

Making Your Life a Success - 10/16/22

TEXT – **Joshua 1:6-9** . . . *then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success . . .*

INTRO – What is success? This has become a difficult question to answer. It seems every week we hear stories of people who climbed to the top of their profession, who built empires, who exemplified creativity and talent and hard work, who received accolades and awards and international recognition, who were the definition of success in their respective fields. But then the stories started to come out. Sexual harassment. Inappropriate relationships. Embezzlement. Scandalous conduct. And very soon, all that they had built counts for nothing.

“The measure of a man's success is determined by the extent of God's control in his life.”

I. How Do You Measure Success?

- **Peter is released from prison by an angel**
- **James is killed with a sword by Herod**

Acts 12:1-5 *Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people. Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.*

- **John the Baptist was beheaded**
- **Stephen was stoned to death**
- **Paul was on his way to a prominent position among Jewry as was Barnabas but called to a different path -delivered time and again.**

By the world's standards these people are the epitome of success: Elon Musk, Bill Gates, LeBron James, Tom Brady, Joe Biden, Kim Kardashian, Taylor Swift, and Kathy Wood
Would you want to be like them?

Rosie Ruiz was declared the winner in the female category for the 84th [Boston Marathon](#) in 1980, only to have her title stripped eight days after the race when it was discovered that she had not run the entire course.

- Ruiz's application for the NYC marathon arrived after the cut-off date for the race, but she received special dispensation from the [New York Road Runners](#) due to her claim that she was dying of [brain cancer](#). After the 1980 Boston Marathon, New York City Marathon officials investigated

Ruiz's run and concluded that she did not run the entire course, so on April 25, 1980, she was retroactively disqualified from the race.

- In 1982, Ruiz was arrested for embezzling \$60,000 from a real estate company where she worked. She spent one week in jail and was sentenced to five years' probation.
- She then moved back to [South Florida](#), where she was arrested in 1983 for her involvement in a cocaine deal. She was sentenced to three years' probation.
- In January 1984, Ruiz married Aicaro Vivas, divorcing in August 1986

II. Just a Humble Servant Of The Lord

Jeremiah 17:7-9 *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. 8 For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit. 9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

In Leviticus 10, Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, brought an unauthorized offering before God. Their service was rooted in arrogance. God had not ordered the offering, and the leaders, Aaron and Moses, had not authorized it. Yet, Nadab and Abihu felt that they didn't need any permission. In this spirit of haughtiness, they perished.

Paul saw himself as the least: Ephesians 3:8 *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;*

1 Timothy 1:15 *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*

III. Failure and Struggle Are Part Of Life

A. We don't have to be first or best.

My Colors Will Be Clear

“Many men owe the grandeur of their lives to their tremendous difficulties.” ~ C. H. Spurgeon

B. Through resistance muscle is developed

“Remember that we have no more faith at any time than we have in the hour of trial. All that will not bear to be tested is mere carnal confidence. Fair-weather faith is no faith” ~ C. H. Spurgeon

1 Peter 1:7 *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:*

James 1:3-4 *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.*

C. Winning is not the only thing

“Winning isn't everything; it's the only thing.” Attributed to the professional football coach **Vince Lombardi**, this proverb stresses the importance of reaching a goal no matter what effort is required.

(Compare *It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game.*)

- We see unseen things.
- We conquer by yielding.
- We find rest under a yoke.
- We reign by serving.
- We are made great by becoming small.
- We are exalted when we are humble.
- We become wise by being fools for Christ's sake.
- We are made free by becoming bondservants.
- We gain strength when we are weak.
- We triumph through defeat.
- We find victory by glorying in our infirmities.
- We live by dying.
- We give and it shall be given unto us
- We humble ourselves to be lifted up
- We put ourselves last and we are first
- We lose our life to find it.

1 Peter 5:5-6 *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

James 4:10 *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

Matthew 10:39 *He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

2 Corinthians 12:10 *Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.*

John Livingstone of Listowel, Ontario, Canada, passed away – a merchant and brother of the famous Dr. David Livingstone missionary and explorer,

IV. Success is Humbly Doing The Will of God

John 13:4-5 *He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. 5 After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.*

Servant Leadership

Mark 10:44-45 *And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. 45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*

A servant-first leader surrenders most of their authority and puts others first. It's a selfless type of leadership that focuses on the [well-being](#) and long-term growth of church members.

Success is measured by the growth of those served.

Judges 6:12-15 *And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour. 13 And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. 14 And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee? 15 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house.*

CONCL – After forty years of faithful service to the Lord as a missionary to Africa, Henry Morrison and his wife were returning to New York. As the ship neared the dock, Henry said to his wife, “Look at that crowd. They haven't forgotten about us”. However, the ship also carried President Teddy Roosevelt, returning from a big game hunting trip in Africa. Roosevelt stepped from the boat, with great fanfare, as people were cheering, flags were waving, bands were playing, and reporters waiting for his comment, Henry and his wife slowly walked away unnoticed. They hailed a cab, which took them to the one-bedroom apartment which had been provided by the mission board.

Henry said to his wife, “This is all wrong. This man comes back from a hunting trip and everybody throws a big party. We give our lives in faithful service to God for all these many years, but no one seems to care.”

His wife then said, “Henry, you need to tell this to the Lord. He went to his bedroom and began pouring out his heart to the Lord.

After about ten minutes, Henry returned to the living room with a peaceful look on his face. His wife said “It looks like you've resolved the matter. What happened?”

Henry replied, “The Lord settled it for me. I told Him how bitter I was that the President received this tremendous homecoming, but no one even met us as we returned home. When I finished, it seemed as though the Lord put His hand on my shoulder and simply said, 'But Henry, you are not home yet!'”

Comment: When Henry Morrison finally went home, the celebration dwarfed the welcoming received by Teddy Roosevelt on the docks. There must have been thousands of Africans, who he had reached for Christ, standing at the Gates of Heaven, applauding and welcoming Henry home.

My Colors Will Be Clear

I am part of the fellowship of the unashamed. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of Jesus. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, with sight walking, with small planning, with smooth knees, with colorless dreams, with tamed visions, with mundane talking, with chintzy giving, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded, or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by the power of the Holy Spirit.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven. My road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions few, my Guide reliable, my mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversary, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity. I won't give up, shut up, let up until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and preached up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go until He comes, give until I drop, proclaim until all know and work until He stops me. And when He comes for His own, He will have no problem recognizing me – for my colors will be clear!