the mirror this morning and thought, God, you dressed up as best as you could to come to church, or as the clean clothes you could find in your closet, and you looked in the mirror and said, God, surely you could have done better than this.

Have you ever thought that God somehow failed in the way he created you? Have you ever thought that maybe you should look different than the way you do, or you should be taller than you are or thinner than you are? You know, we live in a society of fallen bags of bones going down red carpets. All slim and all looking good and shiny and polished. And we start to think like, wow, why can't I look like them? I want to remind you, most of them are headed for hell.

We really don't need to look like any of them. We don't need to be like them. You see, God didn't make a mistake when he made you.

He made you exactly the way you are supposed to be. Because you and I are called, believe it or not, to be ordinary. Now, I'm going to show you a scripture that we know but we don't see until the time that God chooses to reveal it.

May I be bold enough to say, if you have a playlist of messages, would you add this to your playlist and listen to it every once in a while? Because as you get older, it's going to come more and more and more into view. You begin to see something that maybe you haven't seen so far. Philippians chapter 2, verse 5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God.

He was fully God. He could have manifested his presence on the earth any way that he chose to do it. But he chose to manifest his presence and his glory on the earth in a way that in the natural there was nothing about him that would draw you to him.

There's a reason for this. It wasn't just happenstance. He didn't just decide to be ordinary.

There was something about this. In the form of God did not consider robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation. In other words, not his job, not his family, not his lineage, not the house that he lived in.

Everything about him seemed to be ordinary, his physical appearance as well. But made himself of no reputation, took on the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of man and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. He shall grow up as a tender plant and as a root of the dry ground.

He has no form. He has no comeliness. When we see him, there's no beauty that we should desire him.

Yet in the way that God chose to reveal himself is the place where his power would be made known. It was God's choice to reveal himself as an ordinary, nondescript man. I want you to think about that just for a moment.

Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus. He was equal with God and it wasn't robbery if he would have made himself appear equal with God. He could have had such glory upon him that everywhere he walked, people would have just fallen to the ground and say, this is the Son of God, this is the Son of God, this is the Son of God.

But yet he chose a normal, nondescript, ordinary body to walk with in the earth. Now, after Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, the scripture shows us that in three distinct forms he appeared. Now, it appears that at least in each of these instances, he was not recognized as the man Jesus Christ.

Do you understand? After he was raised from the dead, he was to be recognized now by the presence of the Holy Spirit within whatever form he chose to occupy. Now, think about that just for a moment. In John chapter 20 and verse 15, Mary went to the tomb to try to find the body of Jesus, and she turned and saw a man, and the scripture says, and supposing him to be the gardener.

The first post-cross appearance, the first appearance of the resurrected Jesus Christ on the earth is a gardener. Isn't that amazing? Or he has the appearance of a gardener. Did he have coveralls? Did he have a hole in his head? I don't know what he had, but he looked like a gardener.

And Mary would have been familiar with what a gardener looked like. You know, we're talking about the resurrected Christ now. You know, when we go to the Christmas plays that are done every year, we always have the tomb and we have the strobe light in the back and the smoke machine and he comes out and he's glorious.

Well, when he came out of the tomb, he came out looking like a gardener. Still, the power of God is being manifested through the ordinary. And in these forms, it tells us about his continued work on the earth and in some measure, what is our part in the continued work of God on the earth? As a gardener, he speaks in a manner that comforts somebody with a broken heart.

The woman who was there, her name was Mary, her heart was broken. And he just spoke to her so tenderly that he comforted her broken heart. Isn't that what he said in Luke 4.18? This is the spirit of the Lord is upon me for this reason, to bring healing to those that are broken in heart.

In Luke chapter 24, we have two men on the Emmaus road. Now, they're going away from the place of their calling. They're leaving Jerusalem.

They're heading in another direction. They're discouraged. They're disappointed.

They had a vision of what the Messiah was going to do and what he was going to look like and what he was going to accomplish. And when it didn't happen, their hopes died. That's a lot of people in the church are like that in this generation.

You had a vision of what your life was going to be. You had a vision of how this relationship with the Messiah was in a sense going to pan out and when it didn't happen. So you sit here discouraged today online or in the sanctuary and you're actually walking away from your calling.

You don't even realize you're walking away from this incredible and great calling of God that is found in just the ordinariness of who he made us to be. We're not all called to be super Christians. We're not called to walk in places the people of this world don't walk in.

He walked with these men. They didn't see him. He covered, he hid his identity and he became a traveler and he just walked with these men.

And as he walked, he began to open the scriptures and he set them free from wrong thinking about God and about themselves. That's in measure part of what God has called me to do today is to help set free people who have a wrong thought about God. You have a wrong thought about your own life.

You have a wrong thought about how this whole Christian experience was supposed to play out. And in fact, you're walking now away from this high calling of God in Christ Jesus who made himself of no reputation, took upon himself the form of a servant to all people, might I add, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And it gets even better than this.

And of course, in Luke 24, he sets them free by opening the scriptures, a traveler, a gardener, a traveler. And I love John 21. In John 21, he appears as a cook.

Hallelujah. There's a bunch of guys out there who are called into ministry and they've kind of lost their focus. You know, they weren't sure where to go.

And then Peter one day said, I'm going fishing. Everybody says, okay, we're going with you. They fished all night and they caught nothing.

And suddenly they hear a voice saying, hey guys, have you caught anything? And they said, no. It shows they were converted. I never knew a fisherman that would ever tell the truth when you ask that question.

And so when they came to the shore, they didn't recognize him again physically. He was just an ordinary man and he had put some fish and some bread on the coals and he was cooking breakfast for discouraged believers. Come on now.

Again, he's just ordinary. And he had a word of encouragement combined with an act of kindness. Are we offended at being ordinary? It was here that he asked Peter, his disciple, do you love me? You know, you have all these theological interpretations of this, but I don't believe any of them.

It was really simple. He's looking at Peter. First of all, he says, do you love me more than these, all the things around him? And he asked him this question right to the center of his heart.

Peter, do you love me? Here's the way I read it. Are you offended at what the risen Christ looks like? Are you offended by where the power of God is found? Does this offend you? James and John, are you still wanting to sit at the left and right hand of God? Are you still lusting for seats and titles and power? If you are, you won't find the power of God. See, Jesus was saying, I'm going to have a body on this earth.

And the body I'm going to have on this earth is going to be ordinary people. They're going to be cooks. They're going to be gardeners.

They're going to be travelers. They're going to work in factories. They're going to be at stores.

They're going to be at the unemployment office looking for a job. But this is my body on the earth. And this is how I've chosen to reveal my power to this generation.

Not many mighty, not many noble, not many of royal birth are called, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world and the weak things of the world and things which are despised and things which are nothing to bring to nothing everything that stands in its own strength. We are the body of Jesus Christ. This is a truth which we have, we've known, but we've not seen it.

May I put it that way? We've known it, but we've not seen it. Because when you see it, suddenly there's a rejoicing that gets into your heart. And you say, God, thank you for putting me exactly where I need to be in this world.

Thank you for making me exactly as I'm supposed to appear. You didn't make me. We can't all be supermen, you understand? We can't all walk the red carpet with those that are headed for hell in Hollywood.

We can't do that. We are called to walk among the people. We're called to be travelers.

We're called to be gardeners. We're called to be cooks. And it's in this incredible calling of being ordinary, the power of God is found.

You know, we think the power of God is casting out devils. Well, that's part of it, I guess. And laying hands on the sick and the recovered.

We're always lusting after this power that nobody else has. How about the power of cooking for somebody who's hungry? That was the risen Christ. How about the power of encouraging travelers in this world who've lost their way and they've lost heart? How about the power of encouraging those who were called into ministry but have gotten diverted because they're confused or disappointed? How about the power that's found there? He sent me to release the captives, to set free the oppressed, give sight to those who can't see a way forward.

To heal those whose hearts have been bruised. And he sat down, closed the book and said, this day, the scripture is fulfilled in your ears. And what happened? They were offended.

Because this is not my view of God. It's not my view of the fulfillment of the scripture. You know, some of the historians say he was actually quite homely.

This nondescript average, not tall, not majestic man saying he's the fulfillment. Of this scripture? Yes. Because he was identifying with you and me.

We're the body of Christ. We are the nondescript people through whom God is manifesting his power. And as long as we're still lusting to be other than what we are, we'll never know the power of God.

We always walk around with our heads down. We walk around apologizing for who we are. We walk around wringing our hands.

We walk around discontented. We walk around feeling like failures. And the reality is we are everything that God ever intended us to be.

Yes, our inner man is being changed. I know that. We're our characters being formed.

But we are in these containers. Isn't it amazing? We are who God intended us to be. He didn't make a mistake when he created you.

You are not supposed to look like somebody in a movie. Well, depending on what movie it is, mind you, but that's not the calling of God. The power of God is found in the ordinary.

And Brother Roy, I'm smiling because I see this. I see it. I've known it, but I see it now.

That's why I said, put this in your sermon library and listen to it over and over again. Because one day you'll see it. Today you know it, but one day you'll see it.

You'll look in the mirror one morning and say, God, you know, you told me the greatest commandments are to love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength. And my neighbor is myself. Well, what happens if I don't like myself? God says, no, I want you to love the way I made you.

And I want you to love the person I'm making you into. You're allowed to love my presence in your life. And you're allowed to say, God, thank you for making me, me.

Then you have the ability to love somebody else who doesn't feel very good about themselves and give them words of direction and comfort and help. I said it in a message recently. I said, it's so strange.

I had a friend of mine say one time he was in ministry and he was a kind of a Jeremiah type. And he finally, he had the revelation of God. He said, Carter, it's amazing.

He said, it's unfair. He said, you get old. And he says, you finally understand this thing and then you die.

And he was right. He died a couple of years later, but he said, he told me, he said, I finally see it. I knew it, but I see it now.

So many people knew Jesus, but didn't see him. They didn't see God standing right before them. And even today, people who are in the body of Christ don't see the presence of God in their lives.

They don't understand the purpose of God because they're so ordinary. Well, as the father has sent me, Jesus said, now I send you. All the nondescript short, only people for real, for real.

Because that's what they say he looked like. No, I'm not, I'm not, I'm not being sarcastic towards anybody, but that's the reality. You might look good today, but give it time.

Dunfell's disease attacks everybody. Dunfell's, everything up here, Dunfell down here. The wrinkles take over.

You might be a mover and shaker today, but you'll only be a shaker soon. But it doesn't change a thing because the power of God is not based on us. It's God in us.

It's God working through us. So for 2024, here's my challenge. Jesus, thank you for who I am.

Thank you for making me the way you did. Whether you're too tall, too short, too white, too thin, too gray, it doesn't matter. None of it matters.

God, thank you that I'm going to be a good gardener and I'm going to comfort people whose hearts are broken. I'm going to be a good traveler and I'm going to help people turn back to where their calling really is. And I'm going to be a good cook.

I'm going to, I'm going to be kind to people and help those who are discouraged. See, I remind you, this was the risen Christ. This was the risen Christ who appeared this way.

And he was telling us, I'm going to have a body, ordinary people, and I'm not ashamed of you. And I'm not ashamed to manifest my glory through you. Oh, God, thank you.

That's all I can say. Thank you. Thank you for delivering us from the desire to be for big seats and big names and big titles and big, big everything.

God, thank you for the, thank you, God, that your power is discovered in our ordinariness. Thank you that you're going to have a body on the earth again before you return. Thank you, Lord.

The Christianity is not going to be a spectator sport anymore. Thank you, God. You're going to put all of us back in the game.

Thank you, Lord, that you have something for me to do. You've got somebody for me to walk beside. You got somebody for me to comfort.

You got somebody for me to feed. Thank you, God. I do love you.

And I'm not offended by the way you look. I'm not offended by you. You know, I've had the crowds and I've preached in the crusades and done a lot of things, but I've found I knew this truth.

But now I see it. I see it. You know, it's been my prayer in the last year or so.

I'm alone a lot of mornings and my prayer has been, Jesus, I want to see. I want to see what I've not seen before. I want to understand what I've not known.

God Almighty. And then suddenly the pool starts to clear and you realize I knew this. I could quote it.

I could quote all of the scripture to you. I didn't see it the way God intended for me to see it. It's such incredible power.

Just being ordinary. Just being ordinary. Father, thank you.

I ask you, Lord, today that you would help us in this coming year to be thankful. You didn't make a mistake when you made us. God, thank you.

God, thank you. That there is a calling that is deeper, it's higher, it's farther than we can ever understand. And forgive us for losing sight of your word in the flurry of religious activity that we get involved in, in the thoughts of our own minds that come in and crowd out the truth of your word.

We begin to craft a vision of what it looks like to walk with you that isn't according to truth. Thank you, Jesus Christ, for that smile that we heard about today, God, of coming into your house and into your presence. But I'm asking now that there could be a smile when people in this congregation look into the mirror tonight and they can honestly say, thank you, Lord, for the way you've created me.

Thank you for commissioning me. Thank you for making me part of your body on this earth in Jesus' name. We're going to sing a song.

I assume we're going to sing a song. Is that right? Okay. I don't know if this message is spoken to you or not, but if it has and you'd like to respond, by respond, I mean, just come forward and say, God, thank you.

Thank you for giving me a vision for 2024. Thank you for helping me to see what I knew. I knew it, but I didn't see it.

Thank you, God, for giving me a renewed sense of vision and ministry is coming. It doesn't have to be crowds. It doesn't have to be pulpits.

It doesn't have to be great and grand. It just has to be you and people. Thank you, God.

Thank you, God. If you want to just come forward and just say, thank you, you're welcome to do so. You don't have to, but you're welcome to do so.

And just only do it if the Holy Spirit is leading you to, or if you feel in your heart, God, I know what Pastor Carter has spoken about today, but I want to see it. I want more than just the knowledge. I want it so embedded in me that all the self-loathing will be gone.

I will be happy with your presence in my life and happy to do whatever it is you call me to do. It doesn't have to be big. It doesn't have to be grand.

It just has to be you. It could be one person in the graveyard, two on a road. It could be a half a dozen fishing.

It doesn't matter. It doesn't have to be big. It just has to be you.

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