

SUCCESS, AS GOD SEES IT...

Here are a few thoughts from Oswald Chambers regarding true success and true ministry:

"The trap you may fall into in Christian work is to rejoice in successful service — rejoicing in the fact that God has used you. Yet you will never be able to measure fully what God will do through you if you have a right-standing relationship with Jesus Christ. If you keep your relationship right with Him, then regardless of your circumstances or whoever you encounter each day, He will continue to pour 'rivers of living water' through you (John 7:38). And it is actually by His mercy that He does not let you know it."

Michelle and I recall certain seasons of ministry (especially some of our early YWAM days) when we felt out-of-step, "un-anointed", and pretty much useless for God's Kingdom at that particular moment. It seemed we were just getting by as a family, rather than thriving in the pursuit of God's vision for our lives. Daily life was just plain hard work as God continued His deep pruning and purging work in our hearts.

What we found on the other side of those experiences was this: during our times of seeming fruitlessness, even futility, God was using us beyond what we could have imagined. Many people were watching us, seeing how we dealt with difficulty, and learning how to follow God as a family just by our example. Some of our most powerful family ministry came from those seemingly barren times. As Chambers describes, we were entirely unaware of who God was encouraging and how He was glorifying His name through us. Therefore, we didn't get in the way of His good work both in and through us.

How often this is the case today! We feel useless, like we're gaining no ground, bearing no fruit, and accomplishing little or nothing. But if we could see things from God's perspective, we would realize that the passionate heart after Jesus is ALWAYS bearing fruit in ways hidden from us. **If we will be faithful to cultivate fellowship with Jesus as the main priority and passion of our lives, He will be certain that we bear the right fruit in the right time.** God will grant success, give increase, and order the details if we will seek Him first.

I believe the best and truest measure of success is simply this: intimacy with Jesus. If I am growing in intimate fellowship with God, then I am a success, regardless of how things look in my career, health, finances, etc. All those things will become what God has intended in His

time and way if I am putting first things first, and growing in my friendship with Him.

Paul writes, "*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do*" (Eph. 2:10). God has all the "works" under control, and He doesn't need our help in figuring out what to do. *But He does long for our fellowship, our undivided attention, our heart of love.* May we give Him the place He deserves in our heart, our desires, our schedule. May we each be able to honestly say this week, **"I am making my first love my first priority."**

Many blessings in our Messiah,

Pastor Matthew Casey