



UNLIKELY EVANGELISTS

Ordinary People Used by an Extraordinary God



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Introduction

What images and emotions come to mind when you hear the word *evangelist*? Many picture a street-corner preacher shouting at passersby. Others feel the anxiety of knocking on doors or passing out gospel tracts to strangers. Feelings of regret or frustration bubble up as we relive moments when we could have been more clear, bold, or loving. Whatever your experience, it's not a stretch to see how polarizing the word *evangelist* can be.

Throughout Scripture, God used people in amazing ways. Stories like Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt or David killing Goliath make it easy to think, "*God would never use me like those people... They're in a completely different league.*" But the more we read, the clearer God's method of operating becomes. We begin to see a pattern. Instead of using the strong, the brave, and the popular, God routinely used people we would never even *consider*. Broken, sinful people... people like us.

As we dive into the stories of a few *unlikely evangelists*, take some time to meditate on God's transformative love and the incredible truth that He works through anyone, not based on *our* ability but *His* power.

It's our prayer that this simple resource would remind you of God's goodness, encourage you to be bold in your faith, and motivate you to be an unlikely evangelist no matter who you are.

Unwanted to Unashamed

John 4:6-10

Jesus, tired as He was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to Him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water...”

John 4:13-18

...Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to Him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.” “I have no husband,” she replied. Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

John 4:28-30

Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” They came out of the town and made their way toward Him.

John 4:39-42

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman’s testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to Him, they urged Him to stay with them, and He stayed two days. And because of His words many more became believers. They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

A social outcast with a bad reputation. God would never use *her*, would He? She's too broken. God only works through clean, put-together people... right?

Jesus engaged the Samaritan woman when no one else would. There's a reason she was at the well alone. He encouraged her, challenged her, and revealed Himself to be the Messiah. She was so amazed that she *ran* back to town, shouting, "Come meet a man who told me all that I ever did!" Did she clearly articulate the gospel? No. Instead, she was a *catalyst*—a giant billboard pointing to Christ. The townspeople were *interested* because of the woman's testimony, but they *believed* when they got to experience Jesus for themselves.

You might think you're unqualified to reach others because of your past or reputation, but the beauty of the gospel is that despite our imperfection, God redeems us and invites us to share how we've been changed with anyone stuck in darkness.

It won't always look like a well-articulated gospel presentation. Sometimes, we're simply catalysts. This woman knew Jesus for a few *minutes*, but God used her to reach an entire town!

Imagine what could happen if we saw ourselves as catalysts intentionally pointing to God's goodness, mercy, love, and our need for Him.

God used a woman with a checkered past. He can use you, too.

Has your reputation ever discouraged you
from sharing your faith? How?

What are some practical ways you could be a "catalyst"
in the lives of others this week?

Overlooked to Overjoyed

————— **Luke 2:8-20** —————

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest Heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into Heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Smelly, unpopular nobodies. God would never use *them*, would He? God has more important people He can use... right?

Being a shepherd in biblical times was not a glamorous job. Imagine spending every day with stinky animals, sleeping in their pen, chasing them around all day, and keeping them away from dangerous areas. It puts a new perspective on Psalm 23. This was not a job sought out by many, but an important job, nonetheless. Like modern-day trash collectors, we might look at the people hurling our week-old banana peels into a big truck and think, “You stay over there, and I’ll stay over here.” Yeah... shepherds.

And yet, God chooses these unlikely people to be some of the first to proclaim the newborn King of the world to the people of Bethlehem! Angels didn’t appear to the rulers or kings but to lowly shepherds in the night. And after the shepherds met the God-child, they couldn’t help but run through the town, telling everyone the good news.

God doesn’t call people to proclaim the gospel because of their status. He calls them often *in spite of* their status. He is glorified in our weakness. God doesn’t just use pastors, missionaries, and theologians. All of us are equipped with the same Spirit and called to the same mission.

God used people who society cast aside. He can use you, too.

Do you feel like people won’t listen to you because
of your social or financial status?

How do our weaknesses highlight the beauty of the gospel?

Trapped to Transformed

————— **Luke 8:27-39** —————

When Jesus stepped ashore, He was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time, this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house but had lived in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at His feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torture me!” For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and He gave them permission. When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So, He got into the boat and left.

The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with Him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return home and tell how much God has done for you.” So, the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

An out-of-control, violent man overcome by evil. God would never use *him*, would He? God has better, more sane people to advance His kingdom... right?

In this amazing story, Jesus is approached by a man possessed by a demon. This man was a danger to himself and others, but instead of sending him away, Jesus intervened. He delivered the demon-possessed man, exercising complete authority over evil and transforming the man's heart and mind.

Conversations about demons are strange to us, but very real in Scripture. The incredible part of this story is what Jesus did *after* the exorcism. When the townsfolk arrived, they found the man in his right mind, sitting at the feet of Jesus, begging to go with Him. But instead, Jesus told the man to go share his story so others might believe.

You may not be possessed by a demon, but sin still has a stronghold in many of our lives. We often avoid sharing our faith because we don't feel "good enough" or because we still have struggles, but the good news is that Jesus defines us, not our sin. We proclaim the gospel believing that Jesus rescues, delivers, and transforms others just as he transformed us.

God used a demon-possessed man. He can use you, too.

How has God met you in your brokenness
and transformed your heart?

In what ways can you now extend grace and hope to others?

Fishermen to Fishers of Men

Acts 4:1-13

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and others of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is "the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone."

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.

Additional Reading

Matthew 4:18-22

Acts 2:14-47

Acts 4:1-22

Uneducated, blue-collar fishermen. God would never use *them*, would He? God wants smarter, more impressive people to advance His Kingdom... right?

Peter and John were simple fishermen. They didn't have a college education, go to a trade school, or have a certificate in anything. They weren't well spoken, they surely weren't the brightest in the town, and they definitely would have been my last pick.

In Matthew 4, Jesus saw Peter and John fishing and said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." He called them despite their lack of qualifications. These fishermen had nothing they could offer Jesus but followed him anyways.

In Acts 4, Peter and John are arrested for boldly preaching the gospel, but that didn't stop them. They doubled down.

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. -Verse 13

These unlikely evangelists weren't the smartest. They had absolutely zero advanced degrees. So, what made them so bold and effective? Their relationship with Jesus. Our effectiveness is not determined by *what* we know, but by *who* we know and how much we rely on Him.

God used a pair of regular, blue-collar guys. He can use you, too.

Am I trusting in my own abilities or resting in God's ability
to save others?

How does intimacy with God lead to more effective evangelism?

Blasphemer to Believer

Acts 9:1-9

Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," He replied. "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. For three days he was blind and did not eat or drink anything.

1 Timothy 1:12-17

I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that He considered me trustworthy, appointing me to His service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display His immense patience as an example for those who would believe in Him and receive eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

A Christian-hunter on a mission to eradicate the message of Jesus. God would never use *him*, would He? He deserves to be punished, not redeemed... right?

Saul, a religious leader on the rise to Jewish celebrity, describes himself as a blasphemer, persecutor, and violent opponent of God, going so far as to call himself the *chief of sinners*. Quite the self-proclaimed title, and he may not be far from the truth.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved. Eph 2:4-5

This might be the most unlikely evangelist in Scripture, but the transformation of Saul—an opponent of God, into Paul—an Apostle and missionary, should make our hearts sing. No one is off limits, no matter their past.

We might encounter *opponents of God* in our own lives, those who attempt to tear down our faith at every possible opportunity. Maybe you've even been that person. But when we are rooted in the gospel, we remember that God can transform even the darkest of hearts.

God used a vicious persecutor. He can use you, too.

Is there anyone I've deemed *off limits* or *too bad* to be transformed by God?

What qualified Saul to participate in God's mission?
What qualifies me?

Broken to Bold

Psalm 51:10-17

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you. Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.

You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

1 John 1:8 – 2:2

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and His Word is not in us.

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Additional Reading

2 Samuel 11-12

Psalm 51

A humbled king, overcome by temptation and lured into terrible sin. God would never use *him*, would He? He only uses good, obedient, and perfect people... right?

David, King of God's people and a man after God's own heart, did something many would deem unforgivable. You can check out the story in 2 Samuel 11. Warning: It's rough. It would be easy to write David off as a screw up.

But God is so amazing that he restores even the most broken, humbled sinners and uses them to advance His Kingdom. In Psalm 51, David repents of his sin. He gets right with God, trusting that God will forgive, but he doesn't stop there.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you. Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise.

David understood that his great sin was no match for the grace of God, and, after turning back to the Lord for forgiveness, he resolved to tell others how merciful God is by using his own failure as an example. Pretty incredible, isn't it?

When we share the gospel, it's easy to be discouraged by our past or feel unworthy. But when we reflect on how our hearts have been transformed and how God has forgiven us, we are emboldened to share our faith with others.

God used a disgraced, humbled king. He can use you, too.

How does God's grace and forgiveness motivate you to reach others with the gospel?

What role does humility play in sharing your faith?

Selfish to Surrendered

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see Him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, He looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So he came down at once and welcomed Him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Luke 18:22-30

When Jesus heard this, He said to [the rich young ruler], “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in Heaven. Then come, follow me.” When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy.

Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.”

Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.” Peter said to Him, “We have left all we had to follow you!” “Truly I tell you,” Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life.”

A hated tax collector on the wrong side. God would never use *him*, would He? He only uses people on His team... right?

Zacchaeus seemingly prioritized all the wrong things and people hated him for it. He worked for the Roman government collecting taxes from the Jewish people and pocketing some of the leftovers. He was rich in the worst way. And yet, Jesus singled him out and said, “I *must* stay at your house today.” God never seems to do things the way we would, does He?

This story stands in stark contrast to the account of the rich young ruler just a chapter earlier in Luke 18. Jesus called the ruler to give up his wealth and follow Him, but the man sadly walked away because of his great wealth.

Not Zacchaeus, though! Jesus ate with this “sinner” and Zacchaeus’ response was repentance, surrender, and ridiculously generous action. Imagine the example to all those watching... “Jesus can transform a man like *that*?”

Zacchaeus’ story is a great reminder to reflect on what God has done in our lives. He rescued and redeemed us from a life of sin, just as He did for this greedy tax collector. Much like Zacchaeus’ incredible generosity, we are called to live lives on display—lives that point to the transformative work of Christ and our allegiance to Him.

God used a man who wronged thousands. He can use you, too.

How can your story of transformation point people to Jesus?

How can you see people as Christ saw them, regardless of their background or status?

What About You?

These seven characters span hundreds of years, various cultures, social classes, and experiences. And yet, their stories sing one thing in perfect harmony: God doesn't require perfect professionals, just faithful followers.

Regardless of how we've experienced it in the past, evangelism is not an event. It's an overflow. God has given you a new heart, a story, and a voice. He saved you, forgives you, and calls you to live a life on mission.

When the enemy whispers that you are unworthy, remind him of the cross. When he whispers that God is disappointed in you, remind him of your redemption. And when he whispers that God could never use someone like *you*, remind him that God loves working through *Unlikely Evangelists*.



At Always Going, we don't teach tips and tricks, but an outward-focused worldview that will excite you to join God's mission and have you looking for gospel conversations with anyone, at any time, and anywhere.

Visit the website or reach out to learn more or get involved!

