

SIM *now*

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Knowing Him Through Success



PHILIPPIANS 3:10

"I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings, becoming like him in his death..."

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found on website and FB



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KNOWING CHRIST

Joshua Bogunjoko
SIM International Director

Phillipi was a church founded because of God's clear direction to Apostle Paul and his team through a vision. It was to this same church that the Apostle would write a few years later about partnership in the Gospel. However, in writing to the Philippians, the apostle had one clear preoccupation: To know Christ.

Success in Knowing Christ

Paul's desire to know Christ through victory and success was energized by his vision of the resurrected Christ. He made clear to his partners in the Gospel his view of true success and victory. For him, these lay in Christ alone. True success for one desiring to make Christ known is not about worldly accomplishments. In spite of Paul's pedigree as a Jew – "circumcised on the eighth day of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness, which is in the law, found blameless" (v 5,6) – success for him meant counting "all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord" (v 8). Yes, indeed, a man who could boast of being blameless in keeping the law of Moses nevertheless defined success in knowing Christ.

Sacrifice in Knowing Christ

The language the apostle employed in his desire to know Christ was not just a casual knowing, nor was it an intellectual knowing; it was a knowing that transcends that. It was a personal and experiential knowing. The apostle employed a word that implies personal or first-hand knowledge. It was the same word Mary used to express her lack of understanding of how the angel's word would be fulfilled since she did not "know" a man. This is the kind of knowing that the apostle seeks, and no wonder that he was willing to give up all things for this way of knowing Christ. Only this level of knowing Christ fully equips us to make Him known in turn. It is also this level of knowing Christ that defines true success in the Christian journey. Every other achievement is nothing compared to this victory and the joy that accompanies it.

It is no wonder the apostle can conclude in verses 13 and 14: "One thing I do..." Success and victory characterised by a single purpose, a uniting vision, and a singular focus on the upward call of God in Christ Jesus is the kind of success and victory that will make Him known.



KNOWING THE POWER OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

David Yap LT
Board Member, SIM EA



In our life journey, the question of what really worth pursuing, His will inevitably surface. For the apostle Paul, he came to the absolutely clear position that the most worthy goal in life is to know Christ. He wrote: "I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of His resurrection and participation in His sufferings, becoming like Him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead." (Philippians 3:10-11, NIV).

Paul is certainly not referring to mere head knowledge. Rather, he is expressing that deep longing to know Christ intimately, to deepen his trust relationship and to experience the joy of feeling the heartbeat of his beloved Saviour.

The Gospel message that has impacted Paul's life and ours rests on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Once a persecutor of the church and now transformed following his encounter with the risen Christ, Paul shares with us this fervent desire — "to know the power of his resurrection."

Let's reflect on three dimensions of this passionate pursuit.

First, experiencing the joy of receiving forgiveness

In Romans 6, Paul emphasised the truth that by the death and resurrection of Jesus, the believer has been set free from the dominion of sin. And that "the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life" (vv 22-23). This truth is mind-boggling. The power of Christ's resurrection brings about the experience of a forgiven life and the joy of being made holy and the gift of life everlasting from God.

Second, living out the promised hope of His calling

In Paul's intercessory prayer in Ephesians 1:16-20, he asks that the believers' eyes may be enlightened "so that you will know what the hope of His calling is ... and what is the boundless greatness of His power toward us who believe" (NASB). We need to see and understand that the same power God demonstrated in Jesus' resurrection, is now available to all believers — for us to grow to be like Christ. We have the promised hope to grow to maturity, to live out Christlikeness in our lives.

Third, being empowered to live a victorious life.

In 1 Corinthians 15:56-58, the apostle emphasises that all believers must know and grasp that through Jesus Christ, we will have victory over sin and death and be assured that nothing we do for Him will ever be wasted. We too can experience the reality of a victorious life.

This is indeed the most worthy pursuit — "to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead" (NLT). The resurrection power — herein is the power for living a dynamic Christian life. We need to rely on the Lord's divine power to enable us to walk through life's journey with confidence.



SUCCESS THROUGH PREPARATION FOR MISSION

Patrick Ng, South Asia

If anyone asks me what my greatest success in life is, my answer will always be, “to know God and to follow His guidance every day.” But my success in mission, did not begin with good experiences but with many unpleasant ones. My mission field has helped me to know God better than in my own home country, through many unexpected experiences.

Preparation through unpleasant experiences

One of my first unpleasant experiences was burglary in my house when I lost most of my belongings. That was followed by numerous unpleasant experiences like being trapped in bathrooms, house arrest by the authorities as they thought the place was unsafe for a foreigner to live, termination of lease by landlord, money stolen by a person I knew, etc. I believe these are God’s ways of preparing me for His work by revealing to me who He is amidst challenging circumstances.

Preparation through unbearable climate

God has been preparing me for His work by teaching me to endure the hot climate too. Sometimes the temperature soars and goes beyond 40 degrees. At night, my bed and blankets will be hot even when the fan is turned on. Whenever the climate and circumstances become unbearable, God reminds me of Apostle Paul’s words in Romans 5:3-5 “Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

Preparation through language learning

As part of my preparation to be involved in active mission in the field, I am expected to learn the local language. Using English which is not my mother tongue to learn the language of the field, has been very challenging to me. Every day, I struggle to understand what people say to me and I attempt to reply by using the few words and phrases that I have picked up. I feel weak, defeated, and ashamed when I find it difficult to learn the language. It’s easy to hide myself and stay away from people or make friends only with those who can speak some English. Keeping in mind how humble and focused our Lord Jesus Christ was, encourages me not to give up learning the local language, even though sometimes the progress is not obvious but slow. Thus, I believe I am in a way successful in my missionary journey as God is successful in preparing me for His work.

SUCCESS THROUGH FAILURE

Sophia Yu, East Asia

When I first started serving in the field, I mostly taught and communicated in my own mother tongue. From the beginning of this term, I could only use the local language.

Failure taught to turn to God

I recall lecturing in a seminary where I translated all the content and asked the language teacher to check it and correct any errors. I was looking forward to the lecture because it was the first time I was using the local language. However, after the first session, my co-worker told me that the students could not understand me. So, I requested my co-worker to translate it again. I kept wondering and asking God why they couldn't understand my "local language." Praise the Lord for I was not discouraged. God helped me to understand that even when translating, I needed to pay attention to cultural differences. Different cultures have differences in expression. The next time I was invited to share at another seminary, I paid special attention to the use of words, terms, and sentences when translating, and checked with the language teacher whether my expression was clear, simple, and easy to understand. After the teacher approved my translation, I looked to God for help before going to the seminary. After I presented the first part of my lecture, my co-worker gave me a thumbs up and told me that this time, students understood 80% of it.

Failure taught to continue to learn

From 0%-80% - that is a huge jump! There is a saying that "failure teaches success." I appreciate my failures because they point out my limitations and remind me that I must continue learning.

With a learning mentality in an intercultural environment, all challenges and difficulties become learning opportunities, and even "failure" becomes a kind of joy. It's not a complacent mentality because failure becomes the motivation that drives me to learn harder. Success is the grace of God, and all the glory belongs to the Lord!



SUCCESS THROUGH RE-ENCOUNTER

Budin, South Asia



I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior when I was 15. I was attending a youth retreat at our church, when the pastor challenged the participants to become servants of God and said he would pray for them. I was one of the participants who responded to the altar call and went forward to be prayed for. After the retreat, over time, I forgot about my commitment to be a servant of God. I was thrown into the circle of the economically successful and I began to desire to become a financially established person like them. I thought that economic security and success guaranteed one's happiness.

Recommitment and success

Fourteen years after the retreat, I found myself trapped in an unfortunate situation due to the pursuit of my youthful ambitions. Instead of economic security, I was in a risky situation that jeopardised my life. I had strayed too far from God's plan. It was then that I was reminded by God of the commitment I had made before Him. Re-encountering Christ changed my definition/perspective of success. I saw success as a "promise and gift of God" that should be interpreted and responded to wisely. All this time I saw success in a fatalistic, arrogant, and conceited way. I would boast about my achievements to those closest to me and to my community.

In my encounter with God, I was reminded that success is accompanied by responsibility and hard work, so there is no reason for us to boast. Success should not be measured only by economic achievements, but by how we carry out our responsibilities correctly, earnestly, diligently, sincerely, and honestly.

Responsible service and success

With my new perspective on success, God led me back to my original commitment to serve Him. Through an SIM East Asia mission presentation at a retreat in 2010, I jumped at the opportunity to volunteer for mission work. After being part of SIM EA, God took me to a very remote place to serve a people who still adhered to tribal religions and through the youth dorms ministry, I was able to help provide better education to young children. Praise God, through diligent, sincere, and responsible service, many lives were changed for the better. I see them as successes that have eternal value. I no longer hanker after successes that promise personal satisfaction. If God has led us faithfully from the beginning, He will also provide success till the end.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SIM'S NEW INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

Phil Bauman

Phil Bauman has been appointed as SIM's new International Director. His new role started on March 1, 2024, when Joshua Bogunjoko stepped down. An engineer by profession, Phil joined SIM in 2000 and served in several key leadership roles, including Ghana Director. He had been a member of the International Leadership Team since 2018 and of the Executive Team since 2020, serving as the Global Director for Strategic Development. He was instrumental in many global projects, including Synergie and the emphasis on ministry focus. Phil and his wife Andrea have three adult children and live near Toronto, Canada.



Phil, his wife Andrea, Joshua and his wife Joanna during Phil's commissioning (Photography by John Dudeck)