

How to be a Successful Failure

Luke

It is a good life, and I look forward each week to sharing with you the good life found in Jesus. You've probably seen some of these commercials on television about, you know, you send in so much money and they're going to tell you how to be a success in your life. They're going to build you up and for so much money, they'll help you to be a success. Well, today, I'm not going to ask you for any money or anything like that, but I want to look at a subject, "How to be a Successful Failure."

Now, how many people have you ever heard talk about being a successful failure? Well, many people fail in life, but it's much better to be a successful failure. If you're going to do something, you need to do it right. If you're going to be a failure, you might as well go ahead and do it right. And today, we're going to look in the book of Luke, and we're going to see some other Scriptures as we move along in our subject today.

Let me invite you to look at our website, www.LRWM.org. On the website, you'll be able to download a transcript of this program, as well as other programs of "It's a Good Life." You'll also be able to listen to this program and other programs that have been aired on the radio station you're hearing "It's a Good Life" on. Now, if you are having a blessing or receiving a blessing out of these programs, why not take time this week to jot me a little note, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731. Or you can go to the website and send me an email, or there's a place on there also where you can send prayer requests and ask us to pray with you about something that's on your heart, www.LRWM.org.

Well, today, let's look at something that I believe is something that many people overlook is how to be a successful failure. Let's look at some of the people who were failures in the Bible. First, I see

John the Baptist. Now, in Mark chapter 1, it tells us that John was clothed with camel's hair. What a picture that would be. You might say that he had on designer clothes, and I wouldn't want to wear those clothes, but I understand that camel's hair is quite stiff, but here was a man who wore camel's hair for his clothing. And that verse also says in mark chapter 1 that he ate locusts and wild honey. Now, there's a fellow on TV, as well, who eats strange foods. He's a weirdo, and so would John the Baptist be considered a weirdo in his day. And let me tell you, I don't look forward and I really don't want to eat any locusts. Well, the honey wouldn't be so bad, but I wouldn't want to eat the locusts.

But in Mark chapter 1 and verse 9, the Bible tells us something that took place. He might have been a weirdo, but in Mark chapter 1 and verse 9, it tells us that he baptized Jesus. Here was a man who was a successful failure. First of all, we see that he did not have what the world would consider proper clothing or proper food to eat. And then in John chapter 10 and verse 41, it said in that verse that John did no miracle. He wasn't an outstanding person as far as the world was concerned, but in John chapter 10 and verse 42, that verse says that many believed. He may not have been what the world thought as an outstanding person, but the Bible tells us that he preached the Word of God, and because he did that, many believed.

And let's move along now. In Matthew chapter 14 verses 3 through 4, we read about how that John went to a certain person, and he had told him that it was wrong for him to do a certain thing. In Matthew 14, verses 3 and 4, the Bible says, ³*For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.* ⁴*For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.*

What a fuddy-duddy. When we think of John, we think of an old fuddy-duddy, a person who stood for right and wrong. How many people do that today as you look around? We see people who would say, "Well, if it feels good, do it," and, "If your conscience doesn't come in, you go ahead and do it." But John said it was wrong, according to the Word of God, for this man to have his brother Phillip's wife.

And in Matthew chapter 14 and verse 10, we see that.... Well, let's look back in Matthew 14 and verse 3. Herod put him in prison. Now John's a jailbird. Not only is he a fuddy-duddy, but now he becomes a jailbird that was put in jail for standing up for what is right. John would not compromise. He stood. He was a successful failure in the sight of the world.

But not only that, in Matthew 14:10, he, it says there, Herod, beheaded John in prison. Not only was he a jailbird, but Herod went ahead and cut his head off. He was executed. Why was he executed? He was executed because he stood up for what was right. And yes, by God's standards, John was a successful failure in the sight of the world. But he was a success with God. By the world's standards, John was a failure, but in God's sight he was a success.

In Luke chapter 1 and verse 15, it says, *[H]e shall be great in the sight of the Lord....* In Luke chapter 7 and verse 28, Jesus said, *For I say unto you among those that are born of women, there is not a greater profit than John the Baptist.* John was a successful failure in the sight of the world, but he was a great success in the sight of God. Well, why was John a successful failure? First, I see that, according to verse 15 of Luke chapter 1, the Bible says there, *For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine or nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost.* He would be filled with the Holy Spirit of God to be able to do the work of God.

And the second reason I believe that John was a successful failure is because, in verse 16, it tells us that he was a soul winner. In verse 16 of Luke chapter 1, it says, *And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.* John was a successful failure because he was filled with the Holy Spirit. He was a successful failure because he was a soul winner.

How about you, Christian? Are you leading others to the Lord? Are you like John? Are you taking a stand for the Lord? Are you soul winning? Are you telling others about Jesus, that they can be saved by trusting Him? John also had a deep conviction. In Matthew 14:10, it tells us that he died for his convictions. There's not many of us today who would lay down our lives for our Lord, and that's sad, because we see a man, John the Baptist, who was a successful failure because he would lay down his life for his Lord. John 3:3 teaches us that John was a humble person. John said of Jesus, *He must increase, but I must decrease.*

And the fifth thing that I see the reason that John was a successful failure is because he was willing to pay the price. He didn't quit when the going got rough. He kept on going although he was clothed in camel's hair and had to eat locusts and wild honey and all of these things that came upon him. He even had his head cut off. That's when he quit. But you know, he really didn't quit because we're still reading about him today. We're reading about the testimony that John left in this world. He was a successful failure.

The next person that I see who was a successful failure was Simon Peter. In Matthew 16:19, Jesus told Peter, *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom.* And, of course, this was fulfilled in the book of Acts, chapter 2 and verse 41, where it says that about three thousand souls were added to the church that day on the day of Pentecost. And in the same chapter, in Matthew chapter 16, verse

23, some of the places we've been reading today in the book of Matthew, Jesus said, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* Now, here's Jesus telling Peter first of all, "I'm giving you the keys of the kingdom," and then He said, *Get thee behind me, Satan.*

Well, this rebuke, according to Matthew chapter 17 in verses 1 through 3, we see how that there was Elijah and Moses appeared with Jesus and we understand that was called the Mount of Transfiguration. Well, what did old Peter do? He stuck his foot in his mouth again. He said, "Lord, it's good for us to be here. Let's build three tabernacles. Let's build one for You. Let's build one for Moses, and let's build one for Elijah." Well, he put his foot in his mouth again when he said that, because he was saying in part that Elijah and Moses were just as important as Jesus.

And then in verses 5 and 6 of Matthew chapter 17, it tells us that the voice of God was praising Jesus there, and the three disciples were afraid, according to verse 7. But you know, Jesus said as He touched them, He said, "Arise. Be not afraid." Peter was a successful failure. He was always doing something wrong, but the Lord knew that he was going to be a successful failure. He would be a successful failure in the sight of the world, but in the sight of God, he would be a great success.

Well, what about Jesus? He was a successful failure as well. We see, as He went to the cross, He was beaten; He was scourged; He was maligned; He was mistreated; He suffered more than person has ever suffered in this world, according to the Word of God, and as people looked on Him, they said, "Now, this surely couldn't be the Son of God, because He would call and ask the angels to take Him down from the cross, that they would take Him immediately to Heaven. They would heal Him if He were the Son of God." But Jesus hung on that cross, and as the world looked on, they had the idea, and they still do today, that He was a successful failure. Why?

Because in the sight of the world, Jesus failed, but in the sight of God, Jesus is a success. In the sight of those who have trusted Him as Savior, He is a great success because He is the only way to Heaven. He's the One who came to seek and to save those who were lost.

And how about you today? How can you be a successful failure? First, you need to make God the Lord, the controller, of your life. Then, after making Him Lord, you need to be faithful to Him. And the most important way to be a successful failure is to make sure Jesus is your Savior. Have you trusted Him today? Do you know the Lord as your Savior. Have you asked Him into your heart? "Lord Jesus, come into my heart. Please save me so I can go to heaven. I receive You as my Savior. I know I can't save myself, and I'm willing to turn from my sin if You'll come into my heart." And you know, Jesus doesn't say "if" He will come in; He says, "I will come in if you will trust Me." Ask Him to come in today.

And if you're a saved person, you need to turn from your sin if you're not living for Him and ask Jesus to forgive you of that sin, not to be saved, but because you are saved so you can serve Him.

Until this same time next week, may the Lord bless you. It is a good life serving the Lord.