

*Your Fifteen Minutes of Fame*

Pop culture artist Andy Warhol once said, "In the future everybody will be famous for 15 minutes."

In 1999 Time magazine did a lengthy story on Eric Harris & Dylan Klebold, the two gunmen at Columbine. Much of the article was taken from five videotapes in which the boys detailed their plans.

They left conflicting messages about why they killed their classmates but mainly the tapes indicated that they were angry and they wanted to be famous.

Isn't it amazing the lengths people will go to to try and grab that fleeting 15 minutes of fame? John Hinkley shot President Reagan to impress Jody Foster. People have committed crimes, acted in porno movies, gone on Jerry Springer, climbed the outside of skyscrapers, all to grab that transitory recognition.

In a sense we all live for that brief moment in our own way. I can remember when Sandy and I were first married. We'd talk with a married couple and they'd tell us they'd been married for five years. We'd think five years! Wow! That was so long. That was like a quarter of our whole lives at that point.

This past May 15th, Sandy and I celebrated our 30th anniversary. Life is flying by. In a sense, 15 minutes is all we get. Life is like fireworks on the 4th of July. There's a pop, some bright lights, a beautiful pattern seems suspended there, and then it's gone just as quickly as it came.

What legacy are you going to leave when your 15 minutes is over? I want you to think about your 15 minutes. It's going to be like a blink of an eye and it's over. I want you to think about God-powered living.

**Turn with me this morning to Luke 9 pg 1002**

Jesus called twelve disciples. These were just ordinary people. They weren't teachers or rabbis. In fact when God came to earth as Jesus Christ He wasn't a professional minister. He wasn't from the tribe of Levi, the priestly class in Israel. Jesus was a common person. And when He chose twelve people to change the world He didn't choose twelve professional religious individuals. He chose twelve ordinary people.

I want us to see three things from our passage today about making our mark in this world. The first, and this applies to every Christian, is *Recognize Your Power* **Read vs. 1 & 2**

Two weeks ago we looked at the subject of divine healing using Luke 9:1 as our launch pad. We saw

- I. The Gift of Healing Was to Confirm God's Message in an Era of New Revelation
- II. The Gift of Healing Was Given to a Very Limited Group of Individuals
- III. New Testament Healings Were Total, Complete, and Instantaneous

Our purpose in camping out on verse 1 last time was to try and clear up any confusion about the gift of healing itself. While we saw that it's doubtful that anyone possesses the gift of healing today it's certainly clear that God can, and often does respond to our prayers for physical healing.

If you missed that message I'd encourage you to get a tape and listen to it.

But, what I want us to see today is that while God may empower different people at different times for different tasks, the power all comes from the same source.

Time wise, it's early spring, and Jesus is entering the final year of his Galilean ministry before He moves toward Jerusalem. There, He'll submit to the will of his Father to go to the cross of Calvary for our sins.

Matching this up with the Gospel of Matthew, these events of Luke 9 come right after what we're told in Matthew 9. There we read: *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."*

Jesus had come as a Jew to the Jewish people. God had a special place for the Jewish people, yet the Jewish leadership had led the people down a wrong path. There was religious confusion in the nation that had been chosen by God over a thousand years before this.

So when Jesus looked out over the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

He was the shepherd who had come for His sheep but His sheep were wandering around confused.

So notice the plan. Send 12 guys out preaching the kingdom of God. Twelve ordinary guys. Some were fishermen, one a tax collector, another had been a revolutionary, and the rest we know little about. God used ordinary people.

Jesus used some very ordinary guys to carry out an extraordinary job. Let me ask you, if you were strategizing, planning, formulating your approach to get out the most important message in the whole world, is this the way you would have gone about it? I don't think so.

What was going on here? I believe that Jesus was teaching His disciples an crucial lesson. The power to do God's will on this earth wasn't going to come from their education, their influence, their wealth, their good looks, or their natural abilities. It was going to come from God.

In Matthew 28 Jesus said to His disciples: *All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore...*

That means something very important for us. What ever God asks us to do we can do. It doesn't matter who we are. It doesn't matter how many limitations we have in life. We can do what ever God has asked us to do.

We can make our 15 minutes count for eternity. We have meaning and purpose in life.

Steven Jay Gould, the famous paleontologist, once said in an interview on *60 Minutes* "If the history of life teaches us any lesson, it is that human beings arose as ...a kind of glorious cosmic accident resulting from the linking of thousands of improbable events."

That just gives you the warm fuzzies, doesn't it?

It's not coincidental that Eric Harris, one of the Columbine killers, was wearing a t-shirt with "Natural Selection" written across the front.

William Provine, Professor of Biology at Cornell, writing in *The Scientist* said, "No moral or ethical laws exist, nor are there absolute guiding principles for human

society. The universe cares nothing for us and we have no ultimate meaning in life.”

Oxford zoologist, Richard Dawkins was interviewed in the British paper the Observer. He was asked about the purpose of life. This was his best answer: “Well, there is no purpose, and to ask what it is a silly question. It has the same status as ‘What is the color of jealousy?’”

The famous atheist Voltaire wrote: “What is the verdict of the vastest mind? Silence! The book of fate is closed to us. Man is a stranger to his own research. He knows not whence he comes or whither he goes. Tormented atoms in a bed of mud, devoured by death, a mockery of fate.”

To me these guys are a vivid illustration of Romans 1:22 *Professing to be wise, they became fools..*

They’re right if we’re nothing but a cosmic accident and we’re just going to end up as fertilizer. The problem is, natural science can’t explain us and who we are.

A purely naturalistic explanation can’t account for our ability to reason, appreciate beauty, and love others. It can’t explain why I ponder the meaning of my own existence, or why I have a conscience.

The Bible gives us the answers in a clear, definitive way. We’re not cosmic accidents. All of our thoughts, feelings, and emotions aren’t merely the result of chemical actions. We’re creations of a personal God.

We are creations of a personal God and therefore we have meaning and purpose in life. We’re here for something more than to live a few years, accumulate a few things, and then die and leave it all behind.

We’re here to bring honor to our creator. We’re made in His image. The Bible tells us we’re not only creations of God but we’re objects of His passionate love.

Even though we’ve chosen to act like there’s no God at times; even though we’ve rejected His standards of morality and tried to substitute our own relativistic opinions; God reached out to us.

**Turn to II Cor 5 pg 1114 Read vs 18 -21**

Did you catch what being said here? We're the sinners. We have trespassers. We've stepped over God's boundary lines for life.

God is holy and God is just and He punishes wrong doing. He must. It's His character and nature. But here's where the amazing love of God comes in. He punished His Son on the cross in our place. He made him who knew no sin to be sin for us.

He reconciled us to Himself. The dictionary defines reconciled as: *To reestablish a close relationship between. To settle or resolve.*

We're the offending party. We're the guilty ones. We're the ones who need to be reconciled with our Creator. But it was God who did the work of reconciliation. It was God who punished His sinless Son in our place so that we could be restored to a right relationship with Him.

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.*

The Son of God died and rose again so that we could be forgiven. So that we would not have to suffer in hell for eternity. And the only way we can receive that reconciliation is by faith in Jesus Christ.

Jesus Himself said, *He that believes on me has everlasting life.*

That way God gets all the glory, the punishment for sin has been administered, and we are brought into God's family.

Not only that, but notice in II Corinthians 5 *God has given us the ministry of reconciliation...we are ambassadors for Christ...*

Back in Luke 9 Jesus was sending out His disciples as ambassadors of the Kingdom. Christ presented Himself to Israel as their king. Today we're ambassadors of reconciliation to the world. To anyone around us.

Jesus disciples were just ordinary guys empowered for an extraordinary job. I'd say that's a great definition of us. If you've trusted Christ as your personal Savior the same power, the power of Jesus Christ is yours.

Whether its obeying God by sharing your faith, by being diligent at school or at work,

by forgiving someone who hurt you, by being faithful to your spouse or staying pure before marriage... It doesn't matter what area it's in, If your obedient to God you have God's power.

You might not cure the sick and raise the dead. We've already seen that those were specific miracles for a specific time and purpose, but the power is still yours.

**Look at Eph 1 Pg 1124 Read vs 15-20**

Did you catch that? God's empowering us with the same power that raised Christ from the dead! That's power.

**Back to Luke 9**

*I. Recognize Your Power*

*II. Lose Your Distractions*

**Read vs 3-5**

This is our fifteen minutes. If we are going to live empowered lives in these fifteen minutes, we need to lose the distractions. We don't have time for distractions in our lives.

You might paraphrase Jesus' commands here: "Keep it simple, you don't need to be hindered by a bunch of equipment. You are the equipment. You are the demonstration of God's good news in the world."

In 1926 Dr James Allan Francis published a book of his sermons. From that book comes this famous description of Jesus called, "One Solitary Life."

Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place He was born.

He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself...

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth - His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

Isn't it amazing that Jesus only had three years to set the plan in motion that would change the world? How was He going to do it? Was it through huge crusades or doing powerful miracles? He did miracles. But if I were God, I would have come at a time like today when we could have broadcast miracles all over the world. Everybody could see it at the same time. But I'm not God and that was not God's plan.

God's plan was to empower ordinary people.

So Jesus sent these twelve ordinary people who didn't have religious credentials out in His name. They weren't even fully trained yet.

You know, God could come to earth right now and do some incredible miracle. He could just snap His fingers and all the missiles of the world would just disappear. All the hungry of the world could be fed. All the poverty in the world could be eradicated.

But right now that's not the plan. Right now you're God's plan.

As far as we can tell this particular missionary expedition probably only lasted a couple of weeks. That's why Jesus put such limitations on what they could take. But the point is clear. Don't encumber yourself in this life to the point where you can't do what God has called you to do.

There's a number of reasons why we're going through this process of building our

new building without borrowing. One of them is to challenge our people to limit their borrowing. Being in debt is just one of those encumbrances that can distract us.

I know people who graduated from Bible college and had accumulated so much debt that they couldn't go directly into any ministry. They studied for ministry. They prepared for ministry. But they couldn't jump right in because they had to pay off their debts first.

Some of those people still aren't where they trained to be. They're not where their heart was directing them. And that was 26 years ago. The Bible never says that borrowing is sinful, but it has warning after warning about its dangers. Borrowing is just typical of an encumbrance that we need to watch out for.

I've had a number of people say to me, "Ed I'd love to be able to give more to the building fund but I have all these bills I've racked up. I'm so limited in what I can give." But, you know what? I've also had many of those same individuals tell me that this building fund has challenged them to develop a plan to get out of debt. That they've seen how debt limits our ability to do some of the things they want to do for God.

They can't give like they'd like to. They can't even serve like they'd like to because every minute is spent working trying to pay debt.

Whether it's debt, whether it's materialism, whether it's an obsession with sports, recreation, your lawn, your computer, your boyfriend, your girlfriend, whatever. Jesus wants us to lose our distractions. He wants us to give those things their necessary due, but no more.

If we're going to lose the distractions in our life, I would say that the first thing that we have to lose is our excuses for not doing what God wants us to do!

We can't say, "I can't do what God has for me to do," because He's promised us His power. We can't say, "I don't know how God wants me to live," because we have His instructions in the Bible. We can't even use the excuse, "I don't know how to apply the Bible to my life," because you can come to Self-Confrontation class and learn.

How do we make our brief time here on earth count?

*I. Recognize Your Power*

*II. Lose Your distractions*

*III. Ground Yourself in God's Truth*



## **Read vs 6-7**

Herod the Great, who ordered all the babies in Bethlehem slaughtered because he had heard a Jewish king had been born there, was married ten times, and had nine sons and five daughters. He was a bloody ruler who even put to death a couple of his own children.

One who survived was this Herod (Antipas). This Herod was always listening to other people. now it was coming back to haunt him.

The Gospel of Mark gives us the whole account: **Turn MK 6 pg 974**

## **Read vs 17-18**

Herodias had been the wife of Herod's half-brother Philip. That was bad enough, but Herodias was also the daughter of another half-brother, Aristobulus. She was Herod's sister-in-law and his niece at the same time.

## **Read vs 19-28**

Herod had a problem. Herod Antipas was a Jewish leader, or at least he liked to pose as a Jewish leader. For example, he is known to have celebrated Passover in Jerusalem.

A Jewish leader should have gone to the Bible to identify John the Baptist. A Jewish leader should have used the God-given Scriptures to direct his path instead of letting everybody else determine what he was going to do.

First Herodias was controlling him, and now he's listening to everybody else.

## **Back to Luke 9      Read vs 8-9**

We're told by Matthew, Mark, and Luke that Herod had a real, on-going interest in Jesus. Here in Luke we find that Herod kept on trying to see Him. Herod wouldn't see Jesus until He was brought before him at the trial leading up to His crucifixion.

Don't you wonder, with Herod's interest in seeing Him and knowing His identity, why Jesus avoided Herod? I mean here's a man with political power and influence. Here's a man with an interest in Jesus. Why would Jesus send His disciples out to the

"boonies"; to the insignificant and remote villages of Galilee, when He wouldn't go to the capital? Just think what Herod could do for the kingdom of God if he were a believer ... "

Just remember, Herod also had a real interest in John the Baptist and his ministry. Look what happened to John!

Bob Deffenbaugh writes: The message which Jesus would have delivered to Herod was no different than that which John (unsuccessfully) had delivered to him already. Herod could easily have seen Jesus, but he wanted Jesus to come to his own turf. Herod was, at best, curious about Jesus, and, at worst, jealous and fearful of losing his political power. The kingdom of God is not brought in by human might, nor by political intrigue or ploys. The kingdom of God is not made up of mighty men, but of those who are child-like. Herod was no true seeker. Jesus had no time for him. Herod would have his day with Christ, and on that judgment day Herod would show his true colors. There is yet another appointment for Herod to stand before Christ.

### **Read 10-11**

I can just imagine the disciples all gathering around telling about how God had used them in the lives of others. I'm sure they all had plenty of stories to tell.

But their stories weren't about them and all their abilities. The stories were about God using them in spite of the fact that they didn't have many abilities.

You may not think that you could ever do anything worthwhile for God. It could be, your whole life people have been telling you that you can't do anything worthwhile at all. It's time to stop listening to everybody's opinion and start listening to God.

What legacy are you going to leave when your 15 minutes is over? It's going to be like a blink of an eye, isn't it?

Some people leave this world with their biggest accomplishment being they made the evening news or the Jerry Springer show. They got their recognition and now it's gone. Next week no one will remember their name.

God wants us to see life differently. He's got a much better plan. You may not end up famous. You may never make the evening news. But when you honor God by being faithful in the routine things of life, God knows your name. God will welcome you

with the words, *Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things...*

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