

Today's message is like a "preaching to the choir" message. Most of us can easily guess what this message's point would be by matching the message title to the scripture message: Redefining success—boasting about knowing God, not anything else. So, please excuse me in advance if I bore you out this time. Ok, I think I have prepared you enough. So, here it goes.

Have you ever noticed that everyone suddenly becomes a fan when a sports team starts winning? As one who lives with the person who is a diehard Denver Broncos fan, I can tell you as a matter of fact that not many Broncos fans can be found in Hawaii. If I name a few here in Kona, they are Sita Mareko, Mafu Solofa, Nancy and Vernon Lowrey, and plus me by marriage with my hubby Sung 😊
Unfortunately, my team is not in the game anymore for this season. So, each of us cheers for another team right now. Particularly this afternoon, it would be the San Francisco 49ers or Texas Cowboys, who are playing this afternoon.

What is going on here is this—Everyone loves a winner! More importantly, everyone wants to be associated with winners. That is what is happening in our society, even our church. The church in Corinth is one example (1 Corinthians 1:26-31). The members there picked the biggest, hottest names in the early church—Peter, Paul, and Apollos—and formed teams around them because they wanted to boast about being members of a winning team. Although they were boasting about these three men, they were really boasting about themselves! Apostle Paul, however, shut down such foolishness by saying in 1 Corinthians 1:31, "Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord." "The boast in the Lord" in the New Living Translation of the Bible says, "Boast only about the Lord." Apostle Paul was quoting Prophet Jeremiah here.

Prophet Jeremiah, in today's scripture, uses the Hebrew word "הַלְלֵלְךָ (hallel)" in instructing appropriate boasting. We get our word "Hallelujah" from this word "הַלְלֵלְךָ (hallel)." This word "הַלְלֵלְךָ (hallel)" means "to praise, to glory, to boast" in something. What Prophet Jeremiah says in today's scripture is this: **Boast only about the Lord** because **what we boast, praise, or give glory in life defines what success is for us.**

God designed us for success. He made us a winner. This is true for every person, regardless of what has happened in the past. God has never destined anybody to live a mediocre life. Amen?

Jeremiah 29:11 says, "'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'" This same verse in the King James Translation of the Bible says that God knows His thoughts toward us, and He desires to give us **an expected end**. That end is promised in the Word of God. We are guaranteed success in life.

I'm not saying success can always be achieved without a fight or effort, but we were destined for great things. God has created everyone to be something special, but I also feel that we live in a culture that has misrepresented true success.

As a matter of fact, I looked up the meaning of the word. The American Heritage Dictionary (AHD) defines success as "The achievement of something desired, planned, or attempted." That's a pretty broad definition, isn't it? I mean, some people are aiming at nothing and hitting it every time. They are successful according to this first definition I've found in the dictionary since they achieved their goal, which is nothing.

How about this definition of success: "The gaining of fame or prosperity" (AHD)? I feel like people might feel successful when they gain fame or prosperity when they gain those first. But I know many people who have fame and prosperity are not happy. Instead, they live in fear and anxiety. Can we define success in that way?

I think success needs to be redefined to reset our hearts for a new way of living. So, I go back to Prophet Jeremiah's definition—**What we boast, praise, or give glory in life defines what success is for us.**

Telling you the truth, a lot of boasting and bragging goes on in this day and age. Not only do you brag in bars or on dates, but also on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Bragging has become as much a part of daily life as brushing our teeth and putting on our pants. We brag about the food we eat, the clothes we wear, our children or grandchildren we love, and our education and experience. We brag about the people we know about but we do not really know. Even we sometimes brag about our ability not to brag while bragging 😊 There indeed are some things worth bragging about or boasting about.

What do you boast about or brag about in your life? The Bible says that we are born to be successful, but what does success look like for you? How do you define success in your life?

True boasting in the Lord or true success is actually boasting *of* the Lord—boasting of His great attributes, what He has done for us, what He is still doing, and what He has promised to do.

The questions we need to ponder to reset our hearts for a new way of living are these: How often do we boast about the God we believe in? How often do we boast about what God has done for us or what God is still doing in our lives?

May we all check the list of things we praise and boast about today to achieve true success in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.