



## “Lose And Be The Winner”

Luke 9:23-25

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What a strange title for the message of a sermon in today’s world. How can one even imagine being declared the winner when he/she has lost? In the lesson for each of us this morning is one of the most profound teachings of Jesus Christ. Taking a few moments, in the midst of all He had to accomplish for His Father, Jesus takes His apostles aside to teach them a timely piece of wisdom and counsel for all generations.

As He seats them around Him, Jesus says in Luke 9:25, “What will you gain, if you own the world but lose or destroy yourself or waste your life?” Before that, in verse 24 He tells them, “If you want to gain or save your life, you must give up or lose your life for me, and you will be a winner.” What strange counsel—“Lose to Gain.” “Lose to Succeed.” “Lose to Be A Winner.” Illogical. How can a winner be a loser? There are only two impulses in life. One is the impulse to acquire, take, hoard, own, and protect. The other is the impulse to give and to serve. One assumes that each of us can be the Lord of our own lives and that our security and fulfillment depend on our ability to provide for ourselves. The other confesses the sovereignty of God and devotes life to the fulfillment of God’s redemptive will in delivering and empowering others, establishing justice and peace, tearing down barriers, reconciling persons, and creating communities. Those who devote themselves to these tasks confess that the true fulfillment of life is to be found in the service of Christ and that our only security is in Him.

Success or gain in today’s world is usually defined by the superficial rewards glorified in the media: wealth, power, fame, luxury, prestige, and recognition. Yet few of us have a firm idea what it takes to be or feel successful (like a winner). Some people would sacrifice anything to be seen or accepted as “successful, a winner.” We, as a society, have confused success with fulfillment, accomplishment with satisfaction, and achievement with peace. It is essential for you and for me to look beyond the wonderful things success can buy, to the heavy price it will demand. Can you recall the personal experiences that motivated you before external success became your life’s ambition? Do you remember the origin of your assumptions about success? In essence, success or gain in our culture requires becoming what everyone else tells us to be. SUCCESS CAN ONLY BE DEFINED BY PURPOSE AND MEASURED BY OBEDIENCE!!

Purpose is not doing a good thing, but the right thing. Living with a purpose is the difference between being busy and being effective. Jesus was telling His apostles that it makes no sense to attempt to save our lives (gain it all, be a success in the eyes of the world) on earth only to lose everything when our lives quickly and inevitably pass away. The essence of Jesus’ message to us is to choose the wise course and invest our earthly resources—our time, talents, and wealth—in what is eternal. Even if we lose our lives for Jesus’ sake, that investment will promote us as ‘A WINNER’ for eternity.

For further study and meditation read the following scriptures:

Luke 17:33; 14:11; 18:14

Matthew 10:39; 16:25

John 12:24, 25

Start being a successful winner today, by knowing what to lose or give up!!

*Pastor Gerald L. Durley*