

God Uses Ordinary Disciples

- Sharing Joy Exercise- “I’m glad to be with you. God is always glad to be with you. Neighbor
- Introduce myself? Bivocational - Family owns two skating rinks; Disciple Making Training - online 8 week learning about DM Principles; onsite workshop we did here.
- Great Workshop on Kingdom Building — Learned about sharing Glad to be with you Joy
 - Great time learning about our identity as Great Commission People and Ambassadors, Prayer, the Holy Spirit’s role in Disciple Making, Having Spiritual Conversations, and we celebrated being able to bless the community.
- Context for Today – Intro Saul
 - Martyrdom of Stephen
 - Letters from authorities to Damascus 150 miles - men and women
 - Arrest people of **the Way** — how closely their lives resembled Jesus
 - Acts 9:1-9 - Saul on the way to Damascus (Reference but not read)
- Acts 9:10-19 - **Risen Living Lord using an ordinary disciple named Ananias (READ)**
- Glean 4 things about Jesus/God from this passage that **WE**, as disciple makers **NEED**
 - **1. Jesus is the Living God who still speaks today** - Visions, Dreams, highlighting of the word, people, prayer, even a sermon! Calls us by name! (Miraculous M)
 - Holy Spirit Study in Acts — God is the same yesterday, today, and always
 - No Holy Spirit - No book of Acts! - Guide/Direct/ Prevent/ Open Door
 - Blind John’s story of encountering the Living Jesus
 - Notice what is NOT there when Jesus talks to Ananias – he is not afraid.
 - **2. Jesus/God is Sovereign - to have circumstances work together**
 - “Kairos” moment – 2 Types of time - Chronos – like the clock – Kairos – “at the right time” – Gal 4:4 God sent forth his Son Jesus to set us free.
 - Eph 2:10 - For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which **God prepared in advance** for us to do.
 - What if Ananias had not gone?
 - **3. Jesus invites us to partner with him to build his body here on earth!**
 - God could have brought Saul all the way to a saving knowledge — chose to work in and thru Ananias
 - What a privilege! What a RESPONSIBILITY! What an Adventure!
 - 2 Cor 5:20 -We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God. (We are ministers of Reconciliation with an amazing MESSAGE of Reconciliation.) PRAISE GOD.
 - Note what Jesus didn’t say — “you’ll be fine; you won’t be arrested!”

- No – Because how do you spell FAITH = RISK!
 - Jesus is building our trust **IN HIM** and **IN OUR** partnership **WITH HIM AS** we obey.
 - My friend always says – It’s not that we have to partner with God.... It’s that we **GET TO!**— **HIS** way is the **BEST** way!
- **4. Finally, JESUS is LORD. Obedience is the key to growth and faith.** “YES, LORD” is really the only acceptable response when Jesus is LORD.
 - Ananias expressed fear and trepidation. - But Lord...
 - Notice Jesus’ confidence in Ananias’ obedience; understood Creator and Creature relationship; “I’ve already told him someone named Ananias is coming to pray for him.”
 - GO!! - here Jesus gives him an explanation - not always
 - Honestly, I have trouble with obeying – Questions - Did I hear? How can I be certain it’s God? Can God really use me? But I keep on trying
 - Children’s Sermon about obeying Jesus – “Is your mommy smarter than you?” NO. “Is God smarter than your mommy?” Yes – **GOD KNOWS BEST!** Our knowledge is like a speck, a dot, compared to the universe. Too often I’m like that toddler thinking that I’m smarter than God. Boy, that really put obedience in perspective for me.
- **RESPONSE: Where are you today? Where is your cutting edge of growth?**
 - Is it hard to believe that Jesus is still speaking today? Tell him about it
 - Or is it challenging to trust in God’s sovereignty? Talk to him about it
 - Do you have a hard time embracing your identity as an Ambassador of Christ? Ask him to change you into an amazing Ambassador
 - Or are you still wrestling with surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus in your life? Do it now and every day – Tell him you want him to be Lord
- Prayer – **3 H’s Prayer**— Hunger, Heart, and Help
 - Insatiable **Hunger** for God (As the Deer pants for the water; with Him)
 - **Heart** of God for those who need to know Jesus (Luke 15 parables; Conversations)
 - Essential need for the **help** of the Holy Spirit (Review Spirit’s Role in Acts)

- JOHN RUSS's Encounter with Jesus
 - Major heart attack and coded three times on Monday, Jan 6th, 2025
 - During that time he had an encounter with Jesus.
 - I'm going to describe it to you as best I can based on my interview with John. Here's what he said:
- I saw 4 lights — now you know I'm blind, but I SAW 4 lights which I knew were angels.
- Then, in the middle of them Jesus leans over my bed. I saw him looking at me.
- "What did he look like?" I said.
 - He had brown hair
 - He was wearing a white dress shirt
 - He had a kind of deep red robe on
 - and it looked like there were thorns in his hair, in a circle.
- What was He like?
- Well, he was delightful and exciting and scary all at the same time! I don't know how all those things could be true at once, but they were. I was so glad to see him and at the same time I thought to myself – "oh my, I'm seeing Jesus and I'm afraid!"
- I asked him, "Is it my time?"
- Jesus - No, you're not done here on earth yet. You've got work to do. I want you to make it right with your people, get your affairs in order. Then we will talk.
- John - But I want to talk to you everyday.
- Jesus - I like that. I want to talk to you everyday. I'm never too busy to hear you.

Then I started hearing other's voices and was back in the hospital bed. Grace, I love Jesus. Jesus Loves you and my wife and everybody. Honestly, I had some doubt before about Jesus, whether he was really alive. But not anymore. I just have to testify!

It was touch and go for a while, but John has now fully recovered!