

Royal Lessons from Judah - 2 Chronicles 26:1-15
Uzziah Part I: The Reason for My Success...
As I sought the LORD, God gave me success.

We begin our new series today **Royal Lessons from Judah - 2 Chronicles 26:1-15 Uzziah Part I: The Reason for My Success**

These 15 verses cover the **The Good Years of Uzziah's reign**. For these are the years where the Blessings and Divine help flow from Uzziah's obedience, as a righteous ruler, and his fidelity, which is that loyalty, the commitment, devotion and faithfulness to God, his law and commands, including God's Vision for his life and Judah's, which we might understand better when consider it in terms of the sexual faithfulness in the covenant and intimacy of the marriage relationship. That is the kind of obedience and fidelity in a relationship with God that releases the flow of blessing, of divine help and prosperity or success from God in heaven, whether it be to an individual or to a nation as a whole and everyone in between.

Who here wants to live and experience success in their life?
Do You want a taste of what real prosperity from God is like?

Let's start by asking ourselves-What does success look like today? For a kiwi this last week its been about Winning the America's Cup back from Team USA and their Aussie Skipper, the All Blacks beating the Lions and the Warriors managing to pull off a win. Or if you were out on the sidelines yesterday it may have been your children or Grandchildren winning their sport's game. For those who aren't into sport it is perhaps measured by how many followers you have on your Twitter account, Instagram or so called 'friends' on facebook. Still for others, going by the media, it is having your face on national TV for your moment of glory or to become known by your own channel on youtube with a growing list of subscribers. If you are not into engaging with social media then perhaps Success is being in a position of Power or Authority or measured in terms of having a Big House plus other Property and investments along with a growing current balance in your Bank Account or Retirement Fund. For others success is your ability to have regular Overseas holidays, important during these cold winters if you don't ski or snowboard. If you are a stay at home person it may be owning your own yacht or boat living in such place as Auckland.

But if you're a Millionaire or Billionaire success includes not just your business greatly prospering but your ability to own your own America's Cup Sailing Team, or Cricket team or Football team, which could be League or soccer. In contrast to these examples...

The inherent secret of Uzziah's Success or the Reason for His Success simply put is this: "As I sought the LORD, God gave me success". And the meaning behind this reason is...

Success is a great good if it comes from the Lord and is used for the Lord and His purposes.

Three Lessons that we can learn from Uzziah's success include:

1. Success (in the true sense) comes only from the LORD.

Uzziah was a hard-working, visionary king. But verse 5 makes it clear that the source of his success was not his effort or genius, but the LORD. The King James & NAS Bible versions I believe translate this verse accurately when they say, "*He continued to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding (NIV instructed him) through the vision (NIV fear) of God; and as long as he sought the Lord, God prospered him (NIV gave him success).*" Uzziah's success was due to seeking God and His Word. The Hebrew word "seek" meant, literally, "to trample under foot." The idea was that when you frequent a place, you beat a path underfoot. To seek the Lord means going to Him for His wisdom and help so often that you wear a path to God.

Uzziah did that. He followed Solomon's counsel, "*Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight*" (Proverbs 3:5-6).

The prophet Isaiah, whose calling to ministry began in the year King Uzziah died scolded the people for consulting mediums and spiritists and said, rather, "*should not a people consult or inquire of their God?*" (Isaiah 8:19). Uzziah consulted God.

The source of God's wisdom is His Word. In Uzziah's day, of course, the Bible was not completed. He no doubt at least had the Law of Moses, and perhaps Job, the Psalms, and a few other portions of the Old Testament like the Proverbs of Solomon. But he also had a godly counselor, Zechariah known only here, who had understanding in the visions or what the NIV calls the "fear" of God. Uzziah wisely and humbly listened to the counsel of this prophet who understood God's Word. So through God's Word and prayer, Uzziah beat a path to God and God prospered him.

That's the only kind of success or prosperity that matters! When you live by seeking God and His wisdom through His Word and prayer. Let's continue to shift the dust off our Bibles, turning the pages to add to the wear and tear. **Psalm 1:1-3** puts it this way: *Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way/path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on His law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree (firmly) planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, whose leaf does not wither. **Whatever s/he does prospers.***

I might add that some are successful in the eyes of the world, even the Christian world, but God does not share the same opinion. Others may be considered failures or nobodies by the world, but God considers them eminently successful. So we must be careful to seek after true success that comes from beating a path, pursuing God through His Word and through prayer. For when God grants a measure of success, we must realise that...

2. Success can be used for the benefit of the LORD & Others

Uzziah from a young age was a leader of far-reaching vision, whose accomplishments included both domestic and foreign projects.

Verse 2 notes that he built Eloth and restored it to Judah. Eloth, modern day Eilat, was the port city at the southern tip of Israel on what is today called the Gulf of Aqaba. Furthermore he subdued a number of Philistine cities to the west of Jerusalem and built Israeli cities in their region (v.6). He conquered the Arabians and Meunites to the south, and the Ammonites to the east paid him tribute (vv.7-8). Uzziah also fortified Jerusalem, thus restoring the defense against the Northern Kingdom which his father had lost (v.9). Furthermore he built towers for the defense of his vast agricultural and livestock holdings in the outlying countryside and Uzziah "loved the soil" (v.10), and the land prospered, became highly productive, under him.

Also, Uzziah developed a strong army which "could wage war with great power" (v.13). In addition to the traditional weapons (v.14), Uzziah installed the latest military hardware in Jerusalem, great catapults and arrow-shooting devices (v.15). As a result, we read twice (vv. 8,15) of his widespread fame which perhaps came to a pinnacle when his well-trained and equipped army as part of a coalition stopped none other than Tiglath-Pileser the Assyrian King

in his tracks as he sought to advance toward the west.
This kind of success for Uzziah meant that his fame spread far and wide and he became powerful.

Whenever God grants that kind of success and fame to a person, it should be used for the Lord and His purpose. Fame and the influence that comes with it is simply an opportunity to tell more people of the greatness of God, so that His name is exalted. It also provides the opening to do more for the Lord's work and for His people, to see them established in His ways. Lead singer of the Rock Band U2, Bono has certainly tried to use his power and influence to draw attention to the needs of the world's poorest and suffering people and groups meeting with both Church Leaders and the Leaders of the world's nations and anyone else who will listen and commit themselves to action.

Someone once said that the only advantage of fame is that it gives you a platform for service. Erma Bombeck cut to the heart of the matter when she said,

"Don't confuse fame with success.

Madonna is one; Helen Keller is the other."

So we ought to view any measure of success God gives us as a trust to be managed for His glory and kingdom.

Now the hinge of our story is at the end of verse 15:

"... for he was greatly helped until he was strong and powerful."

Uzziah's problem was precisely that- he became strong and powerful. Uzziah's success and strength led to his downfall which we'll address next week in Part II.

So if you fear the Lord you can expect that even though it may seem to you or to others that God has forgotten you, you can be assured that God is still with you and even more than that, God is at work preparing you for what work lies ahead for you. And even though it may seem like God is not answering your prayers, you can experience success along the way as you keep fearing God by obeying His commands and living according to Christ's teachings. Not only does God promise to provide success for those who fear Him, he also promises the provision for our physical needs.

3. [God's Successful provision of our Physical Needs]

In **Psalm 34:9** we read *Fear the LORD, you his saints,
for those who fear him lack nothing.*

Then in **Psalm 37:23-25** Turn a couple of more pages in your Bible

If the LORD delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand. I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

Do you see the equation coming to light here?

Fear of the Lord = Having Physical Needs Met.

The Psalmist says that the righteous may stumble, that he or she might have difficult times, but in the end, God will provide for the needs of those who fear him.

Jesus taught the same thing in **Matthew 6:25-33** [Turn to Matt 6]

V.33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

What is Jesus saying? It's not too hard to figure out.

Make the Kingdom of God your first priority and,

Live as righteously as you can – obeying and fearing God.

If you'll do this you don't need to chase after material dreams.

God will provide what you need. The heart of the matter is that this is the righteous life that God requires.

Conclusion: For as long as Uzziah sought God, frequenting and beating a path to Yahweh – God gave him Success – God made Him, and Judah along with Him to prosper in all ways.

So what if I faithfully fear and seek God through prayer and the revealed truth of his word, what is the success or prosperity that I will experience - As a teen like Uzziah, as a parent, an employee, a business person or one who is retired?

The Answer is the Daily provision of all my human needs, including wisdom and understanding, God's vision for my life!

Application: To apply this to ourselves –

As long as you and I seek the LORD by continuing to include him in our daily lives we will be successful and prosper as individuals, as households, as the people of God, Christ's church, the Temple of the Holy Spirit. And this will be our stated collective testimony...

The Reason for Our Success (being)-

As we sought the LORD, God gave us success...