

Christian Perspectives: Grace Church of the Nazarene ? It is time

It is time for those who claim to be "Christians," "followers of Jesus," "believers," "children of God" or whatever label you choose to use for yourself to come to the realization the Kingdom of God is more than some vague spiritual eternal realm.

If you are who you say you are, then the Kingdom of God is now, it is all around you. When you pray, "Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven," there is a personal accountability and responsibility to be involved in the process of it becoming so.

If you are who you say you are, according to Matthew 16:19 (NIV) Jesus Christ handed you "the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

You have the authority and power "in Christ" to make a difference in this world, right now, if you should choose to do so! The Kingdom of God is here now, if Christ is in you.

I hear so many people whining and complaining about how bad things are in the world and how they believe Jesus is coming soon to rescue them. The second coming of Jesus Christ is not a day of rejoicing, but a day of wailing or mourning (Rev. 1:7).

It is not a day of victory for the Church, it is a day of defeat and judgment against the Church, because God's people failed to take the necessary action to stand up and positively influence this world for the Kingdom of God.

It is time for God's people to stop living in fear; fear of being perceived as a failure; fear of not measuring up to some standard; fear of the unknown if they attempted the extraordinary; fear of other people's opinion; fear of change, and the list could go on and on, couldn't it?

The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 8:37, "In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.?"

It is time for God's people to choose to take action and engage in being the best person they can be in every area of life. This means being successful at who you are and what you do in life.

Earl Nightingale in "The Strangest Secret" wrote, "Success is the progressive realization of a worthy goal or ideal.

"SUCCESS WILL BE DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE, BUT SHOULD NOT BE DISCREDITED BY ANYONE!?"

The critics will say, You should not seek to be successful because when you do you are demonstrating pride. Yes, that is a possibility, but only if you choose to allow it.

Proper self-confidence, balanced with proper stewardship of your life is not pride. It is responsible accountability in making the best use of the resources God has given you.

Look at Joseph. Genesis 39:1-3, "Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him there. {2} The LORD was with Joseph and he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master. {3} When his master saw that the LORD was with him and that the LORD gave him success in everything he did."

When Joseph was falsely imprisoned for his moral and ethical stand notice what happened. Genesis 39:23, "The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care, because the LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.?"

To the critics who would say, but your example is from the Old Testament, consider the Apostle Paul, who championed the gospel to the Gentiles of the Roman world of his day, starting churches in many different locations.

Did he plan and set out to be successful?

I think he did.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27, "Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize?"

Run in such a way as to get the prize. {25} Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. {26} Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. {27} No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."

While the ultimate goal and prize is life in the eternal presence of God, the journey includes the fact as a child of God we are already living in the presence of God and we have a responsibility and accountability to "live up to what we have already attained" (Phil 4:16).

It is time to be the best we can be. Being as successful as we can be is not an option for God's people. Jesus makes this clear in the parable of the talents. The Master gives praise to the stewards who did their best with what they had been given. It is time for God's stewards to make the choice today to be faithful at being their best within the context of our world today so as to make this world a better place because His Kingdom is here now.

By Rev. Bob McLellan