

The importance of boasting

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[0 : 0 0] Father, you know the different things that we boast in, and you know that we don't recognize when we're boasting. We don't recognize, Father, many of the things that we put our hope in and our trust in and that we think will give us significance.

So, Father, we ask that the healing medicine of your word, that your Holy Spirit would apply that to our hearts, the command centers of our lives. That you would, Father, touch our memories, touch our imagination, touch our emotions, touch our hopes and our dreams.

Father, that we might become disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, boasting only in the cross, and learning to live for the good of people and your great glory.

And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, we've gotten maybe a little bit distracted with the singing of the Nunc Dimittis, but I don't know how many of you notice, but the Bible passage that Ken began with talked about money.

In fact, it was basically an exhortation for you folks to give, and not for you folks, for us folks to give lots of money. And, you know, I know that one of the things which many, many non-Christians think about churches is that all we do is think about money, talk about money.

[1 : 3 2] In fact, I think that many people who aren't Christians, and maybe even people who go to church, at least occasionally, might even think that all the greed that seems to be on display at Christmas, that's one way of understanding it.

It's not necessarily the way I understand it, but many people would say that the commercialism and greed evident at Christmas actually has its roots in the Christian faith because of the church's preoccupation with money.

And so, here you come, and maybe you're a guest, and like, bang, give lots to make sure guys like me are able to open the Bible.

And that's where we move on to the next topic. And, you know, it's a problem passage for us, right? Like, why on earth is it that the Bible seems to talk about money? So, it'd be a great help if you got the Bible out, see what it said, and we're going to look at it.

If you don't have a Bible with you, there's some Bibles up at the front. Andrea's getting one right now. And it's Galatians chapter 6. And for those of us who come here week in and week out, the book of Galatians, we've now finished it.

[2 : 3 9] Next Sunday, I begin a new series on the Gospel of John. But Galatians is going to be finished. And Galatians chapter 6, this is how it goes. Am I in darkness here, by the way?

It feels like I'm in darkness. Just ignore the darkness? Just for a moment? That's fine. I can do that. My wife says my ability to ignore the obvious is astounding.

But that's a whole other sermon topic and also to be dealt with later on in prayer. One more thing for you folks to pray about me. Anyway, so why is it that, you know, for many, especially if you're here as a guest, you know, why is it that church sometimes seems to go on and on and on about money?

And here it is. The Bible's talking about money. It's, in fact, the first verse. And I had to divide the book up some way. And in many ways, this is a good place to divide up the last. But here's what it says. Verse 6 of chapter 6.

Let the one who has taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches. And you'll notice it says all good things. And one of those good things is money.

[3 : 47] So why on earth would the Bible be talking about something like this? Well, it's actually goes about, it's dealing with a very, very important issue, which the Bible, the Paul has just finished talking about.

And we talked about last Sunday. And we'll just look up at verse 5. This just gives you a bit of a hint about the broader topic that Paul has just been wrestling with in the previous eight verses.

For each will have to bear his own load. Verse 5. For each will have to bear his own load. And that word for load is, it would be as if you're going on a canoe trip, a solo canoe trip.

And it's the stuff you take in your canoe so that you can do the canoe trip. Or if you're going for a long hike, it would be an overnight or several overnights. It's all of the food, all of the clothes, the pots, the pans, everything that you need to go on your hike.

That's what your load is. And it's your life. So, you know, one of the things which the Bible was talking about last week, which is a very countercultural idea and a very, very powerful idea, is that God never judges you in comparison to other people.

[4 : 58] That was one of the main things that we looked at when we were looking at the verses just immediately before this thing, which is talking about money, is that God never judges any individual by comparing them to somebody else.

Now, this is a very, very, very powerful idea. And if we think about it, we tried to look at it a little bit last week. It's almost impossible for us to think about ourselves and assess ourselves without assessing ourselves relative to other people.

It's almost impossible for me to think about what I am like as a husband without thinking about how I stack up compared to other husbands. It's almost impossible for me to think about how I'm doing as a pastor or a preacher without thinking about how other people are doing.

And sometimes that depresses me and sometimes it flatters me. But it's almost impossible. I would suggest that it's almost impossible for any human being to merely imagine or try to think about how they stand, in a sense, naked and isolated, purely themselves before the face of God.

Because even if we begin to do that, we think, boy, I'm doing that better than other people, aren't I? Like, it's almost impossible to do it. And so what this text, what Paul was talking about just before this, it's in very, not cryptic language, it's in very, like, every word counts.

[6 : 26] It's like reading a poem or maybe a legal document that's been very well thought out. And every single word bears a lot of weight. And it's not something we rush through. But if we linger with it, it's communicating to us, God never judges me and never judges you by comparing me to other people.

Never. He just judges me as me by the situations that I have to deal with. Many of you know that I was in Angola this July.

I'm going to talk about it a little bit more in a moment. And I saw some poverty there. But I have to confess, I didn't see, at least where I was, I never saw the same type of poverty as I've seen when I was in Nairobi.

And the first time I was in Nairobi and the time we lived out in the country and we had a place where we kept chickens.

And I saw restaurants, in quotation marks, and the chicken coop at our house was cleaner. And just, I'd have rather eaten from in there than in that place.

[7 : 36] And some of the beggars that you see in the streets of Nairobi, massive physical deformations and just heart-wrenching. It's just, I can't even, words fail you.

Now, I don't know why it is that I was born in Ottawa. And that I was born in a safe city, at a safe time, in a prosperous city.

And I have a job and I've never missed a meal because of not having any money. And I have comparatively good health. And I don't know why I'm me compared to some of the beggars that I've seen on the streets of Nairobi.

But here's what this very powerful message is that the Bible has been trying to teach just before this talk about money. Which is, George, you're responsible for the stuff and the situations in your life.

You know, Billy Graham, for all the things that are in his life, he's responsible for those. Ravi Zacharias, for those. That beggar in the streets of Nairobi, they're responsible for those.

[8 : 46] And God's going to look at your situation, your opportunities, and not compare you to other people. And he's just going to judge you by yourself. It's a very, very... Actually, as it starts to play around in our mind and our heart, it's a very, very liberating idea to no longer live under the burden of comparing yourself to other people.

And that you just deal with the talents and the opportunities that you have. And that's how God's going to judge you. Now, it's very easy when you have an idea like that, and it's connected to other things that Paul has been going through all the way through the book of Galatians.

You might remember Galatians chapter 5, verse 1. I encourage you to memorize this verse. It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Therefore, do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

And wherever I go, there's thunder. Anyway, if we start to see lightning, then look up.

He's about to come. No, I don't know what it'll... Is there something I can do about this? I've actually ordered a different mic. Okay, there's nothing I can do. You know what I'm going to do?

[9 : 57] I'm just going to speak out of this. I think it's a bit distracting for you, and I'll just have to not wander around. Is this mic on now? Okay. I'm out of practice.

For many, many, many, many, many years, I wasn't able to wander around when I preached. I had to sort of stay in one spot. And so I used to really be lots of waving around and everything to compensate for it.

So you'll start to see whether that returns to me as I sort of have to just be in one spot because of the mic. Where was I? Oh, yes. So it'd be very easy if you hear this message of for freedom Christ has set us free, that Jesus, that God only judges me without comparing me to other people.

It's really easy to take from this an idea that God is calling us to radical individualism. That that's what he's calling me be. I'm free of people's opinions.

I'm free of their expectations. I'm free of all of that stuff. He's just going to judge me by me. And so what other people think and what do they do? You know, sucks to be them.

[11 : 03] I don't give a bleep, bleep, bleep, bleep, and off we go. Just a life of radical individualism. And so the Bible is very wise. The Bible knows the direction of our hearts, how it's very easy for us because many of us are very, very selfish.

And many of us don't struggle with narcissism, but we should. That we're just radically in love with ourselves and think everything we do is wonderful.

And the Bible knows that that's our problem. So the very thing it does right after this section is it returns to an earlier theme. And it says, listen, you're called to a life with one another.

And part of the way that life with one another is going to work is it's going to involve an actual exchange of money and of other things which are good in your lives, especially with those who preach the word.

And because, you see, look at verse, that's what it says in verse 6. Verse 6, it says, let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.

[12 : 07] Now, so actually, if you could just put up the first point. This is something I've said in different times throughout the years. I've just changed it very slightly, but we enter the Jesus way one by one.

But we walk the Jesus way with Jesus and one another. And I've used this phrase one another because the Bible, if you just do a little word search someday, it's amazing how many times in the New Testament the phrase one another is there.

It implies a certain way of walking with Jesus, that we walk with Jesus with one another in some type of a community. And so why is it that it's talking about money?

For me, it's because, well, actually, if you could put up the next point. This is going to be really weird to some of us. The preaching of the gospel while preaching through the Bible is central to the life of the local church and central to God's plan to make the gospel known to every people group.

Now, the preaching of the gospel while preaching through the Bible is central to the life of the local church and central to God's plan to make the gospel known to every people group.

[13 : 26] Now, obviously, there's lots of churches where it's not central. But if you read the New Testament, if you read the book of Acts, and if you read the epistles, you'll see that there's this constant message that God has only one plan.

It's plan A. He doesn't have plan B. He doesn't have plan C or plan D. He just has plan A. And plan A is pretty outrageous. It is that people, one by one, come to a faith in Jesus, and God draws them together into a local church.

And what is to be at the center of that local church is opening the Bible, teaching the Bible in such a way that the whole counsel of God is made clear, but always that the gospel is made clear.

And that's the method by which God is going to see the gospel go to the ends of the earth. That is the means by which God is going to see people in cities come to hear about Jesus and come to a saving faith in Jesus.

That's his plan. We're part of his plan. And central to that plan is this opening of God's word in such a way that, I mean, different things happen just as we do this, that God just sovereignly draws people, that God sovereignly works in our hearts, that, you know, like last Sunday after church, I, you know, I stopped in at one of my favorite coffee shops, and there were several baristas there who didn't know me, and they said, oh, you know, are you going to sit here and work for a while?

[15 : 10] And I said, no, I finished my work for the day. And they said, oh, really? And I said, yeah, I'm a pastor of a church. I mean, it was my opportunity to share with them. And, you know, I say, I'm a pastor of a church.

And then I said, you know, do you have a religious or spiritual connection or past or heritage? And I find out some things about them. You know, it's just a little seed, right? But it's all connected, that either God sovereignly draws people, or as we leave and bear witness to Jesus, that it begins conversations that will end up leading them to some local word preached and taught.

Sorry, I wandered away from the mic. And that's separate from the other things. As just as the word does its work within a congregation, then congregations start to have a desire to see the gospel spread in other congregations form.

It's why people have left our congregation to go to places in Central Asia and Asia and Southeast Asia. And we're about to share.

It's just going to be \$100 a month. But starting in January, we're going to be contributing \$100 a month to helping to plant a church in Jerusalem. And through the preaching of the word and the sharing of the resources that the word be preached, I went to Angola.

[16 : 27] We went to Angola. I got to preach. We got to share the gospel with a semi-nomadic tribe in the Kalahari Desert, a different people group.

And this is God's plan A. It's God's plan A.

He doesn't call us... I mean, on one level, there is nothing like the gospel, nothing like the Bible, so grounds our integrity and dignity and importance as human beings.

Only the Bible teaches that human beings aren't a cosmic accident. They're not a cosmic mistake. It's not something because the gods were fighting, and lo and behold, out of that fight, they created some human beings.

Or it's not because there's some cosmic problem way back in history that now means that human beings' indifference comes to be, and we have to get rid of it and get away from it.

[17 : 37] It's not that there's been some plan by the gods to make human beings so that we human beings can feed them and care for them and maybe be their food. And it's not that we human beings are just a result of blind chance where the strong eat the weak, where the strong survive, and it sucks to be weak because the strong eat the weak and the strong survive.

And it's none of those stories. It's only in the Bible that we hear that human beings, every human being is made in the image and likeness of God and has a dignity and integrity before God, which God has given that no government can take away, no economic power can take away, no racial group can take away of another group, that men can't take away from women, and women cannot take away from men, that there is this inherent dignity, and nothing in the world is as powerful as speaking about the dignity of the human being as the Bible is.

And the same word of God tells us that in this world where the individual is so important, yet at the same time the social is so important, and the gospel brings to not only bring us individual freedom and healing, and freedom from being crushed by the expectations of the tribe, the culture, the coach, you know, the world, the markets, but at the same time it calls us always into a family, one another family, where we walk with Jesus with one another, and at the very, very center of God sharing the gospel with this world is this plan of ordinary fallen human beings like you and me gathering together on a regular basis on a Sunday and in small groups and in mentoring things, and the very center of central function is the opening of God's word to make the whole counsel of God plain as the gospel is regularly shared.

That's his plan A. And it's to involve the sharing of our money, the sharing of our time, the sharing of our imaginations and our hearts and our musical gifts and our gifts of hospitality and our gifts of baking and coffee preparation, and it's a giving of ourselves and of our time and of our talents and our imagination and our creativity and it involves the giving of our money because it's God's plan A.

Now, some people might say after hearing all that that this is a completely and utterly crazy plan. Like it's a stupid plan. Like George, like what a, like don't you think it's a bit of a stupid plan?

[20 : 30] Like don't you think nowadays that music's more powerful? And, you know, maybe what it is is we need to have, like get Bach back in churches or maybe it is we just have to have better rock bands or better indie bands or better roots music.

And don't you think maybe that far more central to doing all of this is that there's better use of the web or there's just better use of communication technology? And don't you think, George, that that plan that you've just described that is God's plan, that there's just, you know, if it just harnessed the power of organization and the power of managing resources to make a profound difference in society through philosophy or through laws or science or markets, you know, George, music, culture, there's so many things that are way better than that.

And if you've thought any of those things, you now understand why it is that Paul immediately from going about sharing about money warns us about mocking God.

Because many of us have a hard time believing that we mock God. But we do. Look what verse 7 says. So look at verse 6 again. Let the one who has taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches.

This is all just part of this whole plan A that we gather as families. The word is preached that this is the means by which the word will go.

[21 : 58] The gospel will go to the ends of the earth. And then verse 7. Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. God is not ridiculed. God is not belittled.

God is not made fun of. God is not ignored. We don't flip God off. Give him the bird and tell him we know better. For whatever one sows, that will he also reap.

For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption. But the one who sows to the spirit, that's the Holy Spirit, will from the Holy Spirit reap eternal life.

So Paul now, it's part of the brilliance of how the Bible is written here that Paul instantly starts to slide back into another topic.

I mean, hopefully he's hoping that the barb or the hook about this call to be realistic in the sharing of the good things in our lives so that the word can be proclaimed in a congregation, in a city, and to the ends of the world.

[23 : 10] But he wants to also teach us some other really important things about this idea that God doesn't judge us compared to other people and all this. And if you could put up the first point, that would be very helpful. So one of the things he wants to make clear about this, this text, is that being made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ crucified does not mean I can do whatever I want with impunity.

Why? Because I reap what I sow. I reap what I sow. And the Bible wants us to understand that that is always a principle which is going on.

We reap what we sow. You put our time, your money, your imagination into certain types of pursuits and something that is congruent with that is going to be the result.

And, you know, in some ways it sounds a little bit like the idea of karma. You reap what you sow, but it's a very, it's similar to karma, but it's very, very different. Karma is mechanical and sort of linear.

And this isn't mechanical, it's an organic image. Right? I mean, if one of you plant a corn seed in your garden in the spring, if in the fall you dig it up and there's just one corn seed there, you know the whole thing failed.

[24 : 36] If you dig it up and there's three corn seeds there, you think that's just weird. And if you plant a corn seed and a raspberry bush grows up, you'd know that something else has gone on.

I don't know, maybe one of your kids has dug up the corn seed to play a trick on you and planted something that'll go raspberry thing. But you know that, you know, it's not mechanical like karma and there's always, there's this extra process that's involved and at the end of the day God is sovereign over it.

And so it's not like investing. It's not like, you know, in some ways karma is a little bit like investing. You know, you put \$20 into this type of, you know, \$2,000 into this mutual fund and if you do that and it's a good mutual fund or a good investment in stocks, you know, the result will be maybe \$2,200 a little bit later.

You've got a good return on your investment. It's a bit of a different image, but it's like karma, but it's different. It's more organic. It leaves God sovereign. It's far more subtle and supple and not nearly mechanical and the whole thing, as we'll see in a moment, leaves room for mercy.

But it says that we sow what we reap. And then it has a terrifying image here. I don't know if you caught it. Look again at verse 7.

[25 : 53] What does it say again? Do not be deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh, and the flesh here means that part of us which is in rebellion against God, that part of us which turns our back on God, that part of us which desires to be a God, ourselves.

If we sow to those projects, we'll from the flesh, that is, from that part of us that's in rebellion against God, we'll reap corruption. Now, if I was a typical Canadian, I would quickly pass over this.

Because if there's one thing that many Canadians would say about the church is that we go on and on and on about money. And another thing it would say is that we're completely crazy and kooky about something called hell.

But this is a hell word. If you could put up the next point. Hell is not glamorous. Hell is real decay, decomposition, and corruption.

You see, this word for corruption is a word from the morgue. It's a word from what's left on the battlefield after the battle. It's the word that refers to a corpse and what happens to a corpse.

[27 : 28] It's not talking about political corruption or anything like that, a mere corruption of your morals or anything like that. It's a death word, a decomposition word.

It's a very, very stark warning about how if we continue to invest our imagination and our creativity in our God project, in our turning our back on God.

And, you know, the thing which is so subtle about this teaching in the Bible is that this isn't just some lambasting of people who are doing like meth heads.

This is talking as well about people who live in expensive condos and Rockcliffe. And it's talking about religious people and people who are spiritual but not religious.

But at the heart of what they're doing is a heart to be, to just flip God off and ignore God. To be their own God. To be the Lord of their own domain.

[28 : 36] And, and Paul, here, the Bible says that the result is hell. But look, look at verse 8 again. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption.

But the one who sows to the Holy Spirit will from the Holy Spirit reap eternal life. If you could put up the next point, when we sow as the Holy Spirit leads, we will reap an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

I'm quoting 2 Corinthians 4. When we sow as the Holy Spirit leads, we will reap an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

You see, there's a, there's a connection but a difference between sowing and reaping, right? I said if you put corn seed in the ground, you don't get another, and if there's a corn seed at the end in the, in the fall, it didn't work.

If you get three corn seeds, it's weird. If it's a raspberry bush, it's even weirder, right? There, you put a corn seed in and you get a, a corn stalk with ears of corn on it and, and you get something similar but different.

[29 : 52] And what Paul is saying here is, listen folks, you're putting money in the plate to further the preaching of the word and the spread of the gospel.

Like in our case, it's what helps to, help us to go on a Wednesday evening and have Daniel Avitan open the Bible in public at the center of the university and preach the Bible.

It's what our hope is for the youth group. It's what our hope is for our small groups that the word is opened in public and the gospel is proclaimed. And so, you know, it looks like it's money. It looks like it's caring for children.

It looks like it's greeting at a door. It looks like it's bringing a casserole over because you're at a one another church. It looks like you're out and being a shoulder that a person can cry on.

It looks as if it's just because you have a concern for the world bringing food that we're going to give to a food bank and you're sowing these things and you're sowing these things and you're sowing your life but what comes out of it because you're doing it as the Holy Spirit leads, as the word of God directs you and you're sowing these things but what comes out of it is an eternal weight of glory.

[31 : 04] It's an eternal weight of glory. And that's why Paul goes on in 9 and 10 to encourage us because you know the fact of the matter is that sometimes it's hard.

You get tired of greeting at the door. You get tired of serving coffee. You get tired of opening the Bible. You get tired of turning the other cheek. You get tired of being the shoulder to cry and you get tired of all these things and so verse 9 what does it say?

And let us not grow weary of doing good for in due season and the word due is a really good word. It's even stronger in the original language. It's that it's going to happen in the future.

In due season we will reap. It's going to happen. It's referring to the second coming of Jesus. It's an eschatological word. Sorry, occasionally I have to use big words.

It's guaranteed for in due season we will reap if we do not give up. So then as we have opportunity let us do good to everyone and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

[32 : 16] Now some of you might say, George, you know this is a very disturbing sermon. I sort of get about the money and everything like that but gosh George this talk about hell. You must think you're something special.

That's one of the things that so bugs me about Christians. You think you're something special. You think your poop smells better than other people's poop.

Who are you to think that you go to heaven and I'm going to go to hell? Who are you to think that? How dare you think that? I'm as good as you. Like, George, my family's in a better situation.

My finances are a better situation. I have a better car. I have more people who like me. Like, I'm, how dare you say something like that? How dare you say that I live in Rockcliffe for an expensive condo or I'm a soccer mom or a soccer dad in Kanata or a hockey mom or a hockey dad?

I'm, how dare you say something like that? It's very interesting that Paul immediately deals with this although we didn't notice it.

[33 : 25] Look at verses 11 to 13. Verse 11, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. That's just a bit of an aside. One of the things that they did in the ancient world, probably most of the letters in the New Testament, Paul dictated them to somebody who wrote them as he dictated them and it could be because his handwriting was terrible.

Could be, that's me, by the way, I'd have to have done it or his spelling was terrible, that would be me, I'd have to dictate it but it's just very common. So now what he's doing is he's showing the letters coming to an end.

I've been dictating this letter but I want to let the people in Galatia who know me, I'm going to show that it's really me by writing these final things in my own handwriting. Verse 12, it is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised and only in order that they may be persecuted, may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.

But basically what he's saying is listen, the religious people, he's drawing the letter to a close, the religious people in the congregation that are causing you all this trouble, it's very interesting, he doesn't go now to talk about the meth heads or the gun smugglers or any of the people, you know, the gang members, people who we would all culturally say are bad people, he goes to the people in the church who are pushing religion and pushing a whole pile of rules and he says in verse 12, it is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh.

All they're caring about is just showing off to people, that's what he's saying, who would force you to be circumcised, to adopt a whole pile of these religious rules and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ because religion is always far more acceptable than the offense of the cross.

[35 : 06] For even those who are circumcised, verse 13, do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. And so what he's just saying here, we're going to get to this hell thing in a moment, he's saying all they're concerned with is with externals, all they're concerned with is being able to, to be able to go around in a little bit of a circuit and say, by the way, look at me, I have this many conversions, I have this many followers, I'm really important, my organization is growing, look at me, look at me, look at me, I'm better than other people, and they're even, they don't care about you, they don't care about your eternal destiny, they just want to show off and the thing they're pushing doesn't even work.

And then in verse 14, and it's a big but there, you know I like saying that, there's some big buts in the Bible, that's one of them, but far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

It's a very important verse as he's bringing the letter to a close, but far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

I encourage everyone here to memorize this verse and maybe spend some time meditating upon how to pray about it, but you see here's this thing back about hell. I've had people in coffee shops harangue me like this, and I don't handle it very well because I don't like being the center of attention, and it's a very culturally acceptable harangue, and I just probably have gotten red and tongue-tied, and that's just, sometimes that's just, you don't always win every battle, but what I'd say in the face of that harangue is I'd say, I'm really sorry.

You misunderstand me. You misunderstand me. I don't think my poop smells better than yours, and I don't think I'm better than you.

[37 : 10] I'm saved only by what Jesus has done for me. I'm quite prepared to accept that I'm way worse in my marriage than you or way worse in my child raising, way worse in my finances, way worse in every way that you would mention.

I'm quite prepared to acknowledge that before you, but I am not made right with God because I'm good. If you could put up the next point, you see, my private and my public boasting reveals what I believe saves me and gives me meaning, significance, and worth.

You see, the person who makes that claim, who would harangue you or me, they're saying that they're good enough. What's their hope? Their boast?

I live in a million-dollar condo, George. I live in a six-million-dollar house in Rockcliffe. I live on the edge of a golf course in Canada. I have a trophy wife.

I have trophy kids. I have a trophy-winning dog. I drive an Audi. I drive a Lexus. I drive whatever. I'm better than you. That's, that's, all Paul would say is that's your hope and your confidence before Almighty God?

[38 : 28] That's what you think will make you right with God? That your dog won an award? Sorry. Really?

That your wife is prettier than my wife or that you have a wife and I don't have a wife? Like, that's what, really? My hope isn't that.

You know what my hope is? Just think of this image of sowing. I'll be honest, with you. I've sown to my flesh. I've sown to my pride.

I've sown to my ego. And my only hope in the face of God is that, you know, every time a seed goes into the earth, the Bible tells us and biology tells us there's a type of death that the seed dies in some way.

And God, the Son of God, sees my great need and my great, my great need. And he comes to die and be planted, so to speak, in the earth.

[39 : 33] And what emerges out of that is resurrection. And my only hope is this, that I, who've invested so much of sowing to my flesh, and I can't stop doing that, that when I call out to God for mercy and reach out to him and he takes me and it's as if there is this spectacular transaction that is outside of time, but because God is outside of time and God is real, it is still real.

And it's as if me, who's been sowing my whole life into the flesh, that God, the Son of God, comes and he surrounds me and he holds me and I die my death with Jesus.

He dies my death for me. And what emerges from Jesus dying is that he reaps eternal life.

He is the resurrected Savior and Lord and the Bible in so many places says that I am part of his fruit when I have allowed myself to be and surrounded by him and his mercy and his love so that as I die it is him dying for me and I am dying in him.

And I do not deserve an eternal way to glory. Far from it. I deserve the corruption but I have died in him.

[41 : 10] My life is hid in him and so my only hope for salvation, my only hope for meaning and significance is in the cross of Christ.

There is no other. If you could put up the next point. As I learned to only boast in Jesus Christ crucified, the world's allure and approval dies and my desire for the world and its approval dies.

Maybe dims is a better word. It's a word that fits. Look at verse 14 again. But far be it for me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by which can also be translated in by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

Crucifixion is a slow death. It's a slow death. It's a dimming of life. And then Paul says this wonderful thing which we'll close with.

For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision but a new creation. If you could put up the point salvation is not merely a helpful idea.

[42 : 35] God not only saves me he actually makes me a new creation. In John it's talking about being born again.

Theologians talk about the word regenerate. It's that God actually does a new work of creation in the one who puts their hands in the hands of Jesus for him to be their savior and Lord.

He actually we can't see it but if we could see ourselves from God's eyes God makes us born again a new creation he creates something new out of the old me when I put my hand in the hand of Jesus to trust him as my savior and Lord.

I don't know this would be arrogant nonsense if I just told you this in my own authority and power but this comes from God himself.

God wants you and me to know that as we struggle. Let's stand please. Once again I just say you know for many of us maybe our prayer right now is the verse 14 prayer that God would help me to realize that my significance my salvation my meaning comes from being gripped by what Jesus has done for me in the cross and that as partly what he's done for me in the cross but so important he actually makes me a new creation that one day as I sow into that as the Holy Spirit leads and the word makes clear will be that I will bear not by my own effort or will or desire but I will bear because God has done it and he has created me to bear an eternal weight of glory and if you have never given your life to Jesus

[44 : 48] I urge you now to call out to him to be your savior and your lord let's bow our heads in prayer father we thank you for your word we thank you for Jesus father it can be a shock to us that we mock you that we ridicule you we think you're stupid but father your word tells us we do that father gently by your Holy Spirit reveal to us how we do that and most important of all father move in our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit that we might learn more and more to boast only in the cross of Christ and from that boasting to sow our money to sow our imagination our creativity all those things within us that you have given us that we can do may that our whole lives father be be sowed into him and furtherance of his kingdom as you make us whole you make us free you make us new and in the world is blessed and the gospel is spread all this we ask in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen