



## Ordinary People Having Extraordinary Impact

### The Prostitute, Orphan, Shepherd and Slave

Christians and the Christian church seem to have lost almost all of their influence and impact on our culture, political discourse, and the direction our nation is heading today. It seems like we are going from bad to worse on a daily basis and worse is accelerating at an ever-increasing pace. The effectiveness of the Church is highly dependent on individual willing to humble themselves, walk righteously before God, exercise their spiritual gifts, pray and to stand against evil. We as Christians can learn much from the stories of four unlikely old testament individuals, a prostitute, an orphan, a shepherd, and a slave. In the process we will see why God chose to use these individuals and how God worked through them to accomplish His purpose and bless all the families of earth.



- Rahab – Canaanite prostitute in Jericho
- Esther – Orphaned Jewish captive in Persia
- David – Young shepherd boy
- Joseph – Teenage boy sold into slavery

But before we look at how God used these unlikely individuals we will first need to look at why God chooses to use people like them to implement His plans in the first place. The following two slides give us a window into how God operates and why He uses some people but not others to accomplish His plans.



## Understanding God's Ways

- **Isaiah 55:8-9** *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth So are My ways higher than your ways. And My thoughts than your thoughts”*
- **1 Corinthians 1:27** *“But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty”*
- **Philippians 4:13** *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”*
- **Isaiah 42:8** *“I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another, Nor My praise to craved images.”*

1 Corinthians 1:27 ***“But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.”*** gives us insight into why God chose these four characters, and this also tells us why He can use people like you and me if we follow His plan in His power His way. The first requirement to be used by God is to walk righteously before Him by believing and trusting Him through faith. Hebrews 11:6 ***“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”***



## God's Call to Righteousness

- **Romans 4:3** *“... Abraham believed God, and it was **accounted to him for righteousness.**”*
- **Romans 10:9-10** *“that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one **believes unto righteousness,** and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*
- **1 John 1:9** *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to **cleanse us from all unrighteousness**”*
- **Romans 1:17** *“... The **righteous shall live by faith**”*
- **James 5:16** *“... The effective, **fervent prayer of a righteous** man avails much.”*

God calls each of us to righteousness. The day we accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior God imputed positional righteousness (salvation) to our account that can never be taken from us. When we commit and live with unconfessed sins in our life we break our fellowship with Him and cannot expect Him to hear and respond to our prayers as we live in a state of unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 ***“if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*** To be used by God we need to maintain our fellowship with Him and be cleansed from all unrighteousness by regular confession of our known sins then God will cleanse us from our known and unknown sins so we can live a life of power, righteousness, and fellowship with Him.

Our first character is Rahab a Canaanite prostitute who through faith showed mercy, kindness, and hospitality by hiding Joshua’s two spies from the king of Jericho. We can see Rahab’s heart in Joshua 2:9-12 where she says ***“I know that the LORD has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea ... and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites ... whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things our hearts melted ... for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.”*** James’ discourse on biblical faith says this about Rahab in Hebrews 11:31 ***“By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies in peace.”*** Rahab’s reward for putting her life on the line and having the faith to trust God for her protection is seen in Matthew where he outlines the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Matthew 1:5 ***“Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king.”***

Our second character is an Orphaned Jewish girl whose family was carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon. Esther 2:7 ***“And Mordecai had brought up ... Esther, his uncle’s daughter... The young woman was lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.”*** King Ahasuerus, the king of Persia was looking for a new queen after he banished queen Vashti for disobedience. An order was sent out to all the provinces of Persia to gather beautiful virgins to the citadel of Shushan, to be given beauty treatments to see who would become the new queen of Persia. Esther was also taken into the king’s palace where she found favor with Hegai the eunuch in charge of all the young virgins. Esther 2:15 ***“Now when the turn came for Esther ... to go into the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king’s eunuch advised. And Esther obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her.”*** Esther 2:17 ***“The king loved Esther more than all the other women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight ...”*** Sometime after Esther became queen Ahasuerus ordered all his servants to bow down and pay homage to Haman a leading prince of Persia. Mordecai, the Jew who raised Esther refused to bow down and pay homage to Haman because he only bowed down and worshiped the Lord God. In a fit of rage Haman plotted to destroy all the Jews in Persia. When Mordecai heard Haman’s plot he sent Esther a message asking her to intervene with the king to save the Jews. Esther 4:14-16 ***“For if you remain completely silent at***

*this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Then Esther told them ... Go, gather all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so, I will go to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish."*

Esther's intervention resulted in saving the Jewish remnant from destruction by Haman.

Our third character was a shepherd boy named David thought to be unworthy of coming to his father's banquet with the prophet Samuel who planned to anoint one of Jesse's sons as the future king of Israel. Being a shepherd was one of the lowest positions in Jewish society usually given to a youngest sons, a single male or hired hand. When evaluating people God does not use the same criteria as man. When Samuel was trying to pick Jesse's oldest sons Eliab as the new king of Israel God told Samuel in 1 Samuel 16 *"Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."* We see David's heart for God in many biblical passages none more so than his battle with Goliath. 1 Samuel 17:45-47 *"... You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you... Then this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's and He will give you into our hands."* David killed Goliath, eventually became the king of Israel, and Jesus Christ became one of his descendants. Apostle Paul says this about David in Acts 13:22 *"... He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'"*

Our fourth character is Joseph who was hated by his own brothers for being Jacob's favored son, giving bad reports about them, and gloating about dreams that they would all bow down before him. His brother hated him so much they plotted to kill him, but Judah convinced them to sell him as a slave for 20 shekels (8 oz) of silver. A captain of Pharaoh's guard, Potiphar, bought Joseph from the Ishmaelites. Genesis 39:2-4 says this about Joseph *"The Lord was with Joseph, and ... his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD made all he did to prosper in his hand. So, Joseph found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him overseer of his house and all that he had he put under his authority."* We see Joseph's heart when Potiphar's wife tried to seduce him Genesis 39:9 *"There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"* Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph and said he tried to seduce her, so Potiphar had Joseph thrown into prison. Genesis 39:21-23 *"But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He gave him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who were in the prison; ... The keeper of the prison did not look into anything that*

***was under Joseph's authority, because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did the LORD made it prosper.*** Pharaoh had thrown the chief butler and baker into prison and they both had dreams which Joseph interpreted correctly for them. Then Joseph said to the butler who would return to his previous position with Pharaoh. Genesis 40:14-15 ***"...please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh and get me out of this house. For ... I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon."*** The butler forgot about Joseph until the Pharaoh had a dream that no one was able to interpret. The Pharaoh sent for Joseph to get an interpretation of his dream and Joseph said to Pharaoh, Genesis 41:16 ***"It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh an answer..."*** Joseph proceeded to give Pharaoh the interpretation of the dream giving God the honor and glory for the interpretation. Then Pharaoh said to Joseph Genesis 41:39-40 ***"Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, there is no one as discerning and wise as you. You shall be over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you."***

When we look at our four unlikely characters in depth we see that they had several qualities in common that allowed God to work his plan through them. If we expect our prayers, our actions, deeds, and words to have similar oversized impacts on our culture, our families, and the nation we need to work at honing these same characteristics.



- First and foremost, they found favor with God through their belief and trust in Him and He accounted it to them as righteousness
- They found favor with men through their actions, deeds and words
- They put their faith in God and His provision
- They committed to do what was right in God's eyes up to and including their own death
- They honored God with their words and actions

God works through people but on His terms not ours. We will only overcome the evil woke agenda if we are working in God's power, on God's plan and God's way. Lucky for us God gave us His plan to restore our nation to health in 2 Chronicles 7:14 ***"if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sins and heal their land."***

I believe a large segment of the world's population views most Christians as judgmental, intolerant, hypocritical, unmerciful, unloving, and not all that kind, gentle or patient. If we are truly walking in a state of righteous fellowship with God then everyone around us should see the fruits of the spirit as God works through us. Galatians 5:22-23 ***“But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”*** When the world cannot see the fruits of the spirit in our lives we are most likely not walking in righteous fellowship with God and we are unlikely to find favor with men as Rahab, Esther, David, and Joseph. Our prayers, actions, deeds, and speech will likely not have the impact we want to have on this nation and the people around us.

I would like to close with a challenge to everyone in this room who would like to add power to their prayer life.



- **Memorize - 1 John 1:9** “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
- **Read - The Sermon on the Mount** Matthew chapters 5-7 every day for a month
- **Memorize - 2 Chronicles 7:14** “if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray, and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land.”