

Glorying in the Cross

Galatians 6:12-15

I. INTRODUCTION:

A. *The Text in Context*—

1. Early in the church there arose a heresy which taught “it was needful to circumcise them and to command them to keep the Law of Moses” (Acts 15:5).
 - a. Paul and Barnabas opposed this heresy at Antioch (Acts 15:1–2).
 - b. The Holy Spirit revealed that Barnabas and Paul should go up to Jerusalem and preach the truth concerning salvation by grace through faith (Galatians 2:1–2).
 - c. Paul had a private meeting with the elders and the apostles (Galatians 2: 2; Acts 15:5).
 - d. Then, the apostles having agreed and taught the elders (Galatians 2:2), challenged those of the sect of the Pharisees (Acts 15:4, 7).
 - e. The matter was resolved by application of Scripture, a letter was written to the churches in the region concerning the heretics who went out, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch to continue their work (Acts 15:7-32).
2. The “Judaizers” infiltrated the Galatian churches and subverted many of the members away from “the grace of Christ” to “another gospel” (Galatians 1:6).
 - a. They “compelled [the Gentile Christians] to be circumcised” (Galatians 2:3).
 - b. They “withdrew and separated” themselves from uncircumcised Gentiles at mealtime, an act of exclusion (Galatians 2:12; 4:17).
 - c. They taught the observance of “days, and months, and times, and years” (Galatians 4:10).
3. Our lesson text is Paul's “parting shot” at the sect of the Pharisees in the Galatian letter.
 - a. They are cowards (Galatians 6:12).
 - b. They are hypocrites (Galatians 6:13, cf. Acts 15:5).
 - c. They are using their brethren for their own ends (Galatians 6:13c)

B. *Lesson Study Objectives*—

1. We want to focus on the statement, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
2. In order to do so, we will:
 - a. Define the term “glory” (KJV).
 - b. Learn why Paul rejects all “glorying” except that which is “in the cross of Christ.”
3. In conclusion, we will make personal applications from lessons learned from the text.

II. DISCUSSION:

A. Definition of the Word “Glory”—

1. Strong's Concordance of N.T. Greek—

- a. 2744. *kauchaomai* {kow-khah'-om-ahee}; from some (obsolete) base akin to that of *aucheo* (to boast) and 2172; to vaunt (in a good or a bad sense): -(make) boast, glory, joy, rejoice.
- b. 2745. *kauchema* {kow'-khay-mah}; from 2744; a boast (properly, the object; by implication, the act) in a good or a bad sense: -boasting, (whereof) to glory (of), glorying, rejoice(-ing).
- c. 2746. *kauchesis* {kow'-khay-sis}; from 2744; boasting (properly, the act; by implication, the object), in a good or a bad sense: -boasting, whereof I may glory, glorying, rejoicing.

2. Bible Usage:

a. The Old Testament—

- (1) In the OT there are many proverbs against self-glorying or boasting.
 - (a) Proverbs 25:14, “Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift is like clouds and wind without rain.”
 - (b) Proverbs 27:1-2, “Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth. Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips.”
 - (c) 1 Kings 20:11, “And the king of Israel answered and said, Tell {him}, Let not him that girdeth on {his harness} boast himself as he that putteth it off.”
- (2) In the OT “boasting” or “glorying” is a serious spiritual fault; self-glorying is the basic attitude of the foolish and ungodly man (Psalm 73:3–11) which expresses a desire to stand on his own abilities and accomplishments rather than depending upon God (Proverbs 27:1, cf. James 4:13-16; Psalm 10:1-6; 49:1-13; 52:1; 94:1-11).
- (3) However, there is approved in the OT a glorying of men in God and His accomplishments of which they are the beneficiaries (Jeremiah 9:23,24; Psalm 34:2; cf. 44:8; 64:10; 105:3; 119:164; Isaiah 62:9; 64:11).

b. The New Testament—

(1) Negatively:

- (a) In the NT self-glorying takes on a new shade of meaning. In the OT it characterized those who were without God and in rebellion to God. However, in the NT it refers to actual believers in God that are seeking acceptance from God, but their approach to God is flawed (Romans 2:17–25).
- (b) For Paul “glorying” was reliance upon the “works of righteousness which we have done” (I Corinthians 1:29; Titus 3:5). It was seeking approval by our own deeds (Romans 3:27–4:5). Paul categorically rejected the idea there was anything of merit in sinners that can be the ground of justification (Ephesians 2:8–9).

(2) Positively:

- (a) In the NT the OT concept of “glorying in God” continues (II Corinthians 10:17–18; cf. Psalm 34:2; 44:8).

(b) Paul gloried:

[1] In the churches (II Thessalonians 1:4-5; II Corinthians 9:2)

[2] In his gifts and calling (1 Corinthians 4:7; 2 Corinthians 5:12; 10:8, 13; 12:1)

[3] In his tribulations (Romans 5:3; 2 Corinthians 11:18, 30; 12:5-9)

[4] In his salvation (1 Corinthians 1:27-31; Galatians 6:13-14)

(c) He gloried justly in all these things because they were accomplished in him or others by God through Christ (Galatians 2:20, Philippians 2:13).

B. What Is There About the Cross of Christ in Which to Glory?

1. To understand Paul's boasting it must be contrasted with that of the Judaizers.

a. The Pharisees "glory in your flesh," that is, they boast or rejoice in your conformity to their demand of circumcision (Galatians 6:13; cf. Philippians 3:1-5; Colossians 2:13; Romans 2:8; Ephesians 2:11).

b. Their religious course was determined by worldly self-interest and party advantage (Galatians 6:12).

(1) Paul identifies their motive in Galatians 6:12 to avoid persecution.

(2) The Judaizers sought compromise with the Legalists to avoid suffering for truth.

c. The necessary consequence of their doctrine was that they became "debtors to do the whole law" (Galatians 5:3).

(1) However, sinful man cannot atone for his sins by law keeping (Galatians 3:10).

(2) He must have a "sin offering" (Galatians 3:13).

(3) This offering we have in Jesus on the cross (Galatians 3:13).

d. The effect of their doctrine was damnation, "ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

(1) Galatians 2:21, "...Christ is dead in vain"

(2) Galatians 3:10, "... are under the curse"

(3) Galatians 3:12, "No flesh shall be justified..."

(4) Galatians 3:18, "If ... of the law, it is no more of promise"

(5) Galatians 4:9, "... ye desire again to be in bondage"

(6) Galatians 5:2, "... Christ shall profit you nothing"

(7) Galatians 5:3, "... he is a debtor to do the whole law"

(8) Galatians 5:4, "... ye are fallen from grace"

e. Thus, the Pharisees were glorying, boasting and trusting, in their own works for acceptance with God rather than in Christ (cf. Isaiah 64:5-6).

2. Paul's letter is designed to reaffirm the Gospel among the Galatians, that one is justified "by the faith of Jesus Christ...and not by the works of the law" (Galatians 2:16).

- a. Paul gloried in “the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” because it is the means of God's grace in redeeming sinful mankind (Galatians 6:14).
- (1) Paul's thesis is stated in Galatians 2:15-17.
 - (2) Throughout the epistle he “glories” in and “boasts” of the cross—
 - (a) Galatians 1:4, “Who gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us...”
 - (b) Galatians 1:23-24, “They had heard only, that he which persecuted us...now preacheth the faith which he once destroyed. And they glorified God in me.”
 - (c) Galatians 2:20, “The life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”
 - (d) Galatians 3:13, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law having been made a curse for us...”
 - (e) Galatians 4:4-5, “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law...”
 - (f) Galatians 5:1, “Stand fast...in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free...”
 - (g) Galatians 6:14, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord...”
 - (3) For Paul this is the only grounds for glorying concerning our justification through “the cross our Lord Jesus Christ.”

III. CONCLUSION—

A. Do You Have Whereof To Glory?

1. Not if you are trusting in your own righteousness for acceptance with God (Galatians 6:13).
 - a. The only thing that “avails” is being a “new creature” (Galatians 6:15).
 - b. Stop relying in yourself and start relying on Christ (Galatians 5:1-4).
 - c. Obey the gospel of Christ (Galatians 5:6; 3:26–27).
2. Not unless “the world is crucified unto me” (Galatians 6:14; cf. 5:13).
 - a. The believer is “crucified with Christ” and become a “new creature” (Galatians 2:20).
 - b. The believer has “crucified the flesh” (Galatians 5:24).
 - c. If the works of the flesh are in your life, you are not “Christ's” (Galatians 5:21, 24).
3. Not unless you are crucified “unto the world” (Galatians 6:14; cf. 5:11).
 - a. The gospel of Christ is an offence to the world (Galatians 5:11).
 - b. That offence is only removed by compromise (Galatians 1:10).
 - c. Compromise damns the soul (Galatians 2:18), frustrates the grace of God (2:21) and nullifies the death of Christ (2:21).

B. Will You Glory in the Cross of Our Lord Jesus?