**Better Boasting**

*Galatians 6:14*

**Introduction**

1. Human pride is a constant struggle, and the seat of all sin. Men are easily taken advantage of by Satan because of their proclivity for pride.
2. The Christian does not abandon pride, but shifts it away from self to God – **Galatians 6:14**
3. Ultimately, we were created for boasting, but there is a boasting that is not good, and a better boasting.
4. ***“Your boasting is not good.” (1 Corinthians 5:6, NASB)***
5. There is a boasting that is not good – **1 Corinthians 5:6**
	1. ***“glorying”*** – *kauchēma* – “act of taking pride in someth. or that which constitutes a source of pride, boast” (BDAG)
	2. Yet not all boasting is bad – **cf. 1 Corinthians 9:15; Galatians 6:4 *(“rejoicing”)*** (same word as above)
	3. What is it about boasting that is “not good,” and is there such a boasting that is good?
6. The Evil of Boasting
	1. “The theological basis for the rejection of all self-praise lies in the fact that those who boast have their attention focused on themselves and no longer look up to God, the Creator and Redeemer.” (NIDNTTE)
		1. Created to be HIS image bearers – **Genesis 1:26-27**
		2. Replacing God as the focus with ourselves – **Romans 1:21-23**
	2. The ***“glorying”*** of the Corinthians linked to the concept of them being ***“puffed up”*** – **1 Corinthians 4:18; 5:2**
		1. *physioō* – “lit. ‘blow up, inflate’ fr. φῦσα (orig. ‘pair of bellows’, then var. ‘wind, blast’, etc.) fig. to cause to have an exaggerated self-conception, puff up, make proud” (BDAG)
		2. Paul’s encompassing question – **1 Corinthians 4:7** – is there anything in which we can truly boast in ourselves?
		3. God’s removal of boasting – **1 Corinthians 1:28-29** – His very design deprives us of an ability to boast.
	3. Boasting is evil because only God is deserving of such attention and praise – **Romans 11:36**
		1. **Of** (*ek*) Him – origin
		2. **Through** (*dia*) Him – sustaining power
		3. **To** (*eis*) Him – purpose or goal
		4. Logical consequence of these truths – ***“to whom be glory forever.”***
7. Better Boasting
8. What is better boasting?
	1. God’s design of things made it to where the only legitimate boasting is in Him – ***“just as it is written, ‘LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD.’” (1 Corinthians 1:31, NASB).***
	2. Reference – **Jeremiah 9:23-24** – All that man may emphasize and boast in is nothing before God, who delights in other things.
		1. **(v. 23)** – no room for boasting.
		2. **(v. 24**) ***(“boasts,” NASB***) – the boasting He calls man to is not in relation to self, but to God.
			1. Understanding and knowing God.
			2. What God is/does – lovingkindness, judgment (justice), righteousness.
			3. He delights in these – connects with the understanding and knowing God – i.e. what He values is not that of **verse 23**, but what He Himself is involved in.
				1. When one walks in these things, they’re walking in fellowship with God – understanding knowing.
				2. When they boast in this **(v. 24a),** it is not self-exaltation, but an exaltation of God because it is only through Him that such is known and appropriated. **(cf. 1 Corinthians 4:7)**
		3. **(vv. 25-26)** – the Jews would be punished with the rest of the nations because they did not truly understand or know God **(v. 24).**
			1. They boasted in other matters – **Jeremiah 7:4, 12** – that they had the temple, that Jerusalem was God’s city, etc.
			2. Circumcision – that they were circumcised, belonging to God. (NT emphasizes this)
	3. When one boasts in knowing God they are looking away from themselves to Him with focus, not on self-accomplishment or self-sufficiency, but confident dependence in God – **Psalm 5:11** ***(“joyful in You”*** = *kauchaomai*, boast, LXX)
9. Boasting in the Message of the Cross
	1. Paul was distancing himself from a culture that loved wisdom in Corinth – **1 Corinthians 1:17; 2:1-2; 3:18-21** – not with own wisdom, message of Jesus crucified, become fool to become wise, no boast in men.
	2. The folly of boasting in wisdom – **1 Corinthians 1:20-22, 26; 2:6-9** – cannot know God through man’s wisdom, no man can know in himself.
		1. **(v. 21)** – none of these can find salvation.
			1. **Wise** – *Sophos* – general – “forming the best plans and using the best means for their execution” (THAYER)
			2. **Scribe** – *grammateus* – probably Jewish – an expert in Jewish law.
			3. **Disputer** – *syzētētēs* – general – “as one skilled in arguing disputer, disputant, debater” (ALGNT) (especially in emphasis on rhetorical skill, not necessarily substance.)
		2. (**v. 22**) – Jews (signs for the sake of signs – **Matthew 16:1-4**); Greeks (wisdom for the sake of wisdom – **Acts 17:21**) (Especially – “Greek rhetoric, with praise being lavished on human beings for their stunning abilities,” Tyndale, Schreiner)
		3. **2:6-9** – wisdom exclusive to God, not found with even the most noble.
	3. Boasting in God’s will as it is the sole power to salvation – **1 Corinthians 1:18, 23-25, 30-31** – some despise it as foolishness and boast in themselves but find no salvation, but those who are saved view it as wisdom and boast in God.
	4. Not searching for self or others, but in relation to the truth of God to His glory – **Galatians 1:6-10** – the attitude in boasting in God and not seeking to please men safeguards us from buying in to anything new which differs from truth.
10. Boasting in the Transformation by the Cross
	1. Paul contrasted himself with the boasting of the Judaizers – **Galatians 6:12-15**
		1. **(v. 12)** – they seek a showing in the flesh – two reasons:
			1. **(v. 12b)** – avoiding persecution (from Jews?).
			2. **(vv. 12a, 13b)** – good showing in flesh, boast in your flesh. (proselyte stats)
		2. **(vv. 14-15)** – Paul boasting in the cross of Christ (synecdoche – gospel message) which changed him completely – “new creation”
		3. Contrast – Judaizers (looking at self, something they did and take credit for, something within themselves they are confident in); Paul (looking to Christ, Christ gets credit, confident in Christ)
	2. Further contrast – **Galatians 4:17-20** – their efforts look inward (so that the Galatians praise them), but Paul’s looks upward (Christ formed in them so that they boast in the same that he does – **6:14-15**).
	3. When we think about what Paul is saying, some would hesitate – **Galatians 6:14-15** – He is saying he is no longer of the world, dominated by sin, but is a new Christ-like creature.
		1. **Galatians 2:20** – He is saying that Christ is living in him!
		2. This is no self-accomplishment, or reason for boasting in himself – HE BOASTS IN THE CROSS – SUCH IS THE POWER TO TRANSFORM HIM. (**cf. Philippians 4:13**)
	4. Irony – their boasting in Jewish pedigree and identification did not translate to faithfulness to God – **Galatians 5:3; 6:13**
	5. When our boast is in God it does not lead to idleness, but faithful obedience to His word – **Galatians 5:5-6, 13-14, 16-18**
11. Boasting in the Power of the Cross
	1. Often times, Paul boasted in accomplishments, yet not of himself, but as God used him:
		1. His labor as an apostle – **1 Corinthians 15:9-10** – the perspective is easily seen here – his boasting concerns activity in which he was involved but places no significance on himself.
		2. The fruit of his labor – **2 Thessalonians 1:3-4; 1 Corinthians 9:1, 15-18** – churches which he planted, yet his boast is in the power of God’s grace to redeem and transform them.
			1. As seen in the Corinthian passage, Paul’s boast is not typical, but in reference to God who works through him.
			2. To abuse his authority and demand the support he has a right to would be to undermine God’s work, making his boasting void by disrupting God’s use of him.
		3. When God uses us to accomplish His will we have reason to boast, but not in ourselves, but in His powerful working – **1 Peter 2:9** – proclaiming His praises.
	2. Paul’s boasting highlights these points exceptionally:
		1. **2 Corinthians 11:16-18, 30** – the false apostles were boastful, so Paul ironically combats their boasting with his – which is in his weaknesses.
		2. **2 Corinthians 12:7-10** – He was taught by the Lord better boasting, and he boasts in his weaknesses that Christ could more fully use him.
			1. Our boasting should be in the sense that minimizes us and magnifies him.
			2. ***“He must increase, but I must decrease.” (John 3:30)***

**Conclusion**

1. There should never be a moment where a child of God thinks they have reason to boast in themselves.
2. Our entire lives should be lived as a boast in God – **Galatians 6:14**