

**Now...as we conclude our series in Galatians, we're going to look at the last part of chapter six, and then spend the remainder of our time together celebrating the gospel in worship and communion!**

**Look with me at Galatians chapter 6:11...**

*"Notice what large letters I use as I write these closing words in my own handwriting. Those who are trying to force you to be circumcised want to look good for others. They don't want to be persecuted for teaching that the cross of Christ alone can save.*

Galatians 6:11-12

**Here, Paul comes full circle to chapter one** and again, he addresses these religious leaders who had come into the church and were teaching, *"If you want to be a Christian, in addition to believing in Jesus, you need to follow the Mosaic Law, with all of its customs and regulations. Men...you need to be circumcised! If you do these things, then God will accept you!"*

**And again Paul says, "No...that's not right! In fact, it flies in the face of the gospel (Good News), which says that God loves and accepts us, not on the basis of our good works, but because of the finished work of Jesus Christ!"** And if we ever believe that God accepts us because we are good, it will steal our freedom and joy in Christ and eventually, it will destroy us!"

**Children:** As a father, I want my children to obey me because it's for their joy! But let me ask you; do I love and accept my children because they obey me? Do I tuck them into bed every night, and pray over them, and give them hugs and kisses because they are good, kind and lovely all of the time? And if we have a bad day...do I yell up the stairs, *"Sorry punks...no kisses tonight!"* **No! I love my children because they belong to me!**

You see, if I say, *"Kids, today, I'm going to treat you kindly as long as you follow the rules and do what I say,"* they may obey me for a while, but over time they'll resent me! **Conditional love always leads to relational disintegration!**

**Walk Straight:** Several years ago, I was talking with a very good friend who described to me why she walked away from the church (and God) during her teenage years...and I'll never forget her words! She said...

*"Jed, I knew that I couldn't walk straight!"*

Deep in our hearts, some of us are saying tonight, "If God is going to love and accept me, I have to walk straight...to get rid of persistent sin...try hard to be a more kind, loving and generous person! Then God will smile!"

**But don't you see...you're trying to build a relationship with God on a lie that will only lead you away from freedom in Christ, toward fear and condemnation!**

Well, you ask, "*How do I know whether or not this is true of me?*" Let me suggest a few questions to consider.

**Is there confidence in your walk with Jesus today?** Tonight, as you approach God in worship, or prayer, do you come with joy and confidence in his mercy? Or, are you preoccupied with your sin and inadequacy...

*"So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most."* Hebrews 4:16

**Can you walk through your day delighting in the truth that God delights in you as a son/daughter?**

**Bedtime:** Every night, I gather with my children in their rooms, and there's talking and sharing and giggling and praying...because dad is with his kids!

Do you have a spirit of delight when you're with God, or are afraid that He is going to crush you if you step out of line!

*"So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, 'Abba, Father.'*

Romans 8:15

**Do you believe that God is committed to your beauty?** Or, are you anxious that God's love depends on your loveliness!

*"And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns."* Philippians 1:6

Let's be honest...at any given moment every one of us can begin to relate to God on the basis of our goodness rather than the mercy and goodness of Jesus, and lose our confidence and joy in the process. So...in the next few moments, as we prepare to

celebrate the Lord's Supper, I want to look together at one verse that has the power to completely transform the way we relate to God...

**Look at verse 14...**

*"As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died. Galatians 6:14*

**Boast** – For most of us, we equate boasting with arrogance and therefore it has a very negative connotation. But, let me help you see boasting from a different angle!

**Lydia:** A few days ago...Beth texted me a video of Lydia, our 13 month old, climbing up onto our piano...grinning from ear to ear as she sat on the keys! Moments later...Beth texted me a picture of Lydia climbing onto a table in the middle of our living room! Most of us say, 'ah...that's so cute.' And I agree, it's ridiculously cute, but what is Lydia doing as she smiles? She's saying, "Look at me!" **She's a little boaster!**

My other children are always showing me something that they've learned... *A dance...a piano rift...a basketball shot...the 50 states and capitals.* As parents, we say, "ah...that's so great..." and I agree...it is! But what are they doing when they say, "Dad, look at me"? They're boasting!

**You do the same thing!** (Not me...you!) What did you do the last time you returned from vacation? You told someone about how good it was! We boast about our accomplishments at work, a promotion, that we got into the school of our choice...or bought a new house. **We're always boasting by saying, "Look at me!"**

Now...please hear me! The majority of the time there's nothing wrong with the things I've just described! Boasting is simply a natural way of inviting people into our celebration of life!

**Paul says, "There's another kind of boasting going on deep within us!" And here it is!**

**Whatever you're looking at tonight and saying, "This is why God accepts me!" This is the very thing you're boasting in!**

**Very Religious** – Some of us are like the Pharisee in Luke 18 who prayed to God...

*"I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. For I don't cheat, I don't sin, and I don't commit adultery. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income." Luke 18:11-12*

**Some of us say to God,** *"You should accept me because I'm a good husband...a great mother. I pay my taxes. I make a hard-earned living for my family! I give my money away! I'm nice to my neighbors! I'm better than a majority of those terrible people out there who make it into the news..."*

### **You're boasting in your religion!**

**Irreligious:** Then, there are some of you who might not consider yourself religious, and aren't even sure whether you believe in God! That's fine. But still, you must find something of which to say, *"this is why my life matters."*

**Rich Man:** Later in chapter 18, a rich man asked Jesus what He must do to inherit eternal life! And to make a very long story short, Jesus looked at the man and said, *"You've got to sell everything you own. Then come follow me."* And the text says that the man walked away sad because he was very rich!

### **The rich man was boasting in his wealth!**

And some of us are more like him! We say... *"Look at my lifestyle. Look at my accomplishments! I'm well educated. People think highly of me. I'm beautiful. I'm attractive. I'm free, no one can tell me what to do! This is why my life matters."*

### **You're boasting in those things!**

Both religion and irreligion are a form of saying to God and others, *"Look at me! This is what makes me acceptable!"* And for the last five weeks, I've been trying to show you that both religion and irreligion will leave you empty!

**Still, Paul says, you must find something to boast in! Something to that can bear the weight of your existence! Something that's worth living for!**

### **What is it?**

Look again at verse 14...

*"As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."* Galatians 6:14

Paul says, *"There is only One who can bring lasting meaning and purpose to your life." Only One who can bring you back into a right relationship with the One for whom your heart was created. Only One who is worthy of boasting in!"*

### **His Name is Jesus Christ!**

**Notice, Paul doesn't just say, "*May I never boast about anything except Jesus Christ.*" He says, "*May I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*"**

**What was the cross?** It was an instrument of execution for the worst of the worst criminals. And, it was the very thing that killed Jesus. Why would Paul boast in something so awful?!

**Because he understood the meaning of Jesus' death...which the Apostle Peter described in his letter...**

*"He (Jesus) personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed."* 1 Peter 2:24

Gospel:

*Jesus carried our sins so we don't have to! **What sins are you terrified of...that you'll never outlive, or that someone is going to find out?** Jesus carried your sin so that you can live for what is right!*

*Jesus was pierced to make us whole! **Where in your life do you say, "I'm always going to be broken?"** Jesus was wounded to make you whole!*

*Jesus died in your place...taking the judgment and wrath of God to free you from sin and death!*

**When you realize what Jesus has done for you, it will humble you! Author John Stott describes this...**

*"Every time we look at the cross Christ seems to say to us, 'I am here because of you. It is your sin I am bearing, your curse I am suffering, your debt I am paying, your death I am dying.' Nothing in history or in the universe cuts us down to size like the cross. All of us have inflated views of ourselves, especially in self-righteousness, until we have visited a place called Calvary. It is there, at the foot of the cross, that we shrink to our true size." John Stott*

**"I am here because of you..."**

**Why do we boast in the cross of Christ?**

**The God who thought you were worth dying for is worth boasting for!**

**Wedding: We had a wedding here yesterday...the bride and groom shared their vows...through tears and laughter they shouted their love for one another! They boasted in one another! You're the One I love for the rest of my life!**

When you realize that your Creator was willing to die for you, you will no longer boast in your own goodness (you'll see how bad you are). And, you'll no longer boast in your irreligion (God, I don't need you). You'll see that nothing you love in this present moment compares to Him!

**You spend your life boasting. Boasting in his goodness at home...at work...in your community! Boasting in your generosity! Boasting in Jesus in the ways you love for neighbor. Boasting in your commitment to your spouse...**

**Communion**

**Today...we want to finish our time boasting in the cross!**

**Communion – The tasting, touching, breathing in of the cross of Jesus Christ! Jesus gathered his disciples and said, “*Do this in remembrance of me!*”**

**We confess our sin! Jesus wouldn't have died if we didn't need it! We deserve death...He gave us life!**

Confess the good works you've been doing to get him to try to earn his love. Confess the areas of your life that you love more than you love Him! Confess specific sins that are stealing life and joy from you tonight!

**We throw ourselves on his mercy! *God, accept me on the basis of Christ's goodness...not mine!***

**We celebrate Jesus crucified for us! We come to the foot of the cross head lifted high...confident, bold, and joy-filled!**

**We boast! Jesus died for me...I will trust in Him alone!**

**Pray!**