

Glorying In The Cross

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[0 : 00] I would like us to turn this morning to Paul's letter to the Galatians, chapter 6, and reading at verse 14.

Galatians 6, verse 14. 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.

But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There used to be a time when we would talk about aspects of Christianity, such as works righteousness or faith righteousness or even prayer righteousness.

Thinking that somehow that by engaging in such activities we could please God. To bring him on our side by what we did.

[1 : 21] But in reality it's all a works righteousness. And Paul in his letter to the Galatians really is dealing with self-righteousness in many of his aspects.

But particularly in our hope and our aspirations that we can somehow please God by what we do and what we achieve in this world.

Now Paul sets the tone for his epistle in chapter 2 and at verse 19.

Where he says, It's not at the beginning, but it's there.

It's very prominent in showing us where Paul's hope, where Paul's life in Christ really lies. When he says, In the life I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

[2 : 54] In the next chapter Paul immediately begins to castigate the Galatians for their lifestyle and for their change in belief.

Where he says, And so he gets right down to the very corrective matter and says, It is by faith you shall be justified.

It is not what you do. It's not how you live. It's not the great works of wonder you might plan to do later on in life. It is only by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And later on in this same chapter, he talks about what Christ has achieved for us in being made a curse. Where he says, The righteous shall live by faith.

The law is not of faith. Rather, the one who does them shall live by them. But Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

[4 : 29] For it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree. So that in Christ Jesus, The blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles.

So that we might receive the promised spirit through faith. And so we have here again and again, And there's no examples of it, Throughout this letter to the Galatians.

Where Paul lays the foundations, That is, It's only by faith. Only by receiving and resting upon Christ alone. That salvation shall be ours.

But to return to our text. How and why can Paul say, God forbid that I should glory, Save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We should remember the sort of man that Paul is, or was. We remember him writing to the Philippians, When he says, For we are the real circumcision, Who worship by the spirit of God, And the glory of Christ, And put no confidence in the flesh.

[5 : 48] In 2nd Corinthians there, He talked about all the things he could have boasted of. All the things in his life that he had done, Are for the church. And yet he counts them as nothing.

He will boast only in his weaknesses, The things that he failed to do. For it is when we acknowledge our weaknesses. It is when we know that we are weak. It is then that we are strong in Christ Jesus.

When we remember that Paul at one time was a man given to much boasting. What mattered to Paul is related here in Philippians 3.

Where he says, Though I myself might have reason for confidence in the flesh. If anyone thinks he has confidence, I more. Once again he boasts of his Jewishness.

Once again he says, That he was circumcised on the 8th day. He was of the tribe of Israel. He was of the tribe of Benjamin. A Hebrew of the Hebrew.

[6 : 52] As to the law, A Pharisee. And that's where the crux of the matter is. He was a Pharisee. He thought that he could somehow do God's works by what he did.

How he accomplished and how God would somehow be in his debt. By what he accomplished here in this world. And it is only by the mercy of God in Christ. As God met him on the road to Damascus. That he was brought to sea. That all his boasting. All his law righteousness. Meant nothing whatsoever. And what had mattered to him in the past.

His Jewishness or his morality or his wisdom. That meant absolutely nothing at all. In his relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. But now.

After his conversion. Paul now has another boast. And his boast is in the Lord Jesus Christ. He says.

[7 : 57] But whatsoever gain I had. I now count as loss. For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

I press toward the mark for that price. I count all things but loss. For the knowledge of him. I seek only. That fellowship and that relationship in Christ.

Which is through his cross. By through what he accomplished. And so we find ourselves here. With a new Paul. With new ideals.

With new aspirations. With new desire. To be in fellowship. With his father. In heaven. And now his boasting.

Is of another nature. Not of what he's done. Not of what he accomplished. Not of what he suffered. For the cross of Christ. Or for the faith. But his boasting.

[8 : 55] Is of Christ alone. His boasting is of the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. You know when we think about. Of all the things that Paul could have boasted of.

Concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. It's remarkable that he thinks of the cross. As the greatest thing he can boast about. It's a remarkable boast.

When we think of what the cross represented. Represented disgrace. Shame. As someone who is an outcast. As someone who was cursed of God.

And it represented also punishment from God. It was a symbol of alienation. Between God and man. He was cursed. He was placed on that tree.

As we saw earlier on in the letter to the Galatians. And that's what Paul is boasting about. He's boasting about this Christ.

[9 : 56] Who was on a cross. Isaac Watts has penned words. Which encapsulate this text in 6.14. Forbid it Lord.

That I should boast. Save in the cross of Christ my God. And all those things that charm me most. I sacrifice them. To his blood.

So how can Paul say he boasted. About the Lord Jesus Christ. We could think that he should have boasted about his sinlessness.

We could think that he boasted about his miracles. The great works of wonder done. Amongst the people who were asking for more signs and wonders. We could think about him raising the dead. And healing the blind. And the lame. But he boasts in these things. About Christ. It isn't that which is brought to the forefront. Of our view.

[10 : 56] As Paul speaks about Christ. And what he's accomplished. For us and for our salvation. He speaks about the cross. But how can he say that?

Because when he thought of the greatest thing about Christ. He thought about the cross. Well in a few words.

And we'll expand on it. Is the fact that it deals with our sin. The cross deals with the sin. That has brought us into a wrong relationship.

With our Father in heaven. It deals also with the anger. Which that sin has brought into being. God's wrath and curse.

Against sin. Both in this world and that just to come. And also. It deals with the curse. That is ours.

[11 : 55] Which our Lord Jesus Christ. Died for us. And became a curse. For us. So first of all. On the cross. Christ deals.

With our sin. It deals especially with Paul's sin. But in a broader aspect. It deals also. With our sin. Because. The cross is. Penal. It is a penalty. That is exacted upon Christ. For us. And. For our salvation. It is something. That he did.

So that we might be spared. The punishment. That is ours. Paul. At the beginning. Sought answers. To.

Religion. He wasn't someone. Who was an ignoramus. He was. A Pharisee. The son of a Pharisee. Someone who was. Very. Deeply schooled.

[12:53] In religion. In the Old Testament. And all that. Belonged. To. The Old Testament. Teaching. And the promise. Of the Messiah. But all he learned.

In the Sanhedrin. All. He tried to. Activate his life. About. Morality. And decency. All these. Didn't bring him peace. It only. Brought him.

A greater feeling. Of his own. Unworthiness. In the sight of God. But as long as. He was a Pharisee. He was satisfied. With that. That's the lifestyle.

He was satisfied. He thought. He was. Engaging in that. Which was. God pleasing. And that's the same. For all. Who are Pharisees. At heart. That by doing the things. We do.

Coming to prayer meetings. Coming to church. Engaging. In that. Which is. Beneficial. For us. For society. We are somehow. Doing God's will. And somehow. That. Is going to.

[13:46] Bring us. Into a right standing. As regarding. Our salvation. With. Our heavenly father. But in all that he sought.

To achieve. And engage with. In religion. He failed. He failed. Miserably. And then.

He is brought. To see. On the road to Damascus. The centrality. Of Christ. And the centrality. Of. The cross. Of Christ. And to.

To bring him. To know. That without Christ. And without the cross. There is no hope. For him. Or. Or for the world. The man.

Who was. In the form of God. The man. Who. Thought of not robbery. To be equal with God. And yet. Made himself. Of no reputation. Came to this earth.

[14:47] To seek. And to save the lost. And to give his life. For ransom. For the many. He is the one. Who does all things. For us. And for our salvation. It's not that we achieve anything.

In building the basis. Or the foundation. Of that relationship. It is only the Lord Jesus Christ. Only by what he has accomplished. It's only what he has done. That we are brought.

To know God. As our father. Who is. In heaven. You can think of those in the past. Who have been. A very like that. Nicodemus. Nicodemus. Comes to Jesus by night. You are a man. Sent from God. For no man can do these things. That you do.

Except God be with him. Nicodemus here. Sees. That there is something different. About Christ. At the end. Of the Lord's life. Nicodemus is. One of those who are there.

[15:42] Taking the body for burial. We can think of Martin Luther. The one who has been accredited. With the reformation in Europe.

He was a monk. He was part of the Roman Catholic Church. He was part of that system. Which advocated righteousness by works. Righteousness by doing things.

Somehow by bringing man's achievements. Into the balance. Of God's works. Of wonder done for us. Martin Luther. In.

Timing up. The steps of St. Peter's Basilica. Doing his penance. On each step. As he goes up. Suddenly rises to his feet. When he realizes. That is his justification.

By faith alone. In Christ alone. That brings us. To a saving knowledge of Christ. That brings us. That safety. And security. That is in Christ.

[16:38] Alone. Well Paul. Saw the cross. Not as a symbol of. Defeat. Or weakness.

Or somehow bringing him. Into subjection to anything. But Paul saw it. As. A triumph. The greatest triumph.

This creation. Has ever seen. Over sin. Over the law. Over death. Achieves all these triumphs. By. Dying for us. By the cross. Where he endured. The wrath of God. Against sin. And so. The cross of Christ.

Deals initially. As I said. With our sin. It deals. With the penalty. That is due to us. God's wrath and curse. It is. It is all. Paid. By Christ.

[17 : 38] And that is why. Paul boated about it. As he says. In Corinthians. He was made sin for us. Who knew no sin. That we might be made.

The righteousness. Of God. In him. And that is why. Paul boated about it. You know. For all of us. The disobedience.

Of Adam. Has. Terrible. And awesome. Consequences. There was a time. When God. Walked with man. In the coot of the garden.

And there was fellowship. And there was love. And there was. Togetherness. But when. Man sinned. When man disobeyed God. When he disobeyed.

The. The only. Prohibition. That was placed before him. God said. In the day. That you eat thereof. You will surely die. And. That. Spiritual death.

[18 : 35] Occurred immediately. When. Adam. And Eve. Were thrown out. To the garden of Eden. And a sword. And a cherubim. Placed at the entrance.

To bar the way. To. The tree of life. And that. Barrier. Has remained there. For all. Who were out of Christ Jesus.

It is only in Christ Jesus. That the barrier. Can be removed. It is only in Christ Jesus. That the sword. Can be. Thrust. Into the breast.

Of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so. The way to that tree of life. Opened for us again. But. For those who are out of Christ. There is. No way of access. And so.

The disobedience of Adam. Has these consequences. The alienation from God. The curse of God. The fallen human natures.

[19 : 30] That we all know. That we have. And now. For Paul. The cross of Christ. Displays a remedy. A means. Whereby. We can once again.

Be restored. To that fellowship. Once again. We can. Enjoy. The closeness. And. And. And. The love of God. In Christ Jesus. It's through.

This cross. That the cross. Not only deals. With the sin. As I. Suggested a moment ago. But also deals. With the wrath of God.

Which that. Sin. Brings into being. Every sin. Deserves. God's wrath and curse. Both in this life. And that which is to come. And so. Each and every one of us.

Because of our. Fallen human natures. Displays sin in our lives. Brings that sin. Into. Into open condemnation. Before God. And so.

[20 : 25] We find ourselves. Here. In this. This. Place of condemnation. In Romans. Chapter 1. The wrath of God.

Is revealed against heaven. Against all unrighteousness. If we were to read that chapter. We would see. What happens there. When God displays.

His strength. And his power. And his ability. In the creation of the world. Everyone is. Without excuse. As we see around us. The emblems of God's power.

And God's energy. In bringing all things into being. And by the power of his word. In the space of six days. And all very good. God does this. By a word. Not by some.

Energy that. Mankind. As somehow devised. But. God's own energy. God's power. God's love. For mankind. And bringing this world. Into being.

[21 : 21] So that. We could be with him. Throughout. The endless ages. Of glory. And John tells us. God is able.

To. To propitiate. The anger. He feels. Towards. The unrighteousness. Of man. As we read. Romans chapter one. At the end. Of that chapter.

We're told. How God. Withdraws. His restraining hand. He gives them over. To a reprobate mind. And the world today. Is. Is being filled.

With. With people. Whose minds. Do not know God. Do not acknowledge God. And. And that's what. A reprobate mind is. It's. It's ignorance of God. A willful ignorance of God.

To go our own way. And do our own things. But God is able. To overcome.

[22 : 18] The blindness. And the hatred of God. In the hearts of mankind. He does it. Abide the cross. He does it by. Propitiating. The anger.

To the old testament. The dispensations. Talks about. God's anger. Being dissipated. On. The mercy seat. In the temple.

There was a mercy seat. On the day. Of atonement. The blood. Of the. Of the sacrificed lamb. Was sprinkled. On that mercy seat. And there.

It was done every year. To show that. It hasn't been done. Hadn't been filled. Perfectly. But it was done every year. To remind people. Of what was required. Of them. A sacrifice. A meeting with God. At his place of mercy. But here. In Christ Jesus. He is the mercy seat.

[23 : 21] He is the one. Whose. Blood sprinkling. Covers not only the mercy seat. But all those. Who would trust in him. And believe in him. And come to know him.

As Lord. And saviour. For where grace abounds. Or where sin abounds. Grace doth. Much more abound. No matter where we've been.

What we've done. What sort of lives we've lived. There is mercy. In Christ Jesus. There is grace with him. There is mercy. In the beloved. In the beloved. It may have been.

That. We've lived lives. Without excuse. It may be. That as we've. Look back. Over our lives. There are many things. That would. Cause us to blush.

Things he would. Not. Like to admit. But God knows. We are an open book. To him. We stand before him. As. As an open book. With every page.

[24 : 19] For him to read. And yet. In spite of that. He wants us. To know him. As God and Savior. He wants us. In a loving.

Fellowship. Filled. Relationship. With him. Perhaps we can't think. Of a single. Reason. Why God should have. Anything to do with us. In the future. But God does. He wants. He wants. To be with us. He wants. To know us. As. His own children. As Paul says. And. This is a faithful saying.

That. I am the chief of sinners. That. I am the one. Who has done. Great things. Against God. And yet. He has brought me. To know him. He has brought me.

[25 : 17] To know him. As Lord. And Savior. And that's where the cross. Of Christ. Comes in. It covers sin. It blots.

Out the handwriting. Of all the sins. Against us. In the great list. That is against us. In heaven. It blots it out. By the shed blood. Of Christ. It deals with that sin.

It deals with. With the anger of God. The anger of God. Against sin. It deals with that. As Christ. Bears that wrath and curse. As Christ has made.

A propitiation. For our sins. And the cross. Also deals. With the curse.

That is due to all those. Who are. In Christ Jesus. Christ has made. A curse for us. He was. Died for us.

[26 : 13] He was. Given over. To that place. Where God's wrath and curse. Were laid. On him. Alone. In.

Isaiah 53. In the last. Verses. Of. Isaiah. 53. We have some of these.

Verses. Which remind us. Of all that. God. Has done for us. In Christ Jesus. Surely he has borne our griefs. And carried our sorrows.

Yet we esteemed him. Stricken. Smitten of God. And afflicted. But. He was wounded. For our transgressions.

He was. Crushed. For our. Iniquities. Upon him. Oh.

[27 : 14] Was the chastisement. That brought us peace. And with. His stripes. We are healed. All this.

Christ has achieved. For us. If only. We would make. His cross. Our boast also. Everything he did. Was for us. Despised. Rejected. Esteemed. Esteemed. Cursed of God. He achieved.

Experienced. And dealt with all that. For us. And for our salvation. So we find. That Paul's boasting. On the cross.

Deals with all these. Different aspects. Of. God's. Argument. With us. His. His. His. Departure.

[28 : 14] From us. God's. But the cross. The cross also. Displays. The defining moment. Of God's love. For us. God's soul.

Loved the world. That he gave. His only begotten son. And that's not talking. About the Lord Jesus Christ. That's talking. About the father. And that's what. The cross does.

It defines. For us. God's. Great. And. Everlasting. Love. For. Those who are in Christ. Jesus. God's soul.

Loved the world. That he gave. His only begotten son. That. Whosoever. Would believe in him. Would not perish. But have. Everlasting life. Here.

Is. God. In Paul's words. Saying. Loving me. And giving. Himself. For me.

[29 : 13] Or the hymn writers. His words. Bearing sin. And mocking rude. In my place. Condemned. He stood. All the wrath.

All the condemnation. All the mocking. All the ridicule. Was for us. But for him. Or for anything he had done.

But for what we've done. And what we deserved. And yet Christ. Christ experienced it. For us. See God's love.

Is not being indifferent. To sins. That's what people so often. Tell us today. God could do anything. Why doesn't he just forgive sins? God's love isn't being.

Indifferent. To sin. God's love to mankind. Is dealing. With their sin. In Christ Jesus. Love.

[30 : 11] Is God. Becoming. The lamb of God. Love. Is God. Bearing the sins of the world. In himself.

In bearing the cost. In himself. We think back again. To the. To the. The flood. Where God says. When I see the bowl. I will pass over.

Here also. In the Passover. When I see the blood. I will pass over. And here also. In the cross. When I see the cross.

I will pass over. The cross is. The defining moment. The defining nature. Of God's love. For us. That he gave his son.

For us. And for our salvation. Love is God. Becoming the lamb of God. And bearing. Away.

[31 : 09] The sin of the world. On the cross. God says. I love the world. I love you.

How shall we turn away. From such words. And such. Love. Then we can ask.

What. Effect. What response. Did. Paul give. To what he's seen. About the cross. What response.

Did. Paul. Give to the cross. We're told. He went everywhere. Preaching the cross. We saw those words. In second Corinthians. The things he experienced.

The things he suffered. The things that he did. For the cross. For. For the cross of Christ. For. For. For the faith. In the Lord Jesus Christ. He went to.

[32 : 10] Athens. He went to. Mars Hill. He went there. To be mocked. And ridiculed. For his faith. He went to Lystra. And Derby. To Corinth. And Ephesus.

And Galatia. To all these places. He went again. And again. Preaching the. Unsearchable. Riches of Christ. Why? But to achieve. Some reputation.

For himself. Not so he could be. Written about. In some book. Down through the centuries. But that God. And Christ. Might be glorified. And that's what our life. Should be about. That God.

And Christ. Might be glorified. In us. And through us. And so.

In all his journeys. He confronted. Philosophers. Confronted atheists. Confronted poets. With this same message.

[33 : 07] God forbid. That I should glory. Save in the cross. Of the Lord Jesus Christ. And everywhere Paul. Went with these words. They were the forefront.

Of his message. The pulpit has. Has no business. In trying to deal with. Social. Or political. Or commercial. Aspects. Of the world. In which we live.

Our message. Is to preach. The unsearchable riches of Christ. To do with. All our ability. To do with all the gifts. We've been given. To do with every breath. That we have. Every preacher.

Must so. Preach. As to know nothing. Amongst their congregations. Except Christ. Except Christ. And him crucified. And then just finally.

And briefly. The cross. Was the pattern. For Christ. For Paul's life. What he saw on the cross.

[34 : 06] And what the cross achieved. Was to become. The pattern for him. Let this mind be in you. Which was also in Christ Jesus. Jesus. He looks at the image of Christ.

At the example of Christ. He says. Let this mind be in you. We live in a world. Very often. And we are. We are. Almost led. By the opinions.

Of men. And the world. In which we live. Paul says no. He says. Let this mind be in you. The mind. Which was in Christ Jesus. Although he was a son of God.

Although he was equal with God. Yet he makes himself. Of no reputation. The world.

Is crucified. To me. He says there. In. 6.14. God forbid. That I should glory. Save in the cross.

[35 : 03] Of the Lord Jesus Christ. By which the world. Is crucified unto me. And I unto the world. God. He says. I am crucified. To the world. The world.

Thought him a fool. One time. He was. He was a. He was a. Great example. Of what a. Young Jewish man. Should be. He was on the right road.

He was in the Sanhedrin. He was a. A Pharisee. He was heading. To the top. Of his. Career ladder. So to say. Sad fact is.

Many of us today. Are also on a career ladder. And very often. The ladder. Is up against the wrong wall. Or Paul's was.

He was on. Up against the long wall. He was climbing it. But the wall. Wasn't the wall. That he should have been climbing. He says.

[35 : 58] I am. Crucified. To the world. The world. Is crucified to me. The world. Thought. Paul. An idiot. For giving up.

What he had. For the prospects. He had. In that world. But he. He thought. Nothing of it. I count all things. But loss. For the excellency. The knowledge. Of Christ Jesus. My Lord.

The world. Put. The Lord. Outside the city wall. And had cried. Crucify him. Crucify him. That's what the. What the world. Thought of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And that's what they thought of Paul. When he declared him. And preached him. And followed him. And the Christian. Can expect. No more. Often.

We. The church. Think. That the more we become. Like the world. The more. We will gain the world's applause. And the world's. The world's acclaim. And the more we will attract the world. Into the church.

[36 : 58] The world. Put the Lord. Outside the city wall. And Christian. Lives. That think. That the world. Will give them. Its applause.

And acclaim. Will find that. That's what the world. Will do to us. They will put us outside. The Christian. Can expect no more.

Than what happened to the world. The Lord. Often we think. That by. The church. Is going to gain. The world's applause. By becoming more like it.

Gaining influence. Acclaim. The applause of the world. Has become more like it. That's exactly. The opposite. Of what Paul is saying.

He is saying. He is saying. He is saying. Expect. Rejection. And mockery. And ridicule.

[37 : 55] For your lifestyle. Your life choices. For the places you go. For the things that you do. For the fellowship you desire.

For the fellowship you desire. Paul says. The cross. Should lead us. To expect that. Let us. Instead. Run the race. That is set before us. Looking always unto Jesus. As the author. And finisher of our faith. Who with the joy. That was set before him.

Endured the cross. Despised the shame. And so. Is set down. At the right hand. Of God. Paul glorified.

In the cross. Because it saved him. We also. Should. Glory in the cross. Should boast in the cross. Because it's the only instrument.

[38 : 57] By which. We. Must be saved. All. Our hope. And all our confidence.

Is tied up. In the cross of Christ. And nowhere else. Because. There. Christ. Died. For sin. And there. Christ died. That we might be saved. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us then conclude our worship.

Sing to God's praise. In Psalm. 16. The Scottish Psalter. Psalm 16. And page 216.

To the tune. Wilshire. At verse 6. And to me happily.

[40 : 00] The lines in pleasant places fell. Ye the inheritance I got in beauty. And doth excel. We'll sing down. Just to the end of the verse. Mark 9. That's four stanzas.

To God's praise. You're the child. To God's praise. George. To me I believe the light in pleasant places well.

Here in heaven's arms I draw, in beauty doth excel.
I bless the Lord because He doth, by founts of meat conduct.
I give the Jesus all the night, my grace to be in strife.

[41 : 22] Before me still the light.