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**Part 3**

**A New Definition of Success (Cont’d)**

**Jeremiah 29:11**

What’s up fam? I want to welcome each of you to part 3 of our series *“Redefined: The true definition of success.”* A great big welcome to those of you joining us online!

Please grab your Bible or Calvary App and flip or click to…

**Jeremiah 29:11 “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give (Thoughts to gift you) you an expected end.”**

**(All we have to do is receive it)**

*“Be careful what you ask for.”* We all know the punch line, right? *“Because you might get it.”*

But what if that isn’t the real punch line? What if the real answer is, *“Because you might not know what you’re asking for?”*

We know God wants “success” for us. The tension resides in the fact that we don’t always define success the same way He does.

How do **YOU** define success?

How **YOU** define it matters.

Let’s be honest, everyone wants success. I’ll bet you’ve never awakened in the morning to a thought like: “I sure hope I fail today [*in my marriage, business, ministry, and finances*].”

**You might think success is measured by**

* **how you look,**
* **by what you have, or**
* **by who you know.**

**Did you know these are false measurements of success? I talked about this last week.**

What if God doesn’t connect success to any of that stuff at all? What if His definition of success is determined by who you are? Your character? What if it’s about things like faithfulness… obedience… serving… loving… giving… believing… attitude… action?

Believe it or not, God designed you for success. He made you to be a winner. This is true for every person, regardless of what’s happened in the past. God’s never destined anybody to live a mediocre life.

**THE RICHES PLACE ON THE PLANET IS NOT**

* **THE GOLD MINES OF WEST AFRICA**
* **NOR THE DIAMOND FIELDS OF SOUND AFRICA**
* **ITS THE CEMETARY!!**

**THE GREATEST IDEAS IN THE WORLD WERE GIVEN TO PEOPLE WHO BECAME MEDIOCRE AND TOOK GODS GREAT IDEAS AND GIFTINGS TO THE GRAVE WITH THEM!!**

**GRAVEYARDS ARE FILLED WITH:**

* + **INVENTIONS THAT WERE NEVER RELEASED**
  + **REMEDIES THAT WERE NEVER DEVELOPED**
  + **CURES THAT WERE NEVER TRIED + TESTED**
  + **MESSAGES THAT WERE NEVER PREACHED**
  + **MOVIES SCRIPTS THAT WERE NEVER PRODUCED**
  + **BOOKS THAT WERE NEVER WRITTEN OR PUBLISHED**

Our theme verse, Jeremiah 29:11, says that God knows His thoughts toward you, and His desire is to give you an expected end. That end is promised in God’s Word.

**You can walk in victory!** What you have today, as a new covenant believer, is superior to what anyone had in the old.

**O-spiritual death**

**N-spiritual life**

**O-rules**

**N-relationship**

**O-who you were in Adam**

**N-who you are in Christ**

**O-condemnation**

**N-affirmation**

**O-reward**

**N-inheritance**

**O-demand**

**N-supply**

You can be guaranteed success. Now, I’m not saying success can always be achieved without a fight or without effort, but you were destined for great things.

Say it: **“I’M DESTINED FOR GREAT THINGS!”**

God created every one of us to be something special, but I also feel that we live in a culture that’s totally misrepresented true success. As a matter of fact, I looked up the meaning of the word. The Dictionary defines success as “The achievement of something desired, planned, or attempted.” That’s a pretty broad definition. I mean, some people are aiming at nothing and hitting it every time. The second definition I found is “The gaining of fame or prosperity.” I hate that definition. That isn’t a godly definition of success at all. Lots of people have fame and prosperity, but they don’t have true success.

In my opinion, success needs to be redefined.

Success isn’t just doing something big. In fact, not everybody’s called to do something big, but everybody’s called to be faithful in what God’s called them to do. That’s success!

Those who are faithful in a few things will also be faithful in much.

**Matthew 25:23“Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities.”**

If we’re good stewards of what God gives us, He’ll increase us and give us more.

The way that success has been presented isn’t a godly concept at all. During this series I want to encourage anyone who feels like they haven’t done much: *God’s got something more for you, and you can succeed.* And for those of you who think you’re all that and more, during this series I hope I can help you recognize that success isn’t based on all of the temporary things that’ll pass away. God judges’ things differently than we do. I’ve said it like this: Heaven’s perspective is drastically different from earth’s point of view.

So, how does God define success? What does it mean to be a success in His eyes? What’s heavens perspective?

Last week we began looking at the seven attitudes of achievement from the life of Paul. We’re using the word **S.U.C.C.E.S.S.** We’ll finish today, and I also want to continue talking about the areas of commitment that God’s calling us to, as a church, in 2020.

**Few people accomplished as much in life as Paul. I think if he'd had a jet plane and an iPhone, he'd have conquered the entire world single handedly. It's amazing. He spread Christianity all over the Roman Empire. He was extremely successful. Six times in scripture we're commanded to follow Paul's example.**

**Let’s get a Biblical definition of success from the life of Paul. And by the way, all of these things are found in Christ.**

**S - Sense of Direction**

We already looked at this one last week. But a quick review. True success starts with a sense of direction. You've got to have a purpose. If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else. Paul had a crystal-clear purpose. **Romans 15:20** says, **"It has always been my ambition to preach the good news where Christ was not known so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation."**Paul was an entrepreneur. He was a pioneer. He was an apostle. He didn't want to take an established church, he wanted to plant new churches. Paul wanted to go where nobody else had gone before and that was his ambition. It was crystal clear; he knew exactly what he wanted.

Have you noticed how many people in life have absolutely no goals? They're aimless, drifting around. They have absolutely no idea what they really want in life. No sense of direction and no real purpose. You've got to have a goal if you're going to truly be successful.

If you go into an airport and say, "I want to buy a ticket." "Ok, to where?" "I don't know." It helps to have a sense of destination. Direction. Where am I headed? What are my goals? What do I want to accomplish in life? Yes, things will change from time to time. Yes, I’ll have to make adjustments along the way. But I know where I’m going. I may not have arrived, but thank God, I’ve left. I’m moving in the right direction. I have a goal.

**Philippians 3:14** Paul says, **"I run straight toward the goal in order to win the prize."** Notice that Paul says, “I run in order to win.” He didn't say, “I'm a good loser.” He said, “I run to win! I want to win! I want to make the most of my life. I don't want to settle for second or third best. I don’t want to limit God. I don't want to be a mediocre person. I run to win!” It's important that Paul not only knew what he wanted out of life; he knew why he wanted it. He said there's a prize! When you figure out the "Why?" God will show you the "How?" The "Why" increased motivation. What do I want out of life? That's fine. But the next step is, why do I want it? That’s called…

**U - Understanding**

Paul said in **2 Thessalonians 3:5**, **"May the Lord lead you into a greater understanding of God's love and the endurance that is given by Christ."** Notice "understanding" and "endurance". Those two words go together in life. When you understand the love of God, you can endure anything. The problems you have a hard time dealing with are the ones when you're wondering, "Does God really love me? If he did, I wouldn’t be going through this. Why would he allow this?" You need understanding.

God’s always giving understanding, but the vast majority don’t receive it, because they aren’t dependent on Him. They don’t trust God. They don’t trust His word or His spirit.

Where do you get understanding?

Paul answers this so clearly in **Ephesians 1:13-14**: **“In Him you also *trusted,* after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, whois the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.”**

Notice two things which are emphasized here which are always found together in Scripture -- the Word, and the Spirit. Both are absolutely essential. There’s no understanding without both of these -- the word and the spirit.

It’s always a mistake to emphasize one of these to the exclusion of the other. There are groups today who are doing this: Some say, "No, we don't need the Word. All we need is the Spirit. All we need is simply to trust the feelings we have. The Spirit is dwelling in us and he’ll lead us." But whenever a group does that, it invariably results in impractical ideas, in mysticism, in fanaticism, and in individualism -- everybody going his own way and doing his own thing. Utter confusion results if you set aside the Word and try to follow only the Spirit.

On the other hand, there groups today who try to follow the Word alone. They’re orthodox to the core, but there’s no life. They’re sterile and dull. This is what results when you try to adhere to the Word without the Spirit. It results in a kind of clenched-teeth piety in which you resolve that you’re going to "do your duty" as Christians, but there’s no motivation, no satisfaction, no love, no warmth, no joy, no life. Duty, no beauty. But in Scripture you always find the two together. The Word is interpreted by the Spirit, and the Word becomes fresh and vital as you look to the Spirit to make Jesus step out of the pages and stand in you, in living flesh. You feel the heartbeat of the human Lord who lived here on earth now living in and through you. It’s the job of the Spirit to do that, and you never should come to the Bible without asking him to take these words, give understanding, and make them come alive in and through you.

Speaking of the word— (attached article)

Many people never grow in understanding. They don't have twenty years of experience; they've got one year of experience repeated twenty times. They're never learning anything from life. They’re never growing in grace or in the word or in the spirit.

If you're going to be a success you need a sense of purpose and a sense of direction. You need understanding. Another one…

**C - Commitment**

In the book *Passion for Excellence*: "The drive you need to rise from mediocrity to excellence requires commitment." Paul said in **Acts 20:24**, **"However I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace."** He's talking about commitment. Have you noticed that many people are allergic to making commitments? "I don't want to be committed to anything! I don't want to join anything! I don't want to get married! I don't want to be tied down to one job or one church. I don’t want to serve. I don’t want to give." They compare – “Life’s a buffet and if I commit myself up front -- taking only the soup and salad -- then when I get down to the chicken fried steak and the meatloaf and the fried okra and the mac and cheese and the pecan pie and the Coconut Meringue Pie, I might miss out on something because my plate's too full.” That's what they say. The tragedy is to get to the end of the line and have an empty plate because you've never committed yourself to anything.

You’ve got to be willing to commit. Truly successful people are willing to do things that other people are unwilling to do –

* **the unpleasant things.**
* **the uncomfortable things.**
* **the inconvenient things.**

And let’s be honest. It is NOT always easy to be faithful, to be obedient to God’s word, to serve and love people, to give, to trust, to take action.

And be careful saying you want what some successful person has because you don’t know what they were willing to commit to in order do to be where they are or get what they have.

What are you committed to? Everything worthwhile requires commitment.

Some of you are limiting what God can do through you because you’re afraid of commitment.

**C - Compassion**

Paul said in I Corinthians 13:2-3, *"I may have all knowledge and the faith to move mountains and may give away everything I have but if I have not love it does me no good."* Without love in your life nothing else matters. Our number one responsibility is to love. If you're going to be a success you've got to be a lover.

The Bible says, *"Love never fails."* If you're a lover you're not a failure.

There are many misconceptions about love. Some people think it’s a feeling, an ocean of emotion. Some people think it’s uncontrollable. "I just fell in love. I couldn't help myself." The fact is love is a choice. It's choosing to care about somebody. Love isn’t a feeling, it produces feelings. Love isn’t uncontrollable, it’s controllable. Love is a choice. People can choose to love or not choose to love.

If you're going to be a success from heaven’s perspective you've got to have compassion. Colossians 3:12 says we are to *"Clothe ourselves with compassion."* This is Paul's "Dress for Success" tip. **If COMMITMENT is the FUEL for SUCCESS, then COMPASSION is the ATTIRE for SUCCESS**. *"Clothe yourselves with compassion."* Be sensitive to the needs of other people.

**E - Enthusiastic faith**

I love Paul! He’s the eternal optimist. He's a hope addict. Where did his faith come from?  Jesus. If Paul was a Hope Addict, then Jesus was his Hope Dealer. That’s why Paul could say stuff like this. Romans 8:31 *"If God be for us who can be against us?"* Philippians 4:13 *"There is nothing I cannot master with the help of the One who gives me strength."*

* **Phillips translation: *"I'm ready for anything!"***
* **Good News: *"I have the strength to face all conditions!"***
* **Nothing’s too hard for me.**

One plus God equals a majority. Paul attempted great things; he expected great things.

I’ve heard it said, "Nothing great has ever been accomplished without enthusiasm." Where do you get enthusiasm? It comes from a Greek work that means **"in God"**. When you get **in Him**, you'll be enthusiastic. Enthusiasm comes from having the Christ-life.

Enthusiastic faith. If God's on my side who can be against me? Jesus said everything’s possible for the person who has faith.

Never say "no" to a good idea just because it's impossible. God specializes in the impossible. The next time you say, "It can't be done, listen for a laugh from heaven." **Impossible isn’t in God's dictionary.**

One of the marks of a successful person is enthusiastic faith. You find that your ability tends to grow to the size of your dreams. Paul says, *"There's nothing I cannot master with the help of the one who gives me strength."*

**S - Service to others**

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 8:19, *"We carry out this service of love for the Lord's glory and to show that we want to help."* There's no such thing as success without service.

**Every business that’s successful is successful because it’s meeting a need**.

* It’s providing a product that’s needed.
* It’s providing a service that’s needed.
* The secret of success is meeting needs.
* Look for needs around you and find a way to meet those needs. Service is what it's all about.
* The secret of success is serving others.

Jesus said, that if you want to be great, learn to be a servant of all. The more you give your life away, the more you get back. You lose your life to find it. 2 Corinthians 12:15 *"I will be glad to spend all I have and myself as well in order to help you."* Paul said, “I'm willing to lay it on the line.”

**The more we give ourselves away the more God sees to it that we have more TO give away.**

**Proverbs 11:25 say it this way, “Those who live to bless others will have blessings heaped upon them, and the one who pours out his life to pour out blessings will be saturated with favor.” That’s for me! I’m choosing to be saturated with favor! Go ahead Lord! I give you permission to bless me!**

That's another one of the characteristics we see in Paul. One more, and this is a big one!

**S - Staying power**

Paul simply did not know how to quit. He couldn’t be discouraged. He was persistent. He was determined. He had tenacity. He had staying power. 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 *"We are* ***pressured*** *on every side but not crushed,* ***perplexed*** *but not in despair,* ***persecuted*** *but not abandoned,* ***struck down*** *but not destroyed."*  He didn’t say it would be easy. Many people think once you've achieved success then all your problems will be solved. No. Greater responsibility comes with greater privilege. Paul couldn’t give up.

1. It says, **"pressured on every side.**"

When I read that I think of a quarterback running out of the pocket feeling the blitz. He's pressured on every side. But Paul says, **“I'm not crushed.”**

1. Then he says, "I'm **perplexed"**. The idea in Greek is of **being stretched and pulled tight, stretched without snapping**. Paul says, “I'm stretched to the limit, but I don't snap.”
2. Then he says, "I'm **persecuted.**" In the Greek it's literally the word **"hunted" or "hounded"**. Do you ever feel hounded by anything? **(STUDENT LOANS)** BUT IM NOT ABANDONED

GOD IS ALWAYS WITH ME!!!

1. Then he says, **"I'm struck down"**. He uses a boxing analogy. "I'm struck down, but I get back up." I like the Phillips translation, ***"I'm knocked down, but I'm not knocked out."***

***NOTICE: PAUL IS AWARE OF PART A***

***(THE SITUATION)***

***THE NATURAL***

***BUT HE’S FOCUSED ON PART B***

***(GOD ABILITY + MY REALITY IN CHRIST)***

***(THE SPIRITUAL)***

**One of the reasons why many people never succeed in life is they give up too soon**. I played sports as a kid. Everybody knows that you often win in the last couple of seconds. The last couple seconds of the game can determine the ending. Great people are simply ordinary people with an extraordinary amount of determination. They don't know how to quit. Failure is never final. It's a temporary setback. Everybody fails. Successful people fail. But successful people have staying power. They get up and they keep on keeping on.

Often the matter of success is simply the matter of hanging on long enough. Maybe you need to do that in your marriage, or with your kids, or in your ministry, or on the job. Hang on long enough.

**Do you ever feel like you can’t hang on anymore? I do!**

**What was Paul's secret?**

2 Corinthians 4:16. How was Paul able to keep on? How was he knocked down and not knocked out? *"Therefore, we do not lose heart, for though outwardly we're wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day for our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen (that’s earth’s point of view), but what is unseen (that’s heaven’s perspective). For what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal."*

The fact is, you've got your eyes on the problem or you've got your eyes on the Lord, who can solve the problem.

How are you doing? "So far so good, under the circumstances." What are you doing **UNDER the circumstances? Circumstances are like a mattress: You get underneath them, and you suffocate to death, you get on top of them and you REST. The flavor of faith is REST!** What are you looking at? Keep your eyes right here: *"Inwardly I'm being renewed day by day."* Paul had an endless supply of spiritual resources in his life. **He had Christ.** If you don't have Him, that's the starting point for successful living.

**Today’s Confession: I’m successful because of who I am in Christ. My new identity empowers me to be committed to the call God’s placed on my life.**