

"Boast Friends"

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Preacher: Justin Bryant

[0 : 00] Good morning. It's a pleasure to see you all on this Sunday morning. It is a joy to join with you together in the Word and in the worship. Please turn with me to the epistle of 2 Corinthians, chapter 1. You'll find that on page 1774 in the Pew Bibles.

We will be continuing our study through 2 Corinthians. Today we will be covering verses 12 through 14.

But I want to share with you before we start a few stories to help prepare your consideration for this passage. A man pulls up to his friend's house in his shiny new Mustang. He comes and calls all of his friends to come outside and to see it.

And he says to them, I know, it's a sweet car. You should see how much it cost me. But this is what happens when you work hard and you play your cards right.

It's not like that junky Subaru you drive. Or that trash Honda that you own. I worked from the ground up to get this. No one helped me.

[1 : 20] It is all my own sweat and dedication. Story number two. A mother sits with her daughter after a hard discussion.

Where the daughter had wanted to go to a party that her friends at school were going to. And her mom told her that she couldn't.

After that the daughter burst out saying, You don't love me. You don't want me to be happy. You just want me to sit at home and have no friends.

Later, as the mom is sitting talking with the daughter, she says to her, You know the love I have for you. I have spent my life, by the grace of God, trying to take care of you.

I have held you when you cried. I have cheered at your successes. I love you. And even if you don't know why I am doing what I am doing, you can be confident that I do it out of care.

[2 : 22] Because I have proven my love for you over and over. Third story. A man walks into church after a hard week, struggling with depression.

His head is low. His eyes are puffy from a lack of sleep. And he feels that his life has little meaning. He doesn't have friends.

He's not attractive. He's bad at his job. No one understands him. And his life isn't going to amount to anything. Or at least, that is how he feels.

And then he hears words read out of 1 Corinthians 1.31. Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord. Remember those stories as we continue this sermon.

Please read with me 2 Corinthians 1.12-14. For our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.

[3 : 41] For we are not writing anything other than things you understand, than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand even to the end, as also you have understood us in part, that we are your boast, as you also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

May the Lord have his blessing to this reading of his word. The first concept I want to think about is boasting in each other.

We're actually going to be taking the order of this passage and flipping it somewhat, as it can be helpful to know where we're going and what we're working to. This passage is working ultimately towards this final verse where Paul says that we are your boast, as you are also ours.

This will be our focus, and this is what I want you to take away. That we are to understand each other as that which we boast in. That we are each other's boasts, each other's pride, each other's joy.

That you should boast in you, and you should boast in you, and that we should complete our joy by rejoicing in the goodness of each other.

[5 : 10] Our boast is in each other, and we should live like it. Last week we spent a lot of time talking about the unity and the partnership that the body of Christ enjoys with each other, where what is good for one person is good for another, and what is bad for one person is bad for another.

That we share in our sufferings, and we also share in our joys, because we are united together in one body. And on the final day, when Christ will judge the earth, he will expose all deeds.

And one of the deeds that we will have to bring before him is the boast of our love for each other as a body. What will you carry before the throne of God on that final day?

Will it be your car? Your hair? How much better you are than other people? How you're not like that guy who does those things?

Is that what you will carry before the throne? No. You will carry those things that you did for each other.

[6 : 33] Those ways in which, by the grace of God, you loved the people that God put you around in specifically his church. This is a big deal.

On the final day, you will give an account for how you loved others. Keep your finger in 2 Corinthians and turn with me to Hebrews 13.

You'll find that on page 1848. Hebrews 13. Paul talks here about the account that elders or pastors will have to give for those that they watch over.

Hebrews 13 verse 17. Obey those who rule over you and be submissive, for they watch over your souls as those who must give an account.

Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you. Paul here identifies that pastors and elders have to give an account for those that they watch over as shepherds guarding sheep.

[7 : 48] And while this is true for pastors, it also is true for us that we are charged to watch over one another, to care for one another and to help one another on to glory.

Hebrews 10.24, which we mentioned in the Bible study earlier, says, let us consider how to stir one another on to love and good works.

This is the calling of all believers that we should be actively considering how to care and love for one another. you will have to answer on the final day for how you did with this.

You will be adorned on the final day with the robes of Christ washed in his blood, his righteousness, but you will adorn that robe with the love that you have for each other.

You will help to highlight the glory of Christ's work for you by the deeds of love that you did for each other.

[9 : 02] When you love each other, you highlight how much you love what Christ has done for you. Our boast on that final day in the day of Jesus Christ will be in each other, just as Paul's boast was in the Corinthians and their boast was in him.

Please turn with me back to 2 Corinthians. You might ask me, you might say, wait, pastor, isn't boasting a bad thing?

Why is Paul talking about boasting here? How could this be a good example? Well, I'm very glad you asked that.

It's a smart question. You see, there is good boasting and there is bad boasting in the Bible. So we have to ask ourselves, when is it good to boast and when is it bad?

We see Paul boasting here and it is an example for us. So we must seek to understand why this boasting is acceptable. To do that first, we must understand what is boasting?

[10 : 22] Boasting is to take pride in something. When you boast, you are saying this is what I am excited about.

This is what I am proud of. What you take boast in is what you are proud of and what you boast in is what you think is good and worthy of regard, worthy of looking at.

To boast is to put something up on a pedestal, to give it an honored position. And this word of pride or being proud can also help give us an illustration of what boasting looks like.

A proud cliff is one that is sheer and juts out from the land. It sticks out. It is prominent. It is clear. There is no subtlety about it.

So what you boast in is that which makes you stand tall with a perky attitude. What you boast in is that which puts steel in your spine and makes you stand firm.

[11 : 43] So should we never stand tall? Should we always hunch over, dejected? Should we walk around weary, bearing in our bodies a sense of discouragement all the time?

Is that what Christians are supposed to look like? I hope you see that the answer to those questions is no. That's not what Christian humility looks like.

It is not this suffering, weary, heavy laden abasement. It is not walking around with a discouraged attitude.

That isn't Christian humility. So then, if we are to stand tall, should we stand tall because of ourselves, because of our pride and who we are?

Should I parade around proud and upright because I have a good job, or a nice outfit or great hair? No, of course not.

[12 : 52] Those things are of so little value that bragging in them is like a parent who boasts in a stamp collection more often than his children.

Someone who thinks little things of tiny consequence are what they should be known for. It is ridiculous to boast in the things of this world in external, simple things like going out and spending money on a coat or on a nice car.

These things are ephemeral in a very little value in the grand scheme of things. So if we are to not boast in ourselves, yet we are not to walk around like worms with no sense of pride in anything, what should we boast in?

Well, that goes back to the verse I mentioned earlier talking about the man who came into the church heavy and dejected, and he heard that verse, 1 Corinthians 1.31, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.

Or the passage that Mary read for us, let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, or the mighty man boast in his strength, but let him who boasts, boast in this that he knows the Lord.

[14 : 18] Christians should stand tall, we should be proud, but not because we are anything, but because we worship a God who is great and amazing, and he has looked on us with such incredible favor that we don't deserve.

so if you are tempted to walk around and be discouraged by your circumstances, I encourage you to stop looking to yourself, stop letting your own value dictate your joy day by day, but let the value of the God you worship and the love he has for you drive you to stand proud.

I am beloved by the God of the universe, the creator of the world gave his son for me. I am highly honored, though I don't deserve any of it.

I'm like a homeless man invited to the White House in awe of the great favor that I've received, that I should have an audience with the king, and that he should call me son.

I may be a worm and not a man, but look at how much he loved me. And also, look at how much the body of people that he made loves me.

[15 : 45] My boast should be, look at all these people who I would probably have very little to do with if it wasn't for God. And yet, look at how him in his majesty has called us all out of darkness and made one body out of it.

Over and over, I meet Christians who are so unlike me, who have none of the same interests, and who if I was just living my life in the world, I would never get to know or get to be close with.

Yet, it is my joy to call you brothers and sisters, because we have the most important thing in common, Christ. And so I can boast before the world that I have been brought into a body of people who love me, who would not be naturally my family, but they pray for me, they call me, they encourage me.

This is what it looks like to boast in the grace of God in our lives, between each other especially. Believers should not boast in themselves do not be like the man who boasts in his car and how great it is and belittles others to make himself look better, but boast in God who is worthy of every consideration and every regard.

Do you boast in the right things? What things do you take pride in? Have you stopped to think about that? What about after you have a conversation with someone you don't like, do you walk away and say, glad I'm not like that.

[17 : 43] I'm glad I'm not one of those annoying people. Look at how good I am. Listen, if we had something worthy to offer, if we had something to boast in ourselves about, we wouldn't need a Savior who provides for everything.

The hymn says, guilty, vile, and helpless we, but spotless lamb of God was he. Full atonement, how can it be?

Hallelujah, what a Savior. If you are a sinner, if you can say guilty, vile, and helpless me, you have no business parading around.

Turn with me to Luke 18. Keep your finger in 2 Corinthians once again. And we'll hear a story about a proud man that Christ tells this parable to show us the folly of pride.

Luke 18 starting in verse 9. Also he spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others.

[19 : 08] Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood proud and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank you that I am not like those other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all I possess. And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, that is declared righteous, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Let him who boasts boast in this, that he knows the Lord. Do not talk about others' beliefs as if you are so great for having picked the right one.

Realize this, that if it was not for the grace of God in your life, you would be making the same mistakes, and walking in the same delusions. Like this Pharisee.

[20 : 48] Watch when you compare yourself to others. That is usually a tool to boast. Wrongly.

The one who is prideful compares himself to others to justify his pride. He knows deep down in his heart that if I was to compare myself to God, I would fall short.

So I go and I find the worst looking sinner I can find, and I say, look, I'm better than this guy, so I must be okay if I'm proud of myself. I didn't slip up like those people did.

Maybe I'm not a drug addict. Maybe I don't fly off the handle like that person does. Look at how good I am. Well, if I'm doing better than those, I must be pretty good.

At least I don't boast like those guys do. If you want to boast in yourself, you have to compare yourself to God.

[21 : 57] You have to say, I'm better than him, if you want to have something to boast about. I'm as perfect and holy as he is.

obviously, you fall short. Romans 3 23, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Boasting excluded, pride I abased, I'm only a sinner saved by grace. Look at what Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verse 12.

We conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God.

Not with fleshly wisdom. Paul refuses to boast in the things which make sense to the flesh. Paul refuses to boast in the things that appeal to the flesh.

[23 : 03] If your boasts could just as easily be made by someone who does not know God, then they are wrongful boasts. If your boasts make sense to people who are in love with the world, if the things that you're proud of are the things which people who love themselves say, yeah, that makes sense, I wish I could be more like that, then you are wrongfully boasting.

Think about how worldly people would react if you said to them, I loved being in church this Sunday. I loved singing about the grace of the Lord and being reminded of what a vile sinner I am and of how great his grace is.

I loved hearing the word preached to tell me how I should live my life. love. And I loved being with all these different people and being loved by them.

Isn't it? It was wonderful. Most people in the world would look at you like you had three heads if you said that to them. people who would look at them.

But we should boast in this way. We shouldn't boast with things that appeal to the world because the world has no love for the God who is glorious.

[24 : 28] We should never be trying to sell, to convince other people to rejoice in the things of we should never boast in such a way that people who think God is worthless would think that our boasts make sense.

Let's consider Paul's example of boasting further. He boasts in his conduct. And he boasts in his conduct by the grace of God. He says, we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, that's his conduct, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God.

So as we think about how we should conduct ourselves, we must never lose sight of where godly conduct comes from. It comes by the grace of God.

So whenever we are talking about the things that we do right, as an example to other people, because it's necessary sometimes for me to say, imitate me as I imitate Christ.

Or to hold up our example, I read the Bible like this, and it has been a great benefit to me. I suggest that you do the same. Or look at my prayer life and copy it.

[25 : 56] These are our boasts that can be helpful to encourage other believers to pursue Christ. But if we are boasting in this way, we need to keep in mind that it is always by the grace of God, following Paul's example.

Any boast that you make that does not give its glory to God is an attempt to steal his glory. I love what one band sings in their song, Dust to Dust.

They say, if I sought fame, I'd be a thief of all of your glory, honor, and praise. That if I sought fame, I'd be a thief of all of your glory, honor, and praise.

We must always realize when we are commending our example to others that it is by the grace of God that we operate. Paul boasts in his clean conscience.

it is clean because his conduct is simple. That is, that his conduct is pure. That it is not mixed with ulterior motives and personal concerns.

[27 : 09] Is your conduct towards others out of a purity of care and concern from them? Is your conduct sweet and refreshing, pure and clean water that revives the soul?

Or is your conduct like a glass of water that I scooped out of a creek full of dirt and debris? Is your conduct full of the dirt and debris of selfishness, of impatience, of pride?

Can you say, my boast is this, the testimony of my conscience, that I conducted myself with simple, pure care for others? Do you get upset when things don't go your way?

Or when you have to sacrifice for the sake of others? This pure conduct should be devoid of these things.

And we should follow the example of Paul, who took pride that by the grace of God, he had pure care for the Corinthians. and his conduct was with godly sincerity.

[28 : 25] That means it was from the heart, that the way he conducted himself was not something he put on for his own advantage. Sometimes we love the praises of others, even in the church, and we serve for the sake of receiving praise or fellowship from other people.

Do you come to church because it makes you feel good to get the attention you get while at church? Or do you live your life not out of a sincere care for others, but out of a desire to be put in positions where others might regard you, and where you might have opportunities to boast?

a heart of love overflows with good for others. Jesus says that out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.

So we should seek to with godly sincerity have hearts of love that do good to others, that we might boast on the final day in Christ that we loved other people sincerely from the heart.

Paul is not just making idle boasts here, but he is proclaiming how he loved them, that they might be drawn closer to him.

[29 : 50] The Corinthian church was tempted to abandon regard for Paul for the sake of people who were flashy in a worldly sense.

They looked successful and like everything was going great in their lives, yet Paul was persecuted and sometimes sickly or despairing, and so the Corinthian church was tempted to disregard him.

So Paul, not looking to aggrandize himself, but knowing that it is good for them to have love for each other, proclaims his boasts to entreat them to love him and draw near to them.

Paul says, our boasting is this, the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity. He is like the mother in the second story who uses a lifetime of love for her daughter to encourage her daughter to trust her, to not doubt her love for her, but listen to her instructions.

Not because she wants her daughter to put her on a pedestal, but she knows what's good for her, and she's even willing to use the ways in which she's done what is right to call her to what is good.

[31 : 13] Paul calls the Corinthians to listen and trust his instruction because of the sincere and simple pure love he's expressed to them, not to make himself look good, but for their sake.

I have not been perfect towards you all. There are ways in which I could have served you better, loved you better, but by the grace of God I have worked these weeks to study and bring the word to you.

Do not ignore the words I speak because I labor in love for you. Please consider them and listen diligently to them.

In the same way you ought to love one another with pure and sincere love. Draw this body of Christ Baptist Church together by your love for each other.

Make it a place where we can boast in the final day of our love for each other. Do not show off, but show off love.

[32 : 26] they shall know you are my disciples by the love you have for one another. Make sure that on that final day you will be able to say to Christ, I love your salvation so much that I worked hard to adorn it and to show its beauty by my love for other believers, by my love for your people.

Know that when all is said and passed, only what is done for Christ shall last. Lord, we ask that you teach us how to love one another, that you cleanse us from sins and our failures as we strive to love one another, other, and that you create in us by your spirit such fruits of righteousness that we would be able to boast in our love for each other, to the glory of Christ who has saved us and called us to his kingdom.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.