



SECOND MONDAY OF LENT
DEVOTIONAL

MARCH 14, 2022

Today is the second week of Lent.

Take a moment to pause and breath in and out slowly.

Intentionally.

Rest in and welcome God's grace-filled presence.



Have you ever slowed down to reflect on how you define success? Or perhaps stated in a more formational way, are you aware of what has influenced your definition of success?

Our culture has this fixation with upward mobility. Always advancing, always making a name for ourselves. Always trying to acquire more power and more prestige. It's frankly hard not to get caught up as one of the upwardly mobile ourselves.



Let's take this moment to pause and reflect on how would you define success?



By your own definition, do you consider yourself successful?

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With your definition in mind and heart, consider what have been the influences in your life that have shaped that definition? Have the influences come from schools you attended? Your family growing up? How have media streams shaped what you deem successful?

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As you listen to Jesus this week, notice how relevant and ancient this conversation really is. Use His words as a filter for your definition and corresponding influences.

Where is your definition of success getting snagged by what we hear Jesus sharing this week?

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SCRIPTURE
MATTHEW 20:20–28 (NLT)

²⁰ Then the mother of James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus with her sons. She knelt respectfully to ask a favor. ²¹ “What is your request?” He asked. She replied, “In your Kingdom, please let my two sons sit in places of honor next to You, one on Your right and the other on Your left.” ²² But Jesus answered by saying to them, “You don’t know what you are asking! Are you able to drink from the bitter cup of suffering I am about to drink?” “Oh yes,” they replied, “we are able!”

²³ Jesus told them, “You will indeed drink from My bitter cup. But I have no right to say who will sit on My right or My left. My Father has prepared those places for the ones He has chosen.”

²⁴ When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. ²⁵ But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the

rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. ²⁶ But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. ²⁸ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give His life as a ransom for many.”



We have already noted how this world seeks upward mobility - clamoring for success and power. But Jesus tells us, “But among you it will be different.”

So how different are you? Return to your definition of success. Does what Jesus shares with us today affirm or challenge your definition of success?

In what ways?



Henri Nouwen reminds us, “The way of the Christian leader is not the way of upward mobility in which our world has invested so much, but the way of downward mobility ending on the cross. I, obviously am not speaking about a psychologically weak leadership, in which the Christian leader is simply the passive victim of manipulation. No, I am speaking of a leadership in which power is constantly abandoned in favor of love.” [*In the Name of Jesus*, page 62.]



Jesus is ever showing us a different way to orient our lives and define success. In today’s Scripture, Jesus helps us to see that as His followers our lives are not to power over others. Rather we are to live as Jesus lived and be downwardly mobile in way of the cross.

We do this because we follow a downwardly mobile Jesus.

We follow the One who created the heavens and then was born as a baby.

We follow Jesus who stooped down in the midst of arguments to doodle in the sand on behalf of an adulterous person to show grace and love.

We follow the One who was called My Beloved Son and then followed the leading of the Holy Spirit into the wilderness for testing.

We follow Jesus who stooped down and washed the feet of those who hours later would betray, deny and abandon Him.

We follow the One who said, “Not My will but Yours be done.”

We follow Jesus - whose downward mobility allowed Him to be lifted up on the cross as the ultimate way of love.

Reflecting on these truths, as you hear today’s Scripture again, what do you now hear with your definition of success in mind?



As you hear today’s Scripture again, place yourself on the scene. What group would you have been part of — the ones turning towards Jesus or the ones turning away? Why?



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In these final moments today, talk to Jesus about where your own definition of success is getting snagged on His words and how you can power-under others and serve them in the downwardly mobile way of love.



CLOSING AFFIRMATION
JOHN 6:66–69 (NLT)

⁶⁶At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. ⁶⁷Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, “Are you also going to leave?”

⁶⁸Simon Peter replied, “Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. ⁶⁹We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God.