

**Next Level Church – December 5, 2021**  
**“HIStory – Part 1 – When Ordinary becomes Extraordinary”**

**Welcome – Cape Coral, East, Online Family, everyone here in Fort Myers! It was such an honor to see so many of you out serving yesterday! Orange Army was STRONG!**

- We get to be family together....THANK GOD that He's placed us in this family.

**Pastor Matt sends his love – he is ministering to one of our Network Churches – Epic Church in Buffalo, NY! Drew is with him & is hoping to see snow.**

**But for real, way to be in God's house – putting Him first (even though this season can be crazy, but when we prioritize our relationship with Jesus we are reminded what this season is all about!)**

**So, I'm excited to kick off our Christmas series HIS Story – but before we get there...do you know that Christmas is 20 days away!?!**

- **Who watched a Christmas movie this week?** Elf, Home Alone, The Grinch, HALLMARAK?!!!
- **Who purchased a gift this week?**
  - Who got side-tracked and instead bought something for yourself??
- **Who is finished shopping?**
- **Who hasn't even started?** Those who are finished, can you please help those of us who haven't even started? WE NEED YOUR HELP!!

**Speaking of Gifts – Next week is our HFTH Offering (hold up envelope & info card)**

- Encourage you to **PRAY** and **PAREPARE**
- **Bring your BEST gift next week.** Jesus's birthday that we are celebrating.
- **Not equal giving, but equal sacrifice** – and it is truly more blessed to GIVE – **praying blessing over your lives as you GIVE next week!** Let's bring our **BEST GIFT** to fuel forward His Kingdom.

**Title of Message: When Ordinary becomes Extraordinary**

**PRAY**

**The message of Christmas is simple, but the story of Christmas has depth in history.**

- **Mary** – the virgin who was favored & said yes “I'm the Lord's servant”
- **Joseph** – the engaged man who finds out his wife-to-be is pregnant & thinks about leaving her, but instead is visited by an angel & has an encounter that makes him realize this is all a part of God's plan!
- **Elizabeth** – Mary's cousin who was pregnant at the same time (John the Baptist) and offers protection to her unmarried pregnant cousin.
- **The Magi** who go on a long 2-year journey to find Jesus and they bring gifts & worship him
- **Simeon** who had waited for the Messiah to be born and moved by the Holy Spirit is there to hold Jesus, bless him and prophesy over him and tells Mary that “a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

- **Jesus** - God in flesh who came as a baby...who was raised in a carpenter's home with siblings and ordinary surroundings.

**Isaiah, the prophet, lived in Jerusalem about 700 years before Jesus was born. But he boldly proclaimed that an ultimate answer is coming...**

*Isaiah 9:6-7 "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this."*

- And it happened.
- "The government will be on his shoulders" in other words, when Jesus came, he took the weight of the world and bore it on his own shoulders.
- 700 YEARS later, wow – and I'm whining about a prayer from 3 years ago? Just wait...WOW!

**700 years later...most people at this time didn't know that Jesus being born was history & Those in the story weren't looking to make history.**

- Mary and Joseph weren't looking for followers on Instagram.
- The magi weren't trying to build their platform.
- Simeon probably had no idea that someone was recording his words that day when he held an 8-day old baby.
- Elizabeth was just excited to be experiencing a miracle – I'm sure she had no idea that thousands of years later we would be blown away by her faith!
- They weren't looking to make history, but their yes to follow God and be moved by the Holy Spirit did make history!

**When we allow His story to intersect with our Story, then we are making history!**

**History – two ways to define it:**

- *The record of past events.* (read it in the history book – it's over)
- *Acts, ideas or events that can shape the course of the future.*

**Church, because of Jesus our lives can shape the course of the future. We are history in the making!**

- **We don't see it this way because we know us...And our lives seem pretty ordinary!**
- I'm just a student right now
- I'm just a barista
- I'm an at-home Mom
- I'm a salesman
- I bag groceries – I drive a bus – I deliver mail – I just run my business....(FILL IN THE BLANK)

**I want us to look at some Shepherds who weren't looking to make history either. Their story was pretty ordinary, but something extraordinary was about to take place!**

## Ways to Experience the Extraordinary:

- In Luke 2, we see Jesus born in a manger in Bethlehem

*Luke 2:8-9 “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.”*

### 1. Be faithful to our assignment.

- Ordinary guys – living in the fields – watching their sheep – angel shows up!
- Blows my mind that God could have chosen to tell anyone first (HUGE NEWS) – who should know first?
  - Let’s send an angel to the shepherds! What?
  - These men were just faithful to their assignment, just doing what they’ve always done.
- **ILL: Most of our assignments feel ordinary, but faithfulness will lead to God-opportunities:** Mom’s, you just never know when you are going to hear God’s voice, the moment that you can help shape your child’s view of God... Barista, Salesperson, Student – there will be God-moments if you are looking for them.
- You just never know when you’re ordinary will turn into extraordinary, but you’ve got to stay faithful. Faithful where God has planted & provided. It may not look like much, but with Him, it may be a setup!

*<sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.*

*<sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*

To experience the extraordinary

### 2. Don’t be afraid of the Supernatural.

- Because we have heard & seen this illustrated many times we can loose the reality of what was happening.
- This was a powerful encounter with God & the angel tells them (don’t be afraid – this is good news)
  - Our culture is gripped with FEAR right now – it’s one of the enemies main strategies (to be afraid and not trust God) – sadly we are seeing Christians fall right into this as well. But GOD has not given us a spirit of fear...but of power, love & a sound mind!
- So, when God has something extraordinary for us, it will often come in the form of the unknown. “I’ve never experienced that before!” Don’t let fear hold you back...
  - **Never sang in public or Raised hands in worship (FEAR)**
  - **Never prayed out loud (what will they think – FEAR)**
    - What if the extraordinary is on the other side of you pushing back that fear?
  - **TODAY: Baptism happening today – if you never publicly proclaimed Jesus...today can be your day! “I don’t like crowds” “I get nervous” “What if...” (Don’t be Afraid)**
- Jesus has good news for you – it’s great JOY – there is nothing to fear in His love!!!

*<sup>15</sup> 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.” <sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.*

*To experience the extraordinary*

### **3. Responded to God quickly.**

- They said – “let’s go” “they hurried off!”
  - They didn’t stand around and say, “well, I’m kind of tired...maybe tomorrow” “I need to figure out the sheep”
    - No, “this thing that the Lord has told us about” – we’ve got to go SEE!
- **ILL: How often do we put off the good thing that God has for us?**
  - I know I should serve // God spoke to me about tithing // I know what I’m supposed to give for Kingdom Builders...but maybe I’ll wait...maybe not yet.
- **CHURCH – we can’t experience the extraordinary if we keep settling for the ordinary!**
  - What is God speaking? What does His Word say? Know that He is Good. His ways are higher than ours. Do it! Respond quickly...stop waiting!

*<sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.*

*To experience the extraordinary*

### **4. Tell Others about Jesus.**

- They spread the word & people were amazed!
- **So excited for many of you who are getting baptized today – you’re telling others!**
- **Challenge all of us to Get Creative this Christmas:** Invitation Cards with homemade cookies, a gift card for your kids teachers with an invitation to come sit with you at church, buy someone’s coffee or meal in drive-through...maybe it looks like slowing down with your family and taking time to share your testimony (Jesus set me free, I am being transformed)

*<sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.*

*To experience the extraordinary*

### **5. Give God all the Glory.**

- No matter how ordinary our day seems. When we encounter Jesus, the extraordinary can happen if we simply choose to worship.
  - **ILL: Woke up with breath (praise), My water was warm (praise), My car started (praise)...Read His Word-reminds me I can trust you (praise) – Glory to God!**
- We often look for the next thing that God will do when we haven’t paused to give him praise for the last thing he did...or even more than that, simply praising him for who He is!
- Some of us will experience the extraordinary when we simply pause, with a heart of gratitude and give God glory (thank you for saving me, for healing me, for delivering me...)

**When we are willing to take our ordinary and let it intersect with Jesus, we will experience the extraordinary.**

## **We can back down from our place, or we can take our place in history!**

- This Christmas season, we have a choice.
- Will we increase our faith and step into this season in history that God has for us?
- Or will we back down, step out, settle for the mundane, believe the lie of the enemy that we are ordinary?

Let's not back down or back out, but let's let our story intersect with His and embrace this season - You are a history-maker and because of Jesus, together, we are making history!

## **Challenge & Prayer**

### **Salvation**

- Stay faithful
- Push back any Fear
- Respond to God (what are you speaking? I will obey)
- Tell Others
- Worship Him alone

Right now is an opportunity to respond to God - Let's worship together  
*"Oh what a Savior, isn't he wonderful..."*