Misfit Mission – Scott Chrostek

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Excerpt #1

What if we didn’t focus first on the well-known or venerated, but instead immersed ourselves in the volumes of Scripture. What if we relied solely on God’s immeasurable and unpredictable stories?

As you turn through the pages of Scripture you’ll uncover the most formative, encouraging and, perhaps, surprising lessons on leadership ever.  Jesus says, *“The one who believes in me**will also do the works that I do**and, in fact, will do greater works than these.” - John 14:14, NRSV.[[1]](#endnote-1)*

No matter how imperfect or fallible we might feel throughout our lives, Jesus reminds us that the God of the Universe creates us with a capacity to do the things that He does, in fact, greater things.  This is extraordinary.

Do you believe this?

Do you feel as though you are capable of doing the things that God does?  Or doing even greater things?

In John 14, Jesus assures us of our capacity to change the world, and then he encourages us to go to work.

Apostle Paul encourages us to do the same thing. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes to his community from a dark, dank, unsanitary prison.  As he addresses his church in Ephesus he offers them (and us) a similar lesson on leadership.  Paul writes of God’s immeasurable and unpredictable power, saying, *“To Him, who by the power at work within us, is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.” Ephesians 5:38, NRSV.[[2]](#endnote-2)*

In confinement Paul reminds his congregation, that no matter how dark, dank or unsanitary things become, even if you find yourself in prison, by God’s grace we have the power to change the world.  It doesn’t matter how stuck, how inadequate or how hopeless you feel, by the power of God’s grace we are able to accomplish the extraordinary (abundantly far more than anything you could ask for or imagine).

Do you feel stuck? Are you without hope?

Are you sitting at a crossroads?

If you are, do you believe that you are able to accomplish abundantly far more than anything you could ask for or imagine?

Paul encourages us from prison, sitting shackled in darkness, to believe just this.

At a time when the whole Roman world would have written Paul off, the Apostle Paul pressed on. Paul even had the strength to encourage others along the way, saying, *‘Even when you are imprisoned like me, shackled by chains, God is able to use you, work through you, maybe even in spite of you to accomplish the extraordinary. Through Christ all things possible.’*

This is God’s call and scriptural promise to us. We are capable of surpassing expectations.  We are capable of surprising the status quo.  We are created and gifted with a capacity to do the things that God does, even greater things.  We are filled with the grace of Jesus Christ that allows us to accomplish abundantly far more than anything we could ask for or imagine.

Scripture reaffirms this time and time again.  All throughout the Bible you’ll find story after story of God calling ordinary people (like you and me) to do extraordinary things and what’s more is that they actually do them.  This is what it looks like to be a part of the Misfit Mission.

In Exodus, God called Moses (a murderer) to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery. He was one of God’s Misfits.  In Jeremiah, God called Jeremiah (a boy) to pluck up and tear down, to plant and overthrow.  He was one of God’s Misfits.  In the Gospels, the angel of the Lord informed Mary (a young unwed virgin), that she was going to conceive and bear a child and he will be the Messiah, the Lord.  Mary was one of God’s Misfits.  In each of these accounts, God called unlikely candidates to do extraordinary things, and upon doing so, God reminds and assures us saying, *“Look! You did not choose me, but I have chosen you.”*

It doesn’t matter who you are or where you’ve been, because at the heart of God’s story is the simple fact that **God chooses us first**.

God invites all of us.  God stirs a passion within our ill-equipped and misfit hearts, and then God equips us with the surprising ability to build Christian community or change the world.  This is what it means to be a part of God’s Misfit Mission. This is how God works. God calls the unexpected in the presence of the perceivably predictable to do extraordinary things.

What is God calling you to do? What is your Misfit Mission?

Excerpt 2

What is your practice? How is God calling you into mission?

These were the questions I posed to our collection of misfits at Resurrection Downtown as we went to work starting our fledgling church. What should we do? How should we measure our efforts? How could we practice our faith and live into God’s Misfit Mission?

We each have something we could do in order to meet people where they are. God calls and equips each of us uniquely to do the things that He does, which means that we all have a part to play. Each and every one of us has passions, unique gifts and the capacity to change the world by the grace of Jesus Christ. Maybe it looks like walking the same bridge with eyes that search for interruptions previously unseen. Maybe it looks like reading the obituary each day with eyes fixed on seeing people in need of surprising hope in the midst of darkness and death. Maybe it is something else.

My preferred practice involves caffeine. God has called and equipped me with the unique ability to meet people in coffee shops. This is how I live fully into the mission God has for me.

As I set out to launch Resurrection Downtown, I focused on meeting the most people possible in the shortest amount of time. During my first 31 days in Kansas City, I went to 33 coffee shops, and I set a numerical goal for each visit. My goal was to bump into, meet and invite 35 people a day to join me in building Christian community in downtown Kansas City. As a way of holding myself accountable to the numbers, I carried 35 pennies with me everywhere I went.

Each morning as I woke up, I placed 35 pennies in the front right pocket of my pants, and throughout the day I hoped to initiate 35 corresponding conversations that would eventually lead people to the church. After each conversation I would move a single penny from my right pocket to my left. My practice was to not return home until all 35 pennies made it into my left pocket.

These conversations often began with small talk and then transitioned into a conversation that eventually pointed toward the church. I would ask a question pertaining to that particular stranger’s occupation or vocation, hoping that, if asked, the question would be reciprocated so that I could have an opportunity to share the details of what I was doing in Kansas City, namely building Christian community in downtown Kansas City. Once a conversation had fully transitioned to the point that I shared the story of Resurrection Downtown and exchanged my business card with the other person, I would then move the penny from my right pocket to the left pocket. I wouldn’t go home until all 35 pennies had moved from one pocket to the other.

Since we started Resurrection Downtown people have asked me, “How did you manage all of these conversations? It seems like you would have needed some sort of strategy to accomplish this level of interaction.“

As I set out to bump into my neighbors and meet them where they were, I planned out exactly when and where these conversations would take place in the community coffee shops. Here are some of the strategies I focused on when approaching each coffee shop so as to maximize opportunities for conversation. (Incidentally, all of this also translates to small diners, local watering holes, etc.)

**Strategies for Maximizing Coffee Shop Conversations**

1. Wait to enter the Coffee Shop until a line has formed.
2. Get in line. (and never cut in line.)
3. Initiate conversation with the person standing in front of you in line.
4. Next, engage the barista in conversation at the counter while ordering coffee.
5. Always order a drink that requires time and preparation (Americano’s are best if you like black coffee and are on a budget)
6. Introduce yourself to the barista and talk long enough until the person behind you in line steps up to order.
7. Introduce that person (the one behind you in line) to the barista you just met as well as yourself.
8. While waiting for your Americano talk to the person behind you in line, ask, “What did you go with?”
9. Before leaving take 15 minutes to sit and survey the coffee shop. Look for people reading familiar books, sitting by themselves, or typing by themselves and sit near them…

On average, I would talk to 3 to 5 people about our new church in every coffee shop I visited. About half of my conversations went really well. People would engage in conversation with me, asking all sorts of questions. They asked me about our vision, purpose or mission. They asked me about service opportunities and worship times. However, not all conversations were as pleasant. Not everybody enjoyed meeting the ‘new pastor in town. In these conversations people would generally respond by telling me about how they used to go to church when they were in the 3rd grade, or how they didn’t believe in God at all, or that they simply weren’t interested. It would have been easy to get discouraged by those conversations, and at times I was. However, what I noticed over time was that even though these conversations didn’t go well, the simple act of having a conversation with a pastor at a coffee shop was enough to leave a lasting impact. Sometimes even then my conversation had a transformational impact that I couldn’t have thought to ask for or imagine.

What is your practice? How are you meeting people where they are?

1. John 14:14, NRSV. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Ephesians 5:38, NRSV.

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   What is your practice? How are you meeting people where they are? [↑](#endnote-ref-2)