

## Polly's Pondering

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Romans 12:2

Dr. Orison Swett Marden was an American inspirational author who wrote about achieving success in life and founded Success magazine in 1897. He is quoted as having said that faith “is the force that moves mountains”. He was a philosopher who was optimistic emphasizing the divinity of man (created in the image of God) and asserted that under God man had the power to conquer all handicaps and adverse conditions that would seek to keep him from reaching his fullest potential. “Success is not measured by what you accomplish but by the opposition you have encountered, and the courage with which you have maintained the struggle against overwhelming odds.”

In this statement I see the way his faith and thought about the life of Christ had transformed his thinking. Jesus was not successful by any of the means we use to measure success. He was not wealthy. He had not accumulated many if any possessions. No business to pass down nor children with whom to pass it down. There is no evidence that he was unusually handsome. In fact, even his background of birth in Nazareth spoke of poverty and cultural surrounding that left a man lacking.” Remember when Nathanael cried out: “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” John 1:46 And yet...

Jesus was successful. It is found in his obedience to God's will which lead to Jesus fulfilling God's purpose in his life. His success is revealed in his faithfulness even when it appears to lead to failure. Because Jesus was faithful to the Word of God and to God's loving purpose in sending him to earth, which were accomplished through great challenges, rejection, and physical harm. Because he was successful through obedience you and I now have a future with hope. We have seen God conquer death and sin through the obedient sacrificial offering through Jesus' death on a cross and the outpouring of his blood. Fulfilling the promise of the new covenant that the bread is his body and the cup is his blood.

Jesus' success is found in the transformed lives that have been transformed by his love, his sacrifice. They have found a life that is abundant regardless of circumstances fulfilling Jesus' words that he had come to give us life and to give it abundantly.

Jesus' success is revealed in the lives of those who seek to follow him as disciples and who have accepted his command to go into all the world making disciples and baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And in all the disciples through the years who have received the gifts of the Holy Spirit as he promised. “But I tell you I am going to do what is best for you. This is why I am going away. The Holy Spirit cannot come to help you until I leave. But after I am gone, I will send the Spirit to you.” John 16:7 CEV It is then that we can receive the fruits of the Holy spirit, which are: “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Galatians 5:22-23

I challenge us to ask ourselves how will our success be measured. Will it be measured by worldly standards or will it be measured by our obedience to God's calling and purpose for our lives. Will the word of God be revealed in our thinking or will we be just another voice in the crowd? Will our success be revealed in the lives we have pointed to and lead to Christ? Will the fruits of the spirit be seen in us. Will others remember our acts of sacrifice and servanthood? Will others say of us that despite the suffering and challenges we have faced we have lived an abundant life and died assured of the promise of eternal life?