

## THIS AMAZING LIFE

Question to think about ... What is the meaning of real success?

**Text: Luke 3: 21 – 23** <sup>21</sup> One day when the crowds were being baptized, Jesus himself was baptized. As he was praying, the heavens opened, <sup>22</sup> and the Holy Spirit, in bodily form, descended on him like a dove. And a voice from heaven said, “You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy.”

<sup>23</sup> Jesus was about thirty years old when he began his public ministry.

**What an amazing life** God has called us to as Christians! When we put our lives in His capable hands, we gain purpose, direction, challenge, fulfillment and yes **sacrifice**.

God demonstrated His desire to demonstrate His love for us by sending His Son

Jesus humbled himself the transcendent God left Heavens Throne to one of us and experience life just as we do ...

He experienced, disappointment, excitement, temptation, grief, happiness, loneliness, exhilaration He can identify with everything you endure or enjoy

⇒ Woman, nurse who works in Mather Hospital discovered on Wednesday that her son had an accident while playing basket ball. Somehow landed on his head during the game and had to be rushed to the hospital, he would die from that freak accident hours later.

In the middle of this crisis another woman who had lost her own son was on duty that day to lend comfort to a comfortless situation.

God cares about our pain and grief - He is faithful, even when there seems to be no way out ... God makes a way

Patrick Morley writes: God is never more near than when He seems farthest away.

Unless you're visiting today, you're here because you've decided to follow Jesus, to become personal with Him. The question is how close are you willing to follow?

☆ I'm critical of televangelists who preach only the sugared version of the gospel when they speak about the relationship God wants with us –

They emphasize God's willingness to shower us with blessings to prosper and make us successful ... **but they only tell half of the story.**

Author, Patrick Morely, writes in, *How God Makes Men ...* “God will never sacrifice our character to improve our circumstances.”

God wants to prosper us but not at the expense of character development. He’s after something far greater.

Go back to that opening question ... What is the meaning of real success?

Comedian Fred Allen said: “A celebrity is a person who works hard all his life to become well-known, then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized.”

God wants to bring us success that reaches beyond the material and emotional things we so desperately want to possess. But to get there we must discover Humility.

Matthew 5 Beatitudes

“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him,  
for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

<sup>4</sup> God blesses those who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.

<sup>5</sup> God blesses those who are humble,  
for they will inherit the whole earth.

<sup>6</sup> God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice,  
for they will be satisfied.

<sup>7</sup> God blesses those who are merciful,  
for they will be shown mercy.

<sup>8</sup> God blesses those whose hearts are pure,  
for they will see God.

<sup>9</sup> God blesses those who work for peace,  
for they will be called the children of God.

<sup>10</sup> God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right,  
for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

⇒ Pulitzer Prize winner **Harper Lee** passed away Friday, Only one other book has changed more lives than *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and that is the Bible ... her only published novel ... Talk real success – changing lives

Turn again to **Luke 3: 21 - 23**

Jesus ... Son of God – is about to begin His public ministry and where do we find Him, at the Jordan River waiting in line ... waiting to be baptized by John the Baptist.

Water baptism is a public declaration of repentance – it’s a humbling experience, because you publicly admit you are a sinner who needs forgiveness but because of the joy of new life in your heart, it’s a trade you gladly make.

But Jesus was sinless, the Bible tells us and yet here he is coming in humility and obedience seeking to do things God's way – His Father's way not His own.

Did you see it ... Jennifer pointed it out to me ... while He was waiting he prayed and as he did the Heavens opened and the Holy Spirit landed on Him in bodily form as a dove. One of the symbols ... icons of the Spirit.

Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit as he was about to begin His three year public ministry. Let that roll around for a minute.

The voice from heaven ... You are my dearly loved Son, and you bring me great joy.

Isn't that the ultimate definition of success for a believer? To put a smile on our Heavenly Father's face ... that He is so please by us that it brings Him joy?

Jesus didn't need to humble himself but He did anyway ... God was so blessed by His humbleness

Where did Jesus go right after being baptized and filled with the Spirit ... he was lead by the Spirit into the desert where he fasted and prayed for 40 days

**Lent is a reminder** – an opportunity to strengthen your relationship with God who is wants to bless and use you.

You can use the suggestions regarding a corporate week by week fast in our weekly bulletin or on Webpage ... **However** should be a personal, specific fast between you and God

- Ask Him what it is He wants you to sacrifice
- It could be something to you - rather than do without
- But it will still involve sacrifice on your part
- Remember that fasting without prayer will not be successful!!!

If you'll take advantage of this opportunity wonderful things can happen ...

When you fast and pray according to His directive – you're telling the Lord, He's more important to me than any of these other things

**Closing:** [James 4:10](#) (KJV) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

Take a moment and wait on God right now .... Write down what is on your heart and make a commitment right now ... then pray and fast in a time you set aside each day this week

Than keep a journal of the experience and the results You commit this to God amazing things are going to happen ... He will author and answer your prayers