

5+2=12
Ephesians 3:14-21
John 6:1-15

What does success look like to you? It may depend on who you are and what you are doing? For instance, a builder of homes may define a success as a house built of quality materials that can keep occupants warm and dry. However, is that all home builders seek to do? Of course not. A successful home builder not only seeks to build a quality house, but to sell it as well.

You have to know where you are supposed to end up in order to have success in what you are doing. Otherwise you will be like the builder who thinks that his ultimate goal is to build a house. He doesn't realize that actual success only comes when that house is sold and people are comfortable living in it.

Over the past few weeks we have been concentrating on the why and how of getting out of debt. You may actually be embracing these ideas and teachings. Maybe you've decided that while you may be able to come up with an argument *for* debt, you also understand that God is smarter than you, so you're going to do it His way. Even so, what does ultimate success look like? What is ultimately supposed to be accomplished here? Are we to become debt-free so that we can simply have the satisfaction of knowing that we don't owe anybody? Actually, that's not a bad goal, but it's not the true goal.

However, as Christians we know that we were created to be in relationship with God through Jesus Christ. So how does merely being able to say we have no debt augment our relationship with our heavenly Father?

Well, if we have as our goal just being out of debt, then we have missed ultimate success. Being debt-free is not the goal, it is the means to the goal. To understand the goal, we must turn to the scriptures for today from Ephesians and John.

The Ephesians passage gives us the theoretical part, and the story in John shows us how theory is lived out.

Listen to Ephesians 3:14-21 again:

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of

Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

This is what I hear from Paul: God's resources are unlimited. I hear that God will empower and strengthen me with His Spirit.

But why will he strengthen me? It is so that I will be able to trust Christ and allow Him to make His home in my heart.

Why is it important that Christ make His home in my heart? It is because my heart, and yours, are actually homes in which someone must reside. If Christ is not living there, then someone else is. There is no such thing as an abandoned house when it comes to the heart. A heart is always occupied. If Jesus isn't living there, then it is the Enemy; for Jesus said you are either for me or against me. There is no in between! I don't know about you, but I don't want Satan living in my heart controlling my actions.

The last idea we can get from our Ephesians passage is that God's ability to accomplish is not limited by our ability to understand.

As I said, these are the theory, if you will. The story of the feeding of the 5000 in John shows us how these ideas are lived out.

Here's how it went:

It was late in the day and Jesus perceived a need – the people were hungry and needed to be fed. He asked Philip how to meet that need. Now Philip had been traveling with Jesus and had been watching him and learning from Him, yet Philip only saw scarcity.

Jesus knew He could meet the *complete* need (the reality is there were more than 5000 people there). Jesus just needed someone to offer from their own resources – however meager they may seem. Once the boy offered his 5 loaves and 2 fish, Jesus blessed that offering...that trust. The boy offered what he had; even though those resources were meant for himself, God blessed them and transformed them into *more than enough*.

Friends, I've said it before and I'll say it again today, this is not complicated stuff. Being in relationship with God is not complicated, full of high-minded theological truths. Most of the time it just boils down to this: Are we going to live for ourselves, or are we going to allow Christ to take over our lives and perform miracles that we could have never imagined. In other words...are we going to *trust* Christ?

Success for you and me is not in just getting out of debt. Success is in freeing resources so that we can demonstrate our trust by offering them to Christ. If you are like me, you long to be a part of something that is bigger than you alone. You long for the stuff of your life – your time, your talent, your money – to be used for a higher purpose; but maybe you can't see how that is going to happen. The truth is it can't happen as long as your time is tied up in making money to pay debt that you are legally obligated to fulfill.

Success is in the breaking free so that you can get caught up in the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God as He uses you and me to accomplish far more than we could ever imagine on our own. So, let's join together in getting debt-free, so that we can demonstrate our trust and see what amazing things God can accomplish through us at Sunrise!