**23/Nov/14 Jubilee Christian Center PROSPERITY AND SUCCESS IN GOD'S EYES**

As we learned last week, success in God's eyes is measured and defined differently by God. It is our demonstrated love, obedience and faithfulness to Him that He counts as successful. In other words, it is our ongoing and growing intimate relationship that is important to Him, not our financial wealth quotient. Are we accomplishing His goals and purposes for our lives, or are we selfishly pursuing our purposes and goals only? We looked at **Joshua 1:8** 'This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do all that is written in it. For THEN you will make your way prosperous, and THEN you will have good success.' and the NT says it this way: **Matthew 6:33** 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all His righteousness and THEN all these things will be added to you.' When we put God first, put Jesus first in our lives, we can expect to have a successful, prosperous life, God's way. We learned that God has a universal standard of excellence that applies to all humankind. To begin to be acceptable to God we must repent of our sin and receive Jesus Christ as our personal Savior - that is the first step towards success in God's eyes. If we are obeying and following after God's ways as laid out in His Word, then we are pleasing and successful in God's eyes. **Deuteronomy 10:12,13** spells success with God this way: 'And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, to keep the commandments of the Lord, and His statutes, which I command you this day, for your good.' God gave what is known as the greatest command in **Deuteronomy 6:5.** 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your mind and all your strength.' **The question is, how** **do we love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind and** **strength?**

The answer is found as we study the words of the greatest man who ever lived and examine the greatest commission ever given. Jesus, in answering Thomas' question 'how can we find the way?' in **John 14:6** made this declaration, 'I am the way, the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.'

We love the Lord our God with all our heart when we give Him our lives; when we turn control of our lives over to Him; when we repent or our sinful ways and ask Jesus into our hearts and lives; when we ask Jesus to change us and make us a new creation, a new creature. That is the beginning point of our relationship with God, through accepting His Son Jesus as our personal Savior. This is the beginning point of a new life and of living a new way. 'Such a tiny offering, nevertheless I lay it at your feet.' Now we have right relationship with the Great Creator, we have restored relationship with the Almighty God, and we can enter into our own individual personal experience with Him. Salvation through Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father. Laying down our own ambitions, our own desires, our own purposes for our lives, our own selfishness and willful ways - exchanging them for His ways, His goals and purposes, submitting to His will for our lives, surrendering to the moving of His Spirit in and on our lives, determining to serve Him no matter what the cost or difficulties - that is all part of the new life found through salvation in Jesus. Different thoughts, different words and different actions - a new and wonderful, satisfying and fulfilling life has now become ours, because we turned control of our lives over to Jesus, because we decided to love the Lord our God with all our heart. **But wait, it doesn't end there.** Have you ever noticed how, when the love of God floods our hearts, that we have this inner compulsion, an inner desire to give Jesus away? That is also part of loving God with all our heart. We love Him so much and enjoy the life He has brought us that we want everyone around us to also know Him, to also give their lives to Him. Jesus is like a 100-kilo bag of maize seed that never runs dry or never runs out - there is always more room at the cross - though millions have come there is still room for one more. So when we have received Jesus Christ as the only way to the Father, and then choose to tell others of the great goodness of God, that is truly loving God with all our heart. **So how do we love God with all our mind?** Again, this involves our will and our ability to choose. Once having received Jesus Christ as our Savior, He desire is to change us from the inside out. He begins with our minds. Our thought life needs to change once we come to know Jesus. Whereas we used to have evil, wicked and useless thoughts, now we need to renew, renovate, reprogram our minds. How can we do that? **Romans 12:2** 'And be not conformed to this world: but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.' We are now to change the way we think, speak and act because the behaviors and customs of this world are usually selfish and corrupting. We are to be a new people with freshness and pureness of thought. Only when our minds are renewed by the new attitudes Christ gives us and the new way of thinking He gives through His Word can we be truly transformed. Our very character undergoes a miraculous change - always for the better. **Ephesians 5:26** 'That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word.' Jesus Christ purifies the church - you and me - through the work of the Holy Spirit in us and through the washing action of His Word. Upon salvation we make a commitment to be a part of this cleansing and purifying process, and it seems this process never ends. There is always some area or something that needs to be dealt with. The old, carnal nature pops up and causes us no end of grief and problems, but we deal with the flesh by crucifying it and not allowing it to control us. This is how we are to mature and grow in Christ. Surrendering and submitting to the moving of His Spirit in our lives. We are to be continually ingesting the Word, studying His Word, memorizing His Word, meditating on His Word, day and night - this is success and prosperity in God's eyes. His Word is life giving and life changing as it washes away the dirt and filth from our lives. So whenever the Pastor announces 'There is a Bible study starting Saturday morning at 6am, you should shout, Yes! I will be there. Or there is a Bible study beginning in January, every night of the week, you should shout, Yes! I'll be there. In other words, avail yourself of every opportunity to 'wash your mind with more of the Word'. That is loving God with all your mind. **But wait, it doesn't end there!** Again, the teaching and training you have freely received now needs to be given away! It is not to hoard just to yourself. The experiences God has brought you through, the wisdom God has poured into you, the knowledge and understanding you have is to be shared with others in the body. Did God intend you to be a 'spiritual giant' stomping around telling everyone to look at me, look who I am, make room for my ministry? God will make room for your ministry, it is God who will promote you. Those who are real teachers from God have Godly humility and move quietly without a lot of fanfare or calling attention to themselves. They turn your attention to Jesus and the Father. When you receive teaching and training from the Word of God and from His Spirit, and then give out what you have learned and been taught, that is loving God with all your mind. Jesus is the Truth so learn of Him and then give Him away. **How do you love God with all your strength?** Is it by grabbing a barbell and doing a military press with 200 pounds? Lord, I'm loving you will all my strength! No, of course not. (I have a lesson called, Put down the barbell and pick up the Bible.) What does it mean, all our strength? Our strength is the God-given ability we have to earn a living, to make our way in this life. Think about it. We are all different with differing skills which we use to provide a good living for ourselves and our families. That represents our strength - our ability to make money. A portion of that we give back to God in thankfulness for His provision of health and work. The balance we use for the living a good life - food, shelter, clothing, education, and whatever else we feel we need or need to do. That is God's good plan, that we should work for our survival, and it is a good plan. When we follow His good plan we will reap a good result, and that is part of loving God with all our strength. **But wait, it doesn't end there!** Why has God blessed us with the strength of earning power? So that we might bless others who may be less fortunate. Again, we are to give some of our strength away. As an example, there was an older lady in a village where we had a church. I was out walking and visiting in the outskirts of the village when I came across her hut and small property. There she was, spreading out tall grasses to dry in the sun, and wrapping inner tube strips around the base of the grass to make a rudimentary but effective broom. She would then take a bundle of 20 or so brooms to market day and sell them for 30 cents each. This is how she make a living. Not only that, she took a broom a week to the church as a tithe. Pastor Ben showed me about 20 or more brooms he had and asked what he should do with them. I said, bless others, give them away! God expects us to provide for ourselves, but also expects us to look around and be alert for opportunities to give away some of the strength He has given us, to give to needs we see that are within our power to help or give to. Now that is loving God with all our strength! In so doing we are fulfilling Jesus additional command in Matthew 22 to love our neighbor as ourselves, to treat others the way we want to be treated, to be considerate of others needs, and be the blessing God intended us to be. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus told us who our neighbor is - anyone who has a need that we are able to meet. So I have attempted to show how we can love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind and strength. As Jesus said, when we have fulfilled this one command, we will have fulfilled the whole law and the prophets. When we stand face to face with God, we will have to answer, did we love Him with all our hearts, minds and strength? Did we love, care for and show consideration for those around us? Let us focus on our real life which is eternity in heaven. Close with **Colossians 3:1-4** Living Bible 'Since you have become alive again, so to speak, when Christ arose from the dead, NOW set your sights on the rich treasures and joys of heaven where He sits beside God in the place of glory and honor. Let heaven fill your thoughts; don't spend your time worrying about things down here. You should have as little desire for this world as a dead person does. Your real life is in heaven with Christ and God. And when Christ who is our real life comes back again, you will shine with Him and share in all His glories.' Continue putting off the old nature and continue putting on the new nature. Allow Him to shape you into the 'new creature' He has promised to. As we choose to love Him with all our hearts, mind and strength we will be part of that spotless and beautiful bride He is coming back for!