

SERMON NOTES: Boasting in the Cross

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National Presbyterian Church

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“May I never boast of anything except THE CROSS of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Galatians 6:4:

1. Boasting in the Cross!! Absurd

Like a Guillotine or a Lynching Tree – a public instrument of death, *designed to cause fear and terror amongst those who watched*

e.g., c. 90BC Jewish king, Alexander Jannaeus, *crucified* 800 Pharisees

2. “Boasting” – used x 50 in 9/13 Paul’s Letters in the Bible

challenging us to **think about what exactly we ourselves “boast in”**

For example

A. NOT Boasting in Racial, Religious, National “superiority”

Romans 2

¹⁷If you call yourself a Jew and rely on (your possession) of the law of God

- **and boast** of your relation to God ¹⁸and know his will
- and determine what is best because you are instructed in the law,
- ¹⁹and if you are sure that you are a guide to the blind,
- a light to those who are in darkness,
- ²⁰a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of children,
- having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth,

²¹**you, then, that teach others**, will you not teach yourself?

- *While you* preach against stealing, do you steal?
- ²²*You that* forbid adultery, do you commit adultery?
- *You that* abhor idols, do you rob temples?

²³**You that boast in** (your possession of God’s) **law**, do you dishonor God by breaking the law? ²⁴For, as it is written, “The name of God is blasphemed in the rest of the world because of you.”

B. NOT Boasting in people or parties that break up the body of Christ

1 Corinthians 3

⁴ When one says, “I belong to Paul,” and another, “I belong to Apollos,” are you not *merely human*? [earlier = “babies”]. ⁵What then is Apollos? What is Paul?

We’re [just] servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.

⁷So neither *the one who plants* nor *the one who waters* is anything, but **only God** who gives the growth. ⁸The one who plants and the one who waters **have a common purpose**,

Conclusion . . . ²¹So **let no one BOAST about human leaders**.

For all things are yours, ²²whether Paul or Apollos or Peter

– or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all belong to you, ²³and *you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.*

What is “Boasting’s bottom line”? -- the real thing to boast about?

→ that **you belong to Christ – the one who died on a cross**

3. BUT Why this Particular Boast – in the Cross?

A. The cross reveals the depth of God’s love for us, and the value God places on us

Romans 5:8-11

. ⁸God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners **Christ died for us**.

⁹Much more surely then, now that we have been justified **by his blood**, (=by his death on a cross) will we be saved through him from the wrath of God.

¹¹But more than that (we can now *change the source of our boasting*):

So that our primary boast (is **not** in ourselves, our own righteousness or anything else (but) is now in *God -- His Love for us & valuing us* demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ, thro’ whom we have received reconciliation.

B. The cross reveals God’s passion

to lift up those who have appear to have nothing to boast about

1 Corinthians 1:23-29

²³ **We proclaim Christ crucified**,

a stumbling block to Jews, and foolishness to all other ethnicities,

²⁶Consider your own call, brothers and sisters:

- not many of you were wise by human standards,
- not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. . . . ²⁷**But . . .**
- God chose what is foolish in the world -- to shame the wise;
- God chose what is weak in the world -- to shame the strong;
- ²⁸God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not -- to reduce to nothing things that are, that . . . **No One** (*lit. no flesh*) **Might Boast in the presence of God.**

God “lifts up” unexpected people ***all over the Scripture***

- God lifts up the **rascal Jacob** over older brother **Esau**
- **Moses & Paul & Peter** – who really messed up
- **Esther** an orphaned beauty queen to save her people
- **Mary**, a young girl, called to be *the mother of Jesus*

In Luke 2 Mary sings

“My soul magnifies (=boasts in) the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ God has shown interest in the **lowliness of his servant**. . . .

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, ⁵¹ God has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵² God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and **lifted up the lowly**; ⁵³ God has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

Ephesus

²⁸By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—⁹not the result of works, so that **no one may boast.**