

God of the Unlikely

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July 26, 2020

Today

God uses **Unlikely Moments/Events**

God chooses **Unlikely Instruments**

God achieves **Unlikely Results**

Long-Odds Events

Roy Sullivan — Park Ranger, VA — struck of lightning seven times

Ann Hodges — AL, struck by meteorite — happens once in 9,000 years

Couple in Belmont CA, wins two lotteries in one day — odds 1 in 24 trillion

God has an Appetite for Unlikely Events that produce Unlikely Results

Judges 21:25

In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

- moral and national disaster
- spiritual confusion
- deeply divided
- killing each other
- no ethics

THEN

“turn the page to the next book in the Bible...”

Ruth 1:3-5

³ And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.⁴ And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. ⁵ And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

Ruth 4:13

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son.

Ruth 4:18-22

¹⁸ Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, ¹⁹ And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, ²⁰ And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, ²¹ And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, ²² And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

- book of Ruth happens same time as Judges
- life worse than nothing
- impoverished widowed Jewish mother-in-law
- Gentile widowed daughter-in law
- four generations later produced King David... later produced the Messiah

How God Operates in History

1738 — England

- Gin Craze peaked – individuals consumed 2.2 gallons each per year
- violence, robbery, prostitution, child sex trafficking

God's Answer

- on ship coming home in disgrace from the colonies in GA
- failed missionary, legalist
- 5'6", nasal voice
- John Wesley

REVIVAL

1798

- post-American revolution in frontier Kentucky
- alcoholism, promiscuity, dangerous travel, robbery
- low respect for religion

God's Answer

- tiny, unknown, backwoods churches
- Cane Ridge, KY
- Camp Meeting, August 6-12, 1801
- 20,000 people

REVIVAL

1967

- Summer of Love — Haight Ashbury, San Francisco
- hippies
- drugs, alcohol, addiction, sex, pimps
- Zodiac Killer

God's Answer

- "Jesus People"
- charismatic renewal

REVIVAL

HISTORY IS NOT HAPPENING TO GOD

HE IS NOT SURPRISED BY IT

HOW IS HE OPERATING IN HISTORY?

"I NEED TO USE THIS EVENT."

"WHO WILL I CHOOSE?"

EXTRAVAGANT AFFECTION FOR THE UNLIKELY!

Unlikely Moments

Unlikely Instrument

Unlikely Results

Needed result — Israel needs a judge...

God's Answer

1 Samuel 1:20

²⁰ Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the Lord.

- choose a barren woman
- her son Samuel great judge in Israel

Needed result — Children of Israel need to be taken out of bondage from Egypt after 430 years in captivity

- Will it happen this decade? This century?

God's Answer

- 80-yr-old man living on the backside of the desert
- has not been to Egypt in 40 years
- can't go back because he committed murder
- can't speak in public
- his name is MOSES

Needed result — Someone to take the Gospel to the Gentiles

God's Answer

- Pharisee
- persecutes the believers
- Saul of Tarsus becomes PAUL

Needed result — Revival in early 20th Century America

- spiritual confusion

God's Answer

- illiterate
- African American
- one-eye
- abandoned livery stable in Los Angeles
- William Seymour
- **Azusa Street Revival**
- Resulting in 580 million spirit-filled believers today

Can anything good come out of today's times?

- tribalism that divides
- plague
- anger, hurt
- political division
- economic stress

God's Answer?

- seems like the time is "ripe for the picking"
- will not discount anyone, no matter how supremely unlikely

What about the likes of us?

- Housewife who has to deal with all of the challenges of life
- Businessman who has to deal with all of the troubles in the business world
- We look like unlikely instruments

**But we, unlikely instruments, common folks,
are bound together by loyalty to Jesus,
and by loyalty to each other.**

Discussion Questions

1. Which of these biblical (or more recent historical) examples sparked your personal response?
2. How are you personally encouraged, given a new hope, by today's message?
3. Even though you are "supremely unlikely," how can God use you?

NOTES