



ENTER God's presence

Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers

Psalm 1:1-3

Lord God, you made all of heaven and earth and everything you made is good. Help us to be like trees planted by streams of water. As we gather now and abide together in your word, may it be in us, a well of living water which springs to eternal life in Jesus. Amen



SHARE life together

- 1. How have you seen Jesus at work in your life this week?**
- 2. Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?**
- 3. What is the most extraordinary thing that has happened in your life so far? How did it come about?**
- 4. How does perspective change whether we see something as ordinary or extraordinary?**

Television producers are on the hunt for it. Recruiters and talent scouts endeavour to unearth it. Entrepreneurial leaders build it in to their business or product. Marketers just love it. And most of us secretly wish we had it. The X-factor. The mastery of those with the X-factor leaves us in awe. They see things the rest of us don't see, they do things that defy explanation. The X-factor transforms something from run of the mill, average or ordinary into something extraordinary. We live in a culture that revels in the special, and the extraordinary. We are drawn to the new and unusual like moths to a flame. But that relegates the lives we live each day to something that is ordinary, boring, bland and definitely lacking the X-factor. But today we see how it is the ordinariness of every day life that the Spirit is at work in ordinary people and ordinary acts and daily faithfulness to add to the Kingdom, the lives of those who are being saved. It may not be a life that has the X-factor, but it will be a life that is filled with the Spirit, and with a power that daily renews, restores, revitalises and recreates your life through ordinary acts.

Week beginning
Sunday 30th May 2021

Worship series:
Getting Our Acts Together



VERSE for the week

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people.

Acts 2:46-47a



REMEMBER this week

**Ordinary acts
+ ordinary people
+ normal life
+ Holy Spirit
= faithful obedience and
grace-filled outcomes**



LISTEN attentively

Read Acts 2:42-47 and 4:31-37

5. **What do you find challenging/confusing/comforting about this text?**
6. **What do these two passages have in common? What is unique about each of them?**
7. **What elements of life in the early church do you wish we saw more of today? Which do you think we still do pretty well?**

Although the book of Acts is certainly full of incredible, extraordinary stories of God at work through the apostles and the early believers, what is easy to miss is that these incredible events take place as the early Christians and apostles are simply going about ordinary everyday life. They continued going to the temple courts like usual, they ate and drank together, they cared for and were generous to each other. None of these acts were remarkable on their own, but the lives of these early Christians, transformed by the gospel of Jesus, and drawn together in unity through the presence of the Holy Spirit were used by God in extraordinary ways.

8. **Have you ever travelled overseas or visited somewhere you were unfamiliar with the customs and traditions? How did the locals react to you?**
9. **Who are some people that you consider to be extraordinary? What makes them stand out to you?**

Ordinary, common, everyday things often get overlooked. Maybe you have heard people remark more recently that, 'common sense just isn't as common these days'. Many of the things we took for granted as assumed knowledge ten to fifteen years ago simply can't be assumed anymore. For example – according to a recent 'Faith in Australia' report from McCrindle research 1 in 29 Australians have not even heard of Jesus! There was a time in Australia when being a Christian was normal and ordinary, in many ways it was easier because everybody was on the same page. But in the 'ordinariness' did we come to overlook or neglect the extraordinary nature of the new life we have in Christ Jesus? Have we forgotten what 'normal life looks like for a Christian?

10. **If being a Christian and being familiar with the story of Jesus is increasingly less common in Australia, how might the authentic Christian life of a disciple of Jesus be seen as extraordinary in the wider community?**
11. **Living ordinary and united lives of love and service, the early church in Acts enjoyed the favour of all the people. What do you think are some of the reasons that cause people to have a negative opinion of Christians and the church in general.**



GROW deeper

Given all of the negative attention that the church has had in the media over the last twenty or so years, many Christians have laid aside some of the things that should contribute to the everyday life of a Christian, in order to 'blend in' with their community, to gain acceptance and to avoid being tarred with the same brush as those who have brought the church and Christianity into disrepute.

Have a look at John 15:18-19, John 17:13-18, and 1 Peter 2:11-12

There are two important things going on here. Firstly Jesus himself acknowledged in John's gospel, that when we are allied with him, when he calls us out of the world and into his kingdom, that the world will hate us as it hated him. We should not be surprised by that. When we realise that the messages and offers of the world are wrong and we are led to recognise Jesus as Lord, we can expect everyone to enjoy being told that they are wrong. However in 1 Peter we see the flipside of this. Even though they might hate and accuse us, when we allow the Holy Spirit of God to transform our lives into good, honest, righteous lives full of Christian love and service to others, those who hate us will still have not option but to notice how different we are and to give thanks for the contribution we make to their neighbourhoods, toward and cities.

12. What does it mean to you to 'be in the world but not of the world'?

13. In what ways does your life look different to the world around you?



LIVE purposefully

Martin Luther was always very careful to remind people that nothing we do ever counts as a good work. Left to our own devices, even our most generous acts of service towards others are usually motivated by selfish desires, either the expected return of the favour or the notoriety of being a generous person. Only when we are led and motivated by the Holy Spirit do our ordinary acts become something that stands out. It is God who transforms our normal, ordinary existence in the world, into something extraordinary, and it is God, as he works through us and our transformed lives that call other to himself and adds daily to the number of those who are being saved.

14. Where have you seen an ordinary act in your life transformed and used by God to draw someone closer to himself?

15. What areas of your life may God still be wanting to transform so that you look less 'ordinary' (like the world) and more extraordinary (like Jesus)?

16. What spiritual practices might you want to make a more 'ordinary' part of your life or routine? What will you do this week to make it a more 'normal' part of your everyday life?



PRAY intentionally

- Praise God for redeeming his creation through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and for making you extraordinary through faith in him.
- Ask God to help us as the LifeWay family of churches to always be a place where people encounter the extraordinary love and forgiveness of Jesus.
- Continue to pray for those severely affected by the Covid-19 crisis and particularly those in Victoria, India and Cambodia. May the extraordinary love and care of your people in those places be evident to all, and may it bring many more people into your kingdom.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

[Name], the Spirit of Christ is working through your life. Amen.