

Defying the Odds

Acts 3:1-16, 4:1-16

Who doesn't like a great underdog story? Rudy, Invincible, The Blindside
Who doesn't love to see a person, or a team defy the odds?

2016 Cavs, Leicester City, Holm vs. Rousey, 2018 Eagles, Tiger Woods

Graduation is a time for celebrating underdog stories & defying the odds!

Defying the odds is unfortunately not easy, it doesn't happen everyday!

Odds are what they are b/c not everyone gets to live the Cinderella story!

Graduation odds:

- Of high school grads who enroll in college, 1 in 5 will never get a degree!
- Only 5% of community college students graduate with two-year degrees in two years & only 36% of students attending a 4 year college/univ. graduate w/a bachelor's degrees in four.
- About 80% of students in the U.S. end up changing their major at least once. On average, college students change their major at least three times over the course of their college career.
- After college graduation, approximately 53% of grads are unemployed or working in a job that doesn't require a bachelor's degree.

Graduates, I want to tell you, "Go out & defy those odds!" Go and succeed in college, grad school, the working world. Achieve your dreams, let nothing stop you! But you don't need me to tell you this, you'll hear this at commencement!

What I really want you to hear from me this morning is to defy a different set of odds! The odds that most people will make decisions for the rest of their lives based upon what will best benefit them & build their own earthly kingdoms.

I want to challenge us all today to defy those odds and decide to live for something more! To live to see God's Kingdom established here in this world, to see His purposes come to fruition, & for His glory to be made known!

God can & does use very ordinary people, with slim odds, to have this kind of impact, to leave an extraordinary & lasting mark on this world for His Kingdom!

Consider:

- Elijah and the 850 to 1 odds he faced in defeating the prophets of Baal. He was extremely outnumbered, but he had God on his side!
- David & the odds of defeating Goliath to bring victory to the Israelites.

God's people were living in fear, but David's actions restored faith in God!

- Gideon, from the weakest clan and the least in his family, with his 300 men obeyed God and defeat an enemy of 135,000. But it wasn't about Gideon & what he could do, it was about God and His purposes.
- Jesus being crucified, dead and buried then rising on the 3rd day! What were the odds of this happening? But God's redemptive plan prevails!
- A bunch of fisherman, tax-collectors, uneducated and untrained men, changing the world through the message they proclaimed about Jesus

Acts 3:1-16 - What were Peter and John pursuing?

If they were pursuing silver and gold, a name for themselves, positions of prominence, then after discovering their ability to heal a man they would have used that ability for their own purposes!

Instead, Peter and John used what they were able to do, what they had, to advance the name and purposes of God, instead of their own in this world.

What are we pursuing with our lives? What has God given us, what do we have, that can be used for God's glory and His Kingdom?

Maybe we can't astonish people with healing a lame beggar, but how are we turning heads by our intentional acts of love & mercy in the name of Christ?

God gives us abilities, degrees, influence – but for what? To make a name for ourselves? No, to make a name for Him, & to bless the world thru Him!

Acts 4:1-16- Odds are, many will not receive this truth positively? Many will try to stop the movement of God's Kingdom & His presence in this world.

But God is continually at work & He will defy all odds – the highest court of the Jews tried to disprove what Peter & John did & the message they were proclaiming, but they failed & the number of believer's rose to 5000 men.

Peter and John – "uneducated and common men" were empowered by God to be His witnesses in this world, & that led to the salvation of many and the undeniable presence of God at work all around us! "Experiencing God" pg. 47-48

What will be said of you & the purpose for which you live? Will people say, "God's presence is undeniable in his/her life. He/she walked with Jesus!"

Defying the Odds

Acts 3:1-16, 4:1-16

Who doesn't like a great underdog story? Rudy, Invincible, The Blindside
Who doesn't love to see a person, or a team defy the odds?

2016 Cavs, Leicester City, Holm vs. Rousey, 2018 Eagles, Tiger Woods

Graduation is a time for celebrating underdog stories & defying the odds!

Defying the odds is unfortunately not easy, it doesn't happen everyday!

Odds are what they are b/c not everyone gets to live the _____ story!

Graduation odds:

- Of high school grads who enroll in college, 1 in 5 will never get a degree!
- Only 5% of community college students graduate with two-year degrees in two years & only 36% of students attending a 4 year college/univ. graduate w/a bachelor's degrees in four.
- About _____ of students in the U.S. end up changing their major at least once. On average, college students change their major at least three times over the course of their college career.
- After college graduation, approximately 53% of grads are unemployed or working in a job that doesn't require a bachelor's degree.

Graduates, I want to tell you, "Go out & _____ those odds"! Go and succeed in college, grad school, the working world. Achieve your dreams, let nothing stop you! But you don't need me to tell you this, you'll hear this at commencement!

What I really want you to hear from me this morning is to defy a different set of odds! The odds that most people will make decisions for the rest of their lives based upon what will best benefit them & build their own earthly kingdoms.

I want to challenge us all today to defy those odds and decide to live for something more! To live to see _____ established here in this world, to see His purposes come to fruition, & for His glory to be made known!

God can & does use very ordinary people, with slim odds, to have this kind of impact, to leave an extraordinary & lasting mark on this world for His Kingdom!

Consider:

- Elijah and the _____ odds he faced in defeating the prophets of Baal. He was extremely outnumbered, but he had God on his side!
- David & the odds of defeating Goliath to bring victory to the Israelites.

God's people were living in fear, but David's actions restored faith in God!

- Gideon, from the weakest clan and the least in his family, with his 300 men obeyed God and defeat an enemy of _____. But it wasn't about Gideon & what he could do, it was about God and His purposes.
- Jesus being crucified, dead and buried then rising on the 3rd day! What were the odds of this happening? But God's redemptive plan prevails!
- A bunch of fisherman, tax-collectors, uneducated and untrained men, changing the world through the message they proclaimed about Jesus

Acts 3:1-16 - What were Peter and John pursuing?

If they were pursuing silver and gold, a name for themselves, positions of prominence, then after discovering their ability to heal a man they would have used that ability for their own _____!

Instead, Peter and John used what they were able to do, what they had, to advance the name and purposes of God, instead of their own in this world.

What are we pursuing with our lives? What has God given us, what do we have, that can be used for God's glory and His Kingdom?

Maybe we can't astonish people with healing a lame beggar, but how are we turning heads by our _____ acts of love & mercy in the name of Christ?

God gives us abilities, degrees, influence – but for what? To make a name for ourselves? No, to make a name for Him, & to bless the world thru Him!

Acts 4:1-16- Odds are, many will not receive this truth positively? Many will try to stop the movement of God's Kingdom & His presence in this world.

But God is _____ at work & He will defy all odds – the highest court of the Jews tried to disprove what Peter & John did & the message they were proclaiming, but they failed & the number of believer's rose to 5000 men.

Peter and John – "uneducated and common men" were empowered by God to be His witnesses in this world, & that led to the salvation of many and the undeniable presence of God at work all around us! *"Experiencing God" pg. 47-48*

What will be said of you & the purpose for which you live? Will people say, "God's presence is undeniable in his/her life. He/she _____ with Jesus!"