

Intro: Years ago I heard the true story of a Pastor in an airport people watching. Two brothers argument: Fight! CHANGE? Education, Military, Government, Social Services, Nothing going to change the trajectory: What would change? The only thing is Jesus, Heart Change: And THAT comes from the Church. The Church is the HOPE Of the World

RTBC Mission Statement: *RTBC is Real People with Real Faith Building Real Community in order to transform our world for Jesus Christ.* Everything we do is targets at that ultimate outcome.

For the next 4 weeks we are going to unpack that statement one piece at a time. All along the way we want to keep our ultimate mission in focus. We want to TRANSFORM our world for Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus is the single most important factor in bring REAL transformation to the world as we know it. Nothing Else Can!

**Today I want to talk with you about the first part of that statement: REAL PEOPLE: What do we mean when we say that we are REAL PEOPLE. In order to understand that I want to look at 3 brief character studies of 3 different people that God used to change their world. Each of them was what we are calling: REAL PEOPLE Not super spiritual; Not Extra Holy; Not Incredibly Gifted people.
REAL PEOPLE Flaws, Problems, Fears:**

1. Moses: The Unwilling Transformer!

Ex 3-4

When Moses was called by God he did EVERYTHING he could to resist God's call. Though he ultimately ended up being one of if not the most important man in Jewish history, Moses was an UNWILLING servant. Over and over again he objected to God's call, until God finally refused to take NO for an answer.

5 Objections

- | | | |
|------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • Ch 3:11: | Who am I that I should go to Pharoah? | "I am nothing special!" |
| • Ch 3:13 | Who are YOU? | God, I don't even know you! |
| • Ch 4:1 | What if no one believes me? | What if I fail!? |
| • Ch 4:10 | I'm not eloquent! | I'm not GOOD enough/No skill |
| • Ch 4:13 | Send someone Else! I don't want to! | The REAL problem! |

Ch 4:14: God's anger burned against Moses: Just Go Do What I Told You To do!

Moses was an UNWILLING transformer. When called by God to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt Moses did everything in his power to find a way out. He ultimately did what God called him to do...whined all the way!

Just like Moses, you and I use all the same excuses today! We hear the call from God, or, we see the need around us and think...SOMEONE should do something about that...But then...the questions start...and the objections begin to be raised in our heads...and we talk ourselves out of doing what God is calling us to.

2. Paul: The Unexpected Transformer!

Phil 3; Acts 9

The early church was growing, and God is going to move it beyond the nation of Israel, out into the entire Roman Empire, so he finds a man that can bridge the gap. A trained Jewish Pharisee, a Roman Citizen and a man of incredible passion and leadership ability. One little problem: He hated Christians! And Jesus! Not to worry...Jesus meets Saul the Pharisee on the Road to Damascus, knocks him down, changes his name, reorients his entire frame of reference. He takes the single most UNEXPECTED man you might ever imagine and changes him from a Persecutor of the Church to a Passionate Advocate of the Church..in an instant! No one expected this...least of all Saul...Now Paul...the greatest evangelist/church planter the Christian church has ever know. But..UNEXPECTED!

- Phil 3:4-6: Impeccable Jewish References: (Trained, Respected, Trusted)
- A Roman Citizen: Tarsus: (With all rights an privileges!)
- Acts 9: A Passionate Persecutor of the early church: On way to Damascus to arrest/imprison
- Acts 9:10-16 Well known...and FEARED by the Early Church:

- Vs 13: Ananias: Are you SURE? Paul...The Persecutor...He is coming to arrest me...And what..you want to EXPEDITE the process and send me to HIM?
- Acts 9:26 Disciples so confused they refused to meet with him until Barnabas intervened!

Paul's past would seem to eliminate him from consideration as a man that could be used to transform the world for Christ. He was a passionate persecutor, a man committed to the destruction of the church, a trained Pharisee, the ruling religious class of Israel...and all of that would have to be put aside: IT WAS!

3. Peter The Unprepared:

Luke 5:1-11

Peter, along with Paul was one of the two early leaders of the church. Paul went to the gentiles, and Peter focused on the Jewish nation in Jerusalem. Paul had education, citizenship and pedigree. Peter none of that. Even today biblical scholars comment on the difference between the grammar and vocabulary of Paul's letters versus Peter's. Paul and Luke were polished, educated and complex. Peter was simple, rustic.

Yet, Peter was called just as clearly...Jesus didn't ask Peter or Paul if they wanted in...Just called them

- Hijacked Peter's boat:
- Kept him awake after a long night of fruitless work when he would rather have been home sleeping
- Insulted him by telling the fisherman how to fish!
- Called his bluff when Peter was like...It wont work.."But if YOU say so I will!"
- Embarrassed him by showing him up...

Peter was so caught off guard that he begged Jesus to go away! Peter was entirely unprepared to be one of the leaders of the early church...but Jesus made him one! He had no training, no education, no experience. The ONLY thing Peter had...was OBEDIENCE! That one thing was enough: "Because YOU say so....I will!"

3 Principles We Need To Understand About God Using "Real People!"

1. God isn't looking for ABILITY: He is looking for AVAILABILITY! Everything else...He will supply. Only YOU can supply that! You have to bring that to the table. Moses struggled with it, Paul did...Peter did...You and I have that same struggle. Illus: Most common failure I see in ministry: Unfulfilled Potential!

2. God is not concerned with your PAST...He is looking at your FUTURE! We all have a past! Moses did, Paul did. A murderer and a persecutor. Illus: I tell teens, young Pastor's: The measure of a man (or woman) is not whether or not you fail. We all do! The measure is what you do AFTER you fail! Do you throw in the towel...or do you get up...and go forward with God's help. You have a past..so what. God knows your past...and He has a future for you better than anything you could ever imagine: To Him who is able....

3. God is not concerned with your OBJECTIONS...He simply wants your OBEDIENCE! If you are looking for objections...they are easy to find. Like Moses...and Like Paul...and Like Peter...it's easy. What is NOT easy is OBEDIENCE. God is looking for obedience!

CONCL: Here is the reality. God uses REAL PEOPLE to transform our world for Jesus. People like Moses who was Unwilling...and like Paul who was Unexpected...and people Like Peter who was Unprepared.

Just as He used them...He wants to use you! THAT'S what we mean in our mission statement. We are real people...with real faith, building real community in order to transform our community or Jesus Christ.

3 Questions for you this morning!

1. Are you AVAILABLE to God?
2. Are you looking at the FUTURE?
3. Are you willing to be OBEDIENT?

If you have those three things....You have EVERYTHING you need to make a difference in your world!

Age doesn't matter: Mary was probably 15 or 16 Simeon 70 or older
 Gender doesn't matter: God used both Esther and Nehemiah to rescue His people
 Social Standing doesn't matter: Isaiah was a nobleman...and a prophet. Amos was a migrant worker!
 Education doesn't matter: Paul had the best schools...Harvard! Peter...The school of hard knocks!
 Race Doesn't Matter: Paul was a Jew, Barnabas was a Gentile, Ruth was a Moabite, Rahab was a Cannanite,

God uses anyone and everyone that meets three simple criteria:

- 1. Are you AVAILABLE to God?**
- 2. Are you looking at the FUTURE?**
- 3. Are you willing to be OBEDIENT?**

When you leave the worship center today...you are going to have to answer those questions. Will you rush off...or will you take a moment...walk through the ministries and service opportunities...and find your place in the mission of this church.

We have some great things going: Food; New TShirts; 2 tablets to give away...but those aren't the real prize.

The real prize is being used by God to see spiritual transformation because YOU made a difference

The real prize is building community...(we discovered we NEED it)

The real prize is knowing that YOU can be used of God...If you are OBEDIENT, AVAILABLE, FUTURE

TICKETS: On way out ushers will give you two tickets....One green and one Blue: Two opportunities to win a tablet. All you do is go...either sign up to get involved...or sign up to get information. No obligation. Then turn in your ticket...and hope you win!