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## SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

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In the sermon this week, our primary text was 1 Cor. 9:19-23.

Become= The process of changing

*To BECOME one day means BEING today.*

From our passage, the author Paul tells us that becoming more like Jesus one day means...

1. Being a servant today v.19
2. Being strategic today vv.20-22a
3. Being contagious today v.22b
4. Being a partner today V.23

Ask: What did God reveal to you during the message this week?

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## WARM UP

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In a recent survey from Harvard Business Review, 4,000 men and women were asked to define "success," both personally and professionally. The most widely chosen answers were (in order):

Professional Success means: 1) Individual achievement, 2) Ongoing learning and development, 3) Making a difference, 4) Working with a good team, and 5) Organizational achievement

Personal Success means: 1) Rewarding relationships, 2) Happiness/enjoyment, 3) A life of meaning, 4) Work/life balance, and 5) New experiences

Question: How would you define success? What would you like to become? Don't discuss the definitions from your culture, society or friends, but your personal definition of success in life.

In the Warm Up, we saw that different people define success in different ways. We are all fighting for a certain image, whatever we believe success truly is.

But how does the Bible define success? What is the image we should be fighting for?

We learned in the *Threads Family Challenge* that Jesus reflected God's image perfectly. Colossians 1:15 says, "he is the image of the invisible God." Hebrews 1:3 says he is "the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being." Jesus said, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9) Just as humans were designed to do in the beginning, Jesus shows the world what God is like. But he does it perfectly. "The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14)

Jesus is the glory of the Father. He makes God known in the world. He is God in human form. He shows us what it means to be the image of God and to reflect God's glory. That's why the New Testament sometimes says we should be like God and sometimes says we should be like Christ. It's because Christ is the true image of God.

The writers of the study *Gospel DNA* put it this way:

"Jesus shows us God's agenda for change. God isn't interested in making us religious. Think of Jesus, who was hated by religious people. God isn't interested in making us "spiritual" if by spiritual we mean detached: Jesus was God getting stuck in. God isn't interested in making us self-absorbed: Jesus was self-giving personified. God isn't interested in serenity: Jesus was passionate for God, angry at sin, wept for the city. The word "holy" means set apart from or different from, our sinful ways. It didn't mean being set apart from the world, but being consecrated to God in the world. He was God's glory in and for the world."

- How does Jesus specifically reflect the glory of God?

### **Read Romans 8:28-29.**

Romans 8:28 is one of the most comforting and widely quoted verses in the Bible. However, when quoted in isolation, we can sometimes miss what God's definition of "good" for us truly is.

According to v. 29, what is the ultimate purpose that God is working all things together for? What does He consider to be "good" for us to become?

What this means is that God has a plan to mold and shape you into the image of his Son Jesus. He uses both blessings and trials to do that shaping work. Therefore, we should submit to his perfect work in us. From God's perspective, becoming like Jesus is the goal of the entire Christian life. This is his definition of success. The purpose of our lives is to bring glory to God, to show the world what he's like as his image bearers. In order to do that, we must be conformed into the image of His Son...which brings Him glory!

- Be honest- do you want to be like Jesus? Why or why not?

### **Read John 20:21 as a group.**

One of the characteristics of God is that he is a missionary God, sending His Son into the world to accomplish His work of redemption. Jesus was the ultimate missionary, and we share His identity as "sent" ones. God has given us the great privilege to participate with Him in His plan of redemption. This is like a divine "take-your-kid-to-work day" every day. We have the privilege of living on mission with Him, sharing the good news of the gospel with others as we live, work, and play. When we embrace this identity, we see that mission is not something to add to our schedule: it is our schedule.

- What currently motivates you to live out your missionary identity that God has given you in Christ? Where have you seen unwillingness to live out this contagious identity as a "sent" one?

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## DIGGING DEEPER

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Once we have embraced this idea of truly becoming like Jesus, the next question is: what does this look like in everyday life? Is this possible for me?

Church planter and missiologist Michael Frost recently wrote a book titled "The 5 Habits of Highly Missional People." In it, he lists 5 habits that every follower of Christ can start developing to lead a contagious life. These 5 habits are described in the acronym "BELLS."

**B- Bless:** I will bless three people this week, at least one whom is not a member of our church.

**E- Eat:** I will eat with three people this week, at least one of whom is not a member of our church.

**L- Listen:** I will spend at least one period of the week listening to the Holy Spirit in prayer.

**L- Learn:** I will spend at least one period of the week learning Christ (through reading the Gospels or other books about Jesus).

**S- Sent:** I will journal all the ways that I worked with Jesus in His mission to advance the gospel or resisted Jesus during the week.

According to Frost, each habit is designed to release a certain value in the life of the person who practices them. If you bless three people every week, you're going to become a very generous person. If you eat with others, you'll develop a greater capacity for hospitality. If you foster the habit of listening to the Holy Spirit, you'll become an increasingly Spirit-led person. If you're learning Christ, it's fair to assume you'll become more and more Christ-like. And if you're journaling the ways you've been sent into your world, you'll increasingly see yourself as a sent one, or a missionary in your own neighborhood.

Imagine if we as a church became generous, hospitable, Spirit-Led, Christ-like missionaries! We would become...more like Jesus.

Take Action: If you decide to dive in and start practicing BELLS, find a person in your group who will join you in the challenge and can encourage you through accountability. Meet or connect each week for the first 6 weeks.

If you'd like more detail on BELLS, you can download Frost's eBook for free at:  
<https://www.exponential.org/ebooks/five-habits/>

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## CLOSING THOUGHT

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"There has been a long tradition which sees the mission of the Church primarily as obedience to a command. It has been customary to speak of 'the missionary mandate.' This way of putting the matter is certainly not without justification, and yet it seems to me that it misses the point. It tends to make mission a burden rather than a joy, to make it part of the law rather than part of the gospel. If one looks at the New Testament evidence one gets another impression. Mission begins with a kind of explosion of joy. The news that the rejected and crucified Jesus is alive is something that cannot possibly be suppressed. It must be told. Who could be silent about such a fact? The mission of the Church in the pages of the New Testament is more like the fallout from a vast explosion, a radioactive fallout which is not lethal but life-giving."

Lesslie Newbigin, *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*