

# The Difference Between Ordinary And Unusual People

Intro: Most people would like to rise above the ordinary and be an unusual person. With most of us, we have come to accept the idea that such is possible only for a few that God has endowed with special gifts. There is not any truth at all in such thinking. There are a few who have unusual gifts but by far the majority of unusual people were at one time just ordinary people.

1. Most of the characters of the Bible who were unusual people were just ordinary people like the others of their generation.
2. Mentions some Bible characters and they stand head and shoulders above the rest. We think they could not help from being unusual and others of their age could not have been unusual if they had tried.
3. This thinking has led us astray and gives us a misconception of what we may become. Most of us feel that the way God made us necessitates that we will have to be in bondage to be just ordinary people all of our lives.
4. A careful study of some of the characters of the Bible will disprove such an idea.

**I. LUKE 4:16-32** <sup>16</sup> And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. <sup>17</sup> And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup> The Spirit of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, <sup>19</sup> To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. <sup>20</sup> And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. <sup>21</sup> And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. <sup>22</sup> And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? <sup>23</sup> And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. <sup>24</sup> And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. <sup>25</sup> But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; <sup>26</sup> But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, *a city of Sidon*, unto a woman *that was* a widow. <sup>27</sup> And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. <sup>28</sup> And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, <sup>29</sup> And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. <sup>30</sup> But he passing through the midst of them went his way, <sup>31</sup> And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. <sup>32</sup> And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power."

## **A. Christ comes back to Nazareth and performs no miracles.**

1. The people complain.
2. Why does Christ not do in Nazareth what He did in Capernaum?
  - a. Are the people of Capernaum such unusual people and the people of Nazareth so ordinary that one can see miracles while the other shall not?
  - b. What made the difference?

## **B. The difference was in what they did.**

1. Mat. 13:58 <sup>58</sup> And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."
2. Luke 4:31-33 <sup>31</sup> And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. <sup>32</sup> And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power. <sup>33</sup> And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,"

### C. Two examples given by Jesus.

1. There were many widows during the days of the famine but God fed one widow of Sarepta.
  - a. 1 Kin. 17:8-24 <sup>8</sup> And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, <sup>9</sup> Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which *belongeth* to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. <sup>10</sup> So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman *was* there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. <sup>11</sup> And as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. <sup>12</sup> And she said, As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. <sup>13</sup> And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. <sup>14</sup> For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. <sup>15</sup> And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days. <sup>16</sup> And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah. <sup>17</sup> And it came to pass after these things, *that* the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him. <sup>18</sup> And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son? <sup>19</sup> And he said unto her, Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed. <sup>20</sup> And he cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? <sup>21</sup> And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. <sup>22</sup> And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. <sup>23</sup> And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. <sup>24</sup> And the woman said to Elijah, Now by this I know that thou *art* a man of God, *and* that the word of the LORD in thy mouth *is* truth.”
  - b. Why the difference?
    - (1) The context would indicate that the difference was in what they did; 1 Kin. 17:15 <sup>15</sup> And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days.”
    - (2) One widow, and alien from Israel, would believe the prophet; while the widows of Israel would not.
2. There were many lepers in Israel in the days of Elisha but only one was healed (2 Kin. 5). What make the difference?
  - a. Was it not in what Naaman did?
  - b. What leper of Israel ever came to the prophet, believing that he could heal him?

## II. BIBLE EXAMPLE OF UNUSUAL PEOPLE.

### A. David an example of an ordinary man becoming unusual.

1. David's name is a household name.
  - a. How many have thrilled to the stories of David.
  - b. Almost every child knows about David.
2. 1 Sam. 17:
  - a. This is the chapter which tells us of David and Goliath.
  - b. In this same chapter, three of David's brothers are mentioned.
    - (1) We know David's name.
    - (2) What are the three brother's names?

- (3) 1 Sam. 17:13 <sup>13</sup> And the three eldest sons of Jesse went *and* followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah.”
- (4) Why the difference?
- c. David was just an ordinary boy.
  - (1) He was tending sheep, no doubt just as his brothers had done; 1 Sam. 17:20 <sup>20</sup> And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.”
  - (2) 1 Sam. 17:55 <sup>55</sup> And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son *is* this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell.”
- 3. What made the difference?
  - a. There came a day when David did something.
  - b. Goliath defied the army of Israel.
    - (1) 1 Sam. 17:8-10 <sup>8</sup> And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, and said unto them, Why are ye come out to set *your* battle in array? *am* not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. <sup>9</sup> If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. <sup>10</sup> And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together.”
    - (2) David’s brothers saw this, just like David did.
    - (3) But David saw more. It was not a direct revelation; David’s brothers could have seen it.
    - (4) It was not only defiance of Israel, but of God; 1 Sam. 17:36 <sup>36</sup> Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.”
  - c. David went forth and conquered. 1 Sam. 17:45-47 <sup>45</sup> Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. <sup>46</sup> This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. <sup>47</sup> And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle *is* the LORD’S, and he will give you into our hands.”
    - (1) It was God who did it. David was just the instrument God used.
    - (2) David’s brothers could have done what David did had they seen what David did.
    - (3) They could have had the same power—faith, if they had seen that Goliath defied God, not Israel; and that God would conquer.

#### **B. Gideon, just an ordinary man. Judges 6:**

- 1. The name of Gideon and his 300 men are known to all alike.
  - a. It is a story that never grows old.
  - b. Gideon’s name is known while others of his generation are not mentioned.
  - c. We are ready to say, yes but he was not just an ordinary man.
  - d. Let’s look at the story and see.
- 2. Gideon was in bondage, just like the rest of Israel.
  - a. Jud. 6:15 <sup>15</sup> And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family *is* poor in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father’s house.”
  - b. Gideon was poor.

- c. Gideon was least in his family.
  - d. What was the difference?
3. There was a day, or night, that Gideon did something.
- a. Jud. 6:11 <sup>“11</sup> And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which *was* in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide *it* from the Midianites.”
  - b. Instead of bowing to the Midianites like others, Gideon went out at night and threshed wheat to hide it from the Midianites.
  - c. This is what made the difference. Other Israelites could have done this just as well as Gideon.
    - (1) This was what enabled God to use him.
    - (2) Gideon became unusual because of what he did.
    - (3) What he did made the difference in God using him instead of others.

**C. Mary, the brother of Lazarus, has cheered multitudes.**

1. Mark 14:3-9 <sup>“3</sup> And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured *it* on his head. <sup>4</sup> And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? <sup>5</sup> For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. <sup>6</sup> And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. <sup>7</sup> For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. <sup>8</sup> She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. <sup>9</sup> Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”
2. No doubt many a woman has longed to be like Mary, yet have felt that is not for me.
3. She was just an ordinary woman.
  - a. There is nothing in the Bible to indicate that she was endowed by God above other women of her day.
  - b. Yet, wherever the gospel goes, her name is carried; Mark 14:9 <sup>“9</sup> Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.”
4. One day she did something.
  - a. Someone may say that was reserved for Mary alone.
    - (1) How would you prove it?
    - (2) Was she the only one with an alabaster box?
    - (3) Why do we read about Mary and her ointment but nothing about other women who had ointment?
    - (4) What makes the difference? It is in what she did.
  - b. Mark 14:8a <sup>“8</sup> **She hath done what she could:** she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.”
    - (1) What kept every other woman from doing what she could?
    - (2) Mary did something, while others did nothing.
    - (3) That is what made the difference then, and what makes the difference now.

**D. The widow and her mite.**

1. Mark 12:41-44 <sup>“41</sup> And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. <sup>42</sup> And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. <sup>43</sup> And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into

the treasury: <sup>44</sup> For all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.”

2. Many widows are mentioned in the Bible. In some instances they are unusual.
3. Here is one who is a memorial that has inspired thousands in service to God.
4. Why would a widow, whose name is not even mentioned, become an inspiration while nothing is said of others?
  - a. Was she the only widow who went to the temple that day? Is there anyone who believes she was?
  - b. What made the difference?
5. There came a day she did something.
  - a. Was it reserved for her alone? NO!
  - b. She gave a gift that showed sacrifice, love and trust in God.
  - c. What she did made the difference.

#### E. Eunice - A mother known to all mothers.

1. Mothers have read of her and her son, Timothy.
  - a. They have felt that they would like their son to be like him.
  - b. 2 Tim. 1:5 <sup>45</sup> “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.”
2. 2 Kin. 11-24:
  - a. There are twelve mothers mentioned with their sons.
  - b. How many know about Eunice but know nothing of these twelve mothers?
  - c. Some of the names of the mothers in Kings we could not even pronounce, and it is not just because the names are difficult; we have just not heard much about them.
  - d. What made the difference? Eunice did something.
3. Eunice believed. Is that beyond any mother today?
4. She transmitted her faith to her son.
  - a. 2 Tim. 1:5 <sup>45</sup> “When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.”
  - b. How did she do it?
    - (1) She taught him the scriptures.
    - (2) 2 Tim. 3:15 <sup>45</sup> “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”
  - c. Here is an unusual woman but she was just an ordinary woman until she did something and what she did, any other woman can do.

#### F. The good Samaritan.

1. Luke 10: (vv. 30-37 <sup>30</sup> And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. <sup>31</sup> And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw *him*, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw *him*, he had compassion *on him*, <sup>34</sup> And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set *him* on his own beast, and brought *him* to an inn, and took care of *him*. <sup>35</sup> And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto *him*, Take care of *him*; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. <sup>36</sup> Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto *him* that fell among the thieves? <sup>37</sup> And he said, He that shewed mercy on *him*. Then said Jesus unto *him*, Go, and do thou likewise.”)

2. The name Samaritan was despised by the Jews.
  - a. The Jews would not have anything to do with them.
  - b. They had the oracles of God committed to them (Rom. 3:1-3 <sup>1</sup>What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision? <sup>2</sup>Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. <sup>3</sup>For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?), yet we find this Samaritan commended in their scriptures and to them, while many of them are condemned.
  - c. What made the difference?
3. The Samaritan's name is a symbol of love and neighborliness.
  - a. Why not the priest and Levite thought of in the same way?
  - b. There came a day when he did something while they did not. They could have done the same thing.
  - c. What the Samaritan did made the difference.

**Conclusion:** There are some whose name lives in infamy (Judas, Demas, etc.) It would have been better for them to have never been born. Was it written in the stars that such be so? NO, what they did made the difference. Let us learn that the difference between ordinary and unusual people is simple the difference between doing and not doing. There are opportunities at hand for all of us. If we will see and use them as the ordinary people of ages past we like them, will become unusual people.