

# Something To Boast About

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It. We looked at a verse this morning. One Corinthians, chapter twelve, verse 13 in Sunday school. And it says, to test yourselves, to see you're in the faith. And so I'm going to test you this morning.

All right, we're going to give a little test. The early church determined that there were seven deadly sins. Seven. I know there s a lot more than that. But they settled on seven.

Anybody know what those seven deadly sins are? Speak up. Five. Oh, pride. That's number one.

Actually, I didn't quite hear you. Floth is another one. Envy, gluttony is another one. Oh, don't like that one. Greed is another one.

And lust. I think we hit them all.

Well, that is a deadly sin. But it's not one that they listed. I'll read them off. Pride, greed, wrath. We missed that one.

Envy, lust, gluttony and sloth. Now that you know the seven deadly sins, and I know nobody here is guilty of any of those, right? But if we were, what do you think would be the worst of those seven deadly sins?

I think most of us would settle on pride. Because I think pride is what leads to a lot of those other sins. But beyond that, it says, God opposes the proud. Well, we don't want

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him on the other side. We want him on our side.

When someone's been born again, one of the things that happens in the christian life is now God is on your side. That's a good place for him to be, being on your side. But I mention that because every one of us, and I can say that with a full assurance, every one of us deals with pride. None of us have escaped the pride of this life. It might be our looks, our smarts, our riches, our cars, our home, our kids, our friends.

The list goes on and on, doesn't it? Things that we proud. We may not speak it out loud, boasting, but inside there's something in us that, well, at least I'm not like so and so, okay? I'm better than that. And the problem with pride is the Bible says the pride of life, which is not from the father, but is from the world.

All pride in ourselves and what we can do comes not from the father, but it comes from the world. Now, I'm not saying that we can't be thankful for the good things in our life. There's a kind of pride that's not looking at ourselves, but it's just thankful for what God has done or is doing in our life. And we should be thankful. We can be thankful for good kids, we can be thankful for a good job.

We can be thankful for good health. It's just we're not proud in the sense of, look at me, look what I have done. And so what I'm saying is, if we base our worth on anything in this world, it is not from God. And it actually opposes him. It opposes him for two reasons.

First of all, every good thing you have, every good gift that you've ever received came from God. It's a gift. So how can you boast about that? And second, if you boast of anything in this world, I guarantee you, you will lose it. Sooner or later, it will disappear, and ultimately it will be meaningless.

Doesn't last. So if any man had a reason to be proud of his life, it was the apostle Paul. And he had an impeccable lineage. He was a Jew, a Benjaminite. I mean, he can go on and on with his religious heritage.

He was smart, he was educated. He was zealous for God. And ultimately, when he came to Christ, he loved God and he loved people with all of his heart. And on top of that, God gave him an amazing experience where he was called into the third heaven where he saw things that are inexpressible. And he could have bragged about that, but he did not boast about it.

And he says in the passage we read this morning in Galatians, chapter 6:14, but far be it for me to boast except in the cross of Christ Jesus, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. I have been meditating on that passage for the last two weeks. And to be honest, I have to ask, why would Paul or why would you or I, why would anyone want to boast in the cross? The cross was an instrument of torture, an instrument of death, unbelievable agony for the people who are on it. So I want to look into this this morning.

Why should you and I, of all things, boast in the cross of Christ? Now, when we boast about something, really what we're doing is we're comparing ourselves with someone else, aren't we? We're saying that what I have is better than yours. And in some ways, we use that to build our self esteem, don't we? I'm worth something because I'm this or I'm that.

I have this or I have that. And we may or may not admit it, but that really is the motivation behind all boasting. Look at me. I'm something. I'm someone.

I'm valuable. And we go on and on for the reasons that we do it.

As I was studying this, I was reminded back in the there was a real push to build kids self esteem. Anyone remember that? When I was in school and you went out to sports, guess how many people got a trophy? One. Whoever won in the 80s or 90s, it didn't matter whether you won or even if you played hard.

Everybody got a trophy because we don't want you to feel bad. Of course, the outcome of that is everybody got a trophy, so you're not special anyway. And building self esteem, and it backfired. What it did is it brought self centeredness and selfishness, resulting in a constant need for praise and affirmation. Aren't I pretty?

Aren't I good? Aren't I smart? Aren't I lovable? Aren't I all of these things focusing on self. And we can never affirm a person enough that they're going to feel the value that God wants them to have, not through what they've done, but through what he wants to give us.

I was reminded of a nephew we have who's a homosexual.

And he told us, if you don't affirm homosexual people, you're responsible for their death.

And I thought, they are that insecure that if somehow I don't tell them what they're doing is great, they're going to kill themselves. And I wanted to respond, grow up, you big baby face. Life. Come on. Doesn't matter.

And so we need to be aware of this. When the apostle Paul met Christ on the Damascus road, and he had been a proud man, a religious man before that, but he met the God of glory, and he realized that everything that he had held near and dear in his life was garbage. He says that in Philippians was garbage in comparison to knowing Jesus Christ. He realized there was not one thing that he could do to earn eternal life. Like the teacher in ecclesiastes, he was showing that ultimately everything in this life apart from Christ is vanity of vanities.

Here today and gone tomorrow. The fact is, everyone dies. And Solomon struggled with this. Here I am, the smartest man in the world, and I'm going to die just like the stupidest man. There's nothing I can do to change that.

And vanity of vanities. Every one of us will have to stand before God and give an account of our lives. And the truth is, we were created to give glory to God. That's the whole purpose of life, that we would glorify our God and creator, our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ, in our life. And if we don't that's what the Bible calls sin.

Romans 3:23. For all have sinned how and fallen short of the glory of God. They were created to glorify him. And if that's not the goal of our life and we don't do that, that's what the Bible calls sin. That's what we were created for.

He deserves our glory. And if we don't do that again, that's called sin. And the punishment for that, the Bible says, is death, eternal death, hell. I don't know. I don't care how much worldly glory comes into my life.

I don't care how much worldly glory comes into your life. Ultimately, the only thing that matters is, did our life glorify the Lord Jesus Christ? We will stand before him, and we'll have to answer that question. And so I want to just look at the cross in the same way. If we've gotten a view of the cross, it should change our lives.

As we gaze on the cross and we realize what Jesus Christ went through for you and I, to save us from our sins, to bring us into this relationship with the almighty God, to be reconciled, redeemed, justified, all of those things, it should cause us to glorify him. When we realize that he emptied himself of all of his glory, became a person, lived a perfect, sinless life, always loved others, always did what was right. As a result of that, they arrested him. They falsely accused him. They condemned him to death.

He died on a cross, and his father poured out his wrath on himself. And Paul says, that is something worth boasting about, what Christ has done for you and I on the cross, everything in life compels in comparison to the love of Christ. For you and I, no matter what we are going through in this life. So let's just take a few minutes to focus on why we should boast in the cross, why we should boast in the cross. So go to Galatians, chapter six, and just a few things there I'd like to point out.

First of all, we should boast in the cross of Jesus Christ because it delivers us from this world. It delivers us from the world. The world and everything in it is passing away, and it will one day be gone. The Bible says it will burn up. We need delivered from this world.

How does the delusion that everything important is in this world, how does it deliver us from this delusion? And there's only one way. And that way, it says, is through crucifixion. Jesus clearly told us, and more than once he said, if we do not take up his cross and follow him. We're not worthy of him.

Whoever finds his life will lose it. And whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. That means that you and I, if we want life, we talked about this in Romans six in Sunday school this morning. If we want new life, then we have to die to our old life. There's no other way.

The only way to have new life is to die to self. And that means that we take up our cross, that we have actually been crucified with Christ.

We may think we're following Christ, but if we have not died to self, we're just out there walking around. Because following Christ means losing your life for him, living for him. We're constantly faced with the demands of life. And yes, there's responsibilities that we all have to meet, and we should. But we want to make sure that we always keep in mind that the goal is eternity with Jesus Christ.

And we're going to struggle with our pride and dignity and safety and all of those things. But we have to believe in our hearts that the only way to the father is to follow Jesus. By giving up our life for him. Taking up our cross means that we're dying to the things of this world. More and more doesn't happen all at once.

It's progressive as he sanctifies us, but more and more, the cross before me and the world behind me. Second thing we can boast about in a cross of Jesus Christ is because it makes us a new creation. A new creation. Religion prides itself in what it believes and does, thinking it makes a person acceptable before God. Paul says it doesn't count.

He was talking about, am I circumcised or uncircumcised? All these religious things, he said, they do not count. What counts is a new creation. Again, old things passed away. I'm a brand new man.

When Christ comes into a person's life, he starts the work of making you a new creation, starts to make you more and more like himself, a new man or a new woman. And to do that, he has to deliver us from that old self. And the only power to change you and to change me and to make us more like Christ is the cross. Apart from the cross, we're all hopeless and helpless in this world. And only he can make us that

brand new person.

The problem we all face is that we want to be that brand new man after we come to Christ. But we often resist the cross. We will not take up our cross and follow him. And then we wonder why am I not experiencing the changes that he talks about? And back in two Corinthians, Paul talks about that, two Corinthians, chapter twelve, verse nine to ten.

And he says, after he had talked about his thorn in the flesh three times, oh, God, take it away. God did not take it away. He said to him, my grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then I'm content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities.

For when I am weak, then I am strong. We struggle with that, don't we? When hardships, persecutions, we go on and on the list, come into our lives. What do we do? We immediately get defensive.

I've got to protect myself instead of realizing that maybe Christ is trying to work in our life through those weaknesses so that his strength can be made perfect in us, that new creation that he's creating in each one of us. A third thing the cross does, we boast in the cross of Jesus because it brings peace and mercy into our lives. Go back to Ephesians chapter six and says in verse 16, and as for all of us who walk in this rule, the rule of the cross, peace and mercy be upon you. Peace and mercy be upon you, upon the Israel of God. And we are that Israel of God.

When we take up the cross and follow Jesus Christ, it frees up his power to work in our lives and to provide what we can't provide for ourselves. It's his power living in us. And he says it brings peace and mercy into our lives. Why do so many Christians miss out on peace and mercy in their life? Why are they in turmoil, upset and worried, and oh, poor me and poor that and all of those things.

I believe it's a result of they're carrying that burden themselves. They refuse to take it to the cross and to let it be crucified and let Jesus Christ be the one who carries that.

Jesus Christ invites us to lay down our burdens back. In Matthew, chapter eleven, he cries out to those who are following him.

We know the verse, and it says, come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. And if we're finding that our yoke is heavy and our burden heavy, hard.

It's because we have not taken it to the cross. We have not given it to Jesus Christ. We're not willing to accept the peace that he wants to bring into our lives. The cross seems like an impossible burden in our life. I've got to hold on to my pride.

If I don't, what's going to happen to me? Instead of giving that to Christ and saying, it's yours, Lord, you do the work, you're responsible. I can trust you in that. And we do that. It brings peace and mercy into our lives because it's Christ's strength that's working in us, not our own strength.

Finally, we boast in the cross of Jesus Christ because it shows God's love for you and I. The one thing that we all want more than anything else, whether we admit it or not, is we want to feel loved. We want love. And God shows his love for you and I. In Romans chapter five, it says that he demonstrated his love for us in this while we were still sinners.

Christ Jesus died for us, for the ungodly. The fact is, we're all weak and ungodly and sinners. We deserve God's wrath. But God shows his love by sending his son Jesus Christ to take our place on the cross. And that is worth boasting of again.

Today is palm Sunday. 2000 years ago, Jesus left the town of Jericho down in the Jordan valley. Anyone know the elevation of Jericho? 568ft below sea level. Close.

Dead Sea is the lowest place on the planet. It's 18 miles from Jericho to Jerusalem. It was then. And Jerusalem is over 2000ft in elevation. Half a mile elevation.



Climb of 18 miles. After Jesus had been at Zacchaeus House, they left and he was under no illusions what was going to happen to him in Jerusalem. He says in chapter 20 of Matthew, as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and on the way he said to them, see, we're going up to Jerusalem. And of course they expected he was going to be crowned the know, going to get rid of those hated Romans and we'll have this glorious kingdom again. That's what they expected.

But Jesus told them, and the son of man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the scribes and they will condemn him to death and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. And he will be raised on the third day. He knew ahead of time what would happen to him in Jerusalem. And he purposely continued on that journey knowing that it would lead to the cross. And he did that for the joy that was set before him scoring to shame so that one day we could sit down with him in glory.

And that is something to boast about. What he did for us, this great sacrifice for our sins because he loved us. He endured the physical agony, the mental anguish the humiliation of his accusers the false accusations against him the penalty of the crucifixion and finally his father's wrath. Because he loves you and I even though we were his enemy. And we could talk about this love, and I think we will for all eternity.

How could God love me that much when I was his enemy? That he would die for me? But I think a song of Charles Wesley sums it up. I won't do the whole song, but it says, and can it be? Anyone sang it before?

Great song, by the way. Anyone know how many songs Charles Wesley wrote?

Sandra, were you the one that told me over 5000 songs? His heart was full of the love of God and the grace of God and they came pouring out of his soul. Many of the songs we sing today are still from Charles Wesley but it sums up God's love perfectly. And it goes this way. And can it be that I should gain an interest in the savior's blood?

Died he for me who caused his pain for me who him to death pursued amazing love. How can it be that thou, my God, should die for me? And I submit that of all the things

in the world to boast about that is the only thing worthy of our boast. That Jesus Christ died for me on that cross, paid my penalty. And he offers eternal life to everyone who put their faith in him.

He delivers us from the vanity of this world. And it doesn't mean we don't enjoy the things of the world. We do. But they're not the goal. They're just part of the means to glorify him with our life.

And so, like I said, I've been meditating on this because I find in my life that I don't always boast in the cross. And I try not to boast out loud because I know it's foolishness, okay? And other people recognize it when we're boasting, don't they? They really think they're that? No.

Okay. But we do it inside. We want to come to that place where we see the cross more and more clearly. And our boast is in the Lord that he went to the cross for you and I. And I believe that frees God up to work in your life because you value him.

And you glorify him. Let's pray.

Father, we're so thankful that when Jesus went up to Jerusalem first, he proved that he was sinless. He proved that he was the son of God. And as a result of that, they arrested him, brought false charges. They condemned him. They nailed him to a cross.

But even worse than that, Father, you poured out his wrath on him. He took our place. Our penalty paid for our sins so that he could give us his righteousness. We believe that he rose on the third day, that he overcame death. He overcame sin, overcame the world.

He overcame the devil. And he reigns on high today. Grace reigns in the lives of those who have put Christ first in their life, who have come to him in faith, who have repented of their sins, and who have chosen to follow Christ. I think of disciples as they were walking up to Jerusalem, thinking there was going to be glory when they got there. But finding out in a way that, no, it's not going to be good.

They're going to arrest me. They're going to flog me. They're going to crucify me. And yet, Father, they still follow Jesus, because he alone is worth it. And we boast in him this morning.

In Christ's name, amen.