

How many people have seen the Incredibles, the first one? As a parent of four littles I can confess with building into the new one coming out we watched the incredibles several times. So much so that my son thinks he is Dash the middle child. There is this really interesting dynamic between the heroes and the villain. Spoiler alert if you haven't seen it one why not, but two the main villain is introduced at the beginning of the story as Buddy, someone who looked up to his favorite superhero Mr. Incredible, but Buddy wanted to be a superhero more than anything in the world, but Buddy wasn't incredible.. Buddy was one of the "other guys."

I can totally relate to Buddy, especially when it comes to faith. In the bible we have hundreds of stories of incredible things. Things like God audibly speaking to people, God parting the Red Sea, Jesus walking on water, Healing of the blind man, or even bringing the dead back to life. In this book of stories, of incredible things, I would love to see one of those incredible events. I like Buddy want to jump along side my super heros and watch them, but I have never seen a miracle.

Maybe those are just old stories and God doesn't work that way anymore. But I was at this conference this week though and the speaker told her story of how she was lost in her life and broken and then she told us about how God audibly spoke to her, or last week when I was talking to my Dad a pastor about my ministry and he told me God always tells HIM how to do ministry, or my dear friend Rajiv a Pastor in India who tells me of incredible miracles that happen everyday. Rajiv shared with me a story of how there was a bus full of sick kids were brought to the church and they all left healed.

I don't know about anyone here, but I have yet to see or perform a miracle, I have yet to hear God's audible voice telling me something or giving me the answer.

Like Buddy I don't feel incredible, I feel ordinary. I am out of my depth and lost and I don't see or experience God like this in my life. I feel like "the other guy" in all those superhero movies..

Today, we are going to take a moment and investigate what it means to be the "other guy." We are going to see that we are blessed more than we realize and that God works more in Grace than in miracles. Just because we don't see God's flashy, we don't see God's incredible miracles, or hear his voice doesn't mean God is not faithful. In Fact we see how incredible God is to the "other Guys" too, even when it does not look flashy. In this investigation of incredible miracles we will see that when we only look for the big and flashy, we actually miss God's Grace.

So would you stand and join me today in worship as we open our hearts and minds to hear what God is saying to us today.

Message

We are in our summer series, which we're calling "The Way, Way Back". This series is all about the things we learn when we're willing to leave home - aka our comfort zones.

We're in the book of Genesis, following the patriarchs and matriarchs of our faith as they follow God on road trips of their own. These are the incredible heroes of faith having these miraculous encounters. We began the first week with God calling Abram to leave everything he'd ever known and follow him. We marveled at Abram's faithfulness as he set out after God with no plan, only a promise. And we began to consider the journey we're all setting out on as well, how God is calling us to move, to go, to follow into a future that will require us to be a different kind of church.

Scripture Slide

Last week we were here and Sara was pregnant, with Isaac who is the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham. We are jumping into the story and Isaac is a grown man and now he needs a wife to carry on the family. We begin the story with Abraham enlisting his head slave to take on this task of finding a wife for his son. The most important thing this individual has ever done.

Try to imagine being this servant, Abraham calls you into his tent, hey God told me to do this pack everything immediately, I don't know where we are going but we are moving, uprooting everything, leave everything we know behind, and we are probably never coming back. Wait what how, what do you mean God told you, did you get an email or something? Hey God told me I am going to be a father. Wait what your old, what are you like 60? Hey God is here can you go prepare the meal. What the what what do you mean he is here, okay I can't wait to see him, no you stay here I will serve them. You have to imagine this guy trying to peak out of the tent to see what is going on, trying to see what Abraham sees. This servant, this other guy is just trying to run the business and he sees Abraham is witnessing and doing incredible things, but he is running the mundane the everyday affairs, there is no incredible miracles in herding Goats, managing livestock, trading, or digging out the toilets. Everyday chores that don't feel incredible..

So the boss man sends you out with a job to do Finding a wife to continue his family name, but before you leave he tells you to trust God. Hey don't worry God will show up this is the most important mission I have ever given you, but don't worry God will show up and solve it. How many times have they had this conversation and Abraham tells him we will move on faith or we will trust in Yahweh? How many times has the servant rolled his eyes and went on about his work to accomplish what was needed. So you can imagine being this servant and wondering will God show up for me, yes he shows up for Abraham, but will he show up for me. We need to pay attention to the story and its simplicity and then we are going to break it down to see how God moved and worked within the story.

The servant agrees to follow Abraham's way of faith first and prepares to set out.

. 10 Then he loaded ten of Abraham's camels with all kinds of expensive gifts from his master, and he traveled to distant Aram-naharaim. There he went to the town where Abraham's brother

Nahor had settled. 11 He made the camels kneel beside a well just outside the town. It was evening, and the women were coming out to draw water.

12 “O Lord, God of my master, Abraham,” he prayed. “Please give me success today, and show unfailing love to my master, Abraham. 13 See, I am standing here beside this spring, and the young women of the town are coming out to draw water. 14 This is my request. I will ask one of them, ‘Please give me a drink from your jug.’ If she says, ‘Yes, have a drink, and I will water your camels, too!’—let her be the one you have selected as Isaac’s wife. This is how I will know that you have shown unfailing love to my master.”

15 Before he had finished praying, he saw a young woman named Rebekah coming out with her water jug on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel, who was the son of Abraham’s brother Nahor and his wife, Milcah. 16 Rebekah was very beautiful and old enough to be married, but she was still a virgin. She went down to the spring, filled her jug, and came up again. 17 Running over to her, the servant said, “Please give me a little drink of water from your jug.”

18 “Yes, my lord,” she answered, “have a drink.” And she quickly lowered her jug from her shoulder and gave him a drink. 19 When she had given him a drink, she said, “I’ll draw water for your camels, too, until they have had enough to drink.” 20 So she quickly emptied her jug into the watering trough and ran back to the well to draw water for all his camels.

21 The servant watched her in silence, wondering whether or not the Lord had given him success in his mission. 22 Then at last, when the camels had finished drinking, he took out a gold ring for her nose and two large gold bracelets for her wrists.

23 “Whose daughter are you?” he asked. “And please tell me, would your father have any room to put us up for the night?”

24 “I am the daughter of Bethuel,” she replied. “My grandparents are Nahor and Milcah. 25 Yes, we have plenty of straw and feed for the camels, and we have room for guests.”

I don’t know about you, but I didn’t see an angel come down and point “hey it’s this one right there” or an angel appear to the girl and say “hey there’s gonna be a guy here today water his camels and invite him over.” There was not an eclipse or a ray of heavenly light spotlighting her out. There was this simple interaction kindness, and welcome, but this servant sees God at work.

I have to be honest the way I would see this is coincidence, I see the ordinary workings of life. I don’t see anything special, I don’t see the flashy, or an audible voice. We want the miracle, we want the angel, we want the ray of lights, we want the loud audible voice, we want the eclipse, the multiplying fish, the lame to walk, the sick to be healed. We thrive on the dramatic. We want that because it moves us into certainty. That’s the hard part isn’t it, we all want the certainty.

Faith doesn't come naturally to us, it is not something that is easy. We have to admit to ourselves. Maybe some of us are not even as faithful as this servant. Maybe some of us can't see how God's moving.

What is a life with no faith, what is a life that presents us the answers before we know the question. What is a life that is all about the destination and not the journey. We can not skip past faith, God invites us into a life of faith. Another way to ask it might be what is a life without drive and passion? Spiritually faith is what drives us to certainty and knowledge like our passions drive us to joy. Faith is God's invitation to life like passion is our doorway to fulfillment. We can't enjoy life without passion just like we can't fully embrace our spiritual life without faith.

Are we missing the work that God's doing because we are waiting on a miracle, are we missing how God is moving through grace? Like this servant can we stop and recognize God at work? Are we missing the grace in our daily lives? The food on the table, the house over our heads, the fact that we live in the U.S. The kindness and hospitality around us. So are we missing the divine providence that God makes a way for us, that God is daily moving in our lives Abraham's servant found God at work in ordinary everyday acts. What would happen if we looked for God in our ordinary everyday lives? What if we are missing the reality that are lives are incredible?

How could the servant have been so confident? When we see faith we think of blind trust, we turn off our brains and we just wait and that's why we are always looking for the incredible miracles. Faith gave the servant the confidence to believe the things he may have never seen, but to see God working.

Hebrews 11:1 says that "Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see" "Faith is a way we choose to see the world. "Not that God only shows up in the big and Flashy, but God is near, not God in just in incredible miracles, but God in the continual everyday action of grace. Faith in God is putting complete confidence and trust into the invitation he has given us. An invitation to join him in a life of faith.

For us today faith is not something that we need to drum up more of to have our miracles, it is not like we are not spinning the right mix of prayers and faith and that is why we are not seeing these incredible miracles.

Faith is looking and finding God's presence, provision, and divine providence. We all woke up this morning, we all just took a breath, we all have clothes on, we all live in a country abundant with opportunity. We all have access to God's love and Grace. Faith is seeing that God is constantly working in everything and through everything that God is with us. Maybe some us can chalk it all up to coincidence, or hard work, or planning, but faith is the invitation to see and to believe in the work God is doing, in the ordinary, in the coincidences, in the hospitality and welcome, and in God working in the everyday. That God works through the ordinary to constantly invite us to the divine.

I know it can be hard to see this, I have been there. I can't tell you how many times I have had an obstacle, my world has crumbled around me, or I have a had a pressing decision to make and I wanted my miracle. I would talk to my Christian friends and they would say just pray God will answer. God never did in an audible voice. What was wrong with me? I have prayed for clear signs. I have prayed for an audible voice, I have prayed for a clear decisive decision. I am "the other guy." I can relate to the servant that shakes his head at Abraham and goes on about his way. I have heard people like Abraham that have said God said this, go this direction, or God told me to do this, but I haven't.

Many times in my life I have been presented with decisions, much like anyone here. I remember very specifically a few years ago I was praying for a miracle. I thought that if I had enough faith, I prayed enough, and I fasted enough that I would be able to see the miracle. That God would show up in the incredible.. Through the time frame of about 6 months I watched and waited and I never got my miracle. I was sad and thought there was something wrong with me or maybe I didn't have enough faith. Years later I have come to realize, and see God at work in that time and process. I can look back and see all the groundwork that was paved for me, all the knowledge, experience, and provision that was a part of my everyday life in those 6 months. I see how God changed, changes, and will change people's lives and provides all the same. I can now look back and see how God specifically made a way for all those involved even though there was nothing incredible. I saw God mend, heal, and transform others. I chose to see God at work instead of wait for a miracle. I look back and I missed my miracles in the everyday ordinary things around me. I missed God at work. Faith is choosing to see God at work, all around us, in the dull, in the mundane, in the ordinary things.

The people in this story today, did not experience a miracle, they experienced God's grace and divine provision, just like we do everyday. They see God at work in the regular and everyday. They choose to see God's way, they chose to have complete confidence in what God is doing and how he is working in their lives and surroundings. That is the faith God invites us too.

In the incredibles as the movie progresses we meet Buddy again, but we meet him as Syndrome. His desire to be incredible has turned him into a villain. We see that the moral of the movie is that you don't need to be a super to be incredible. What it means to be incredible is to look for the ordinary everyday chances to embody, goodness, kindness, and hospitality. To live a life of faith.

We have this same opportunity today we can choose to see the world like everyone else, like a series of coincidences or we can choose to see the world as a place where God is working. We can come to the communion table today and have bread and juice or we can come to the communion table and watch the ordinary become incredible.

Examen + Communion

[Communion Slide] When Jesus gathered his followers the night before he was killed, he didn't give them a miraculous sign from heaven. He simply invited them to share a meal with him.

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Read over this and reword anything you don't think sounds like you! <3

During that meal, he broke bread and offered it to them as his body, broken for them. He offered a cup of wine. He said, 'This is my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sin.'

At this table, Jesus affirms for us that our ordinary world is incredible. God is present with us in every moment, every high, every low. Every incredible and every boring thing. We come to the table to find this God who is everywhere.

You don't have to be a member of Catalyst to receive communion with us today. If you're hungry for an incredible, ordinary meal, if you're aching to find God everywhere in your life, God says to come to the table.

I'm going to lead us in a prayer of examen before we come to the table. I'll ask you four questions and give you space to reflect prayerfully on them. Then I'll pray for us all, and as you're ready, you can come to the table.

1. Where have I seen God working around me in the last week?
2. Where in the last week did I ignore God, or forget to look for God?
3. Where in the next week might I ignore or forget to look for God?
4. How can I choose to watch for God this week?

God, our creator and giver of life,

You gathered us today that we might hear this good news: that you are not only with the heroes, the incredible giants of faith. We have seen in the story of your servant Abraham's servant that you are with all of us little guys, too.

We approach your table this morning to receive an affirmation of this truth in this meal you share with us. To show us your love, you gave us simple bread and wine. We ask now that these wafers and juice we receive become a spiritual food, that in these moments we would be enfolded into the incredible mystery at the heart of our faith: that you are with us always and everywhere.

Send us from this place with eyes that see your work. Make us a people who, like the servant in today's story, tell everyone we meet how we see you working in and around us.

We offer these prayers and approach your table in the name of your son, Jesus.