

What do You Boast About?

Galatians 6:14

Intro

Three boys in the schoolyard were bragging about their fathers. The first boy says, "My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a poem, they give him \$100."

The second boy says, "That's nothing. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a song, they give him \$200."

The third boy says, "I got you both beat. My Dad scribbles a few words on a piece of paper, he calls it a sermon. And it takes four people to collect all the money!"

Two women meet on the way to the market. They began to talk about their husbands. One woman was boasting that her husband was an angel. The other woman said, "You're lucky, mine is still alive.!"

We all brag or boast to some degree or another. Some people boast about themselves, their money, fame and power; but the Apostle Paul's boast was about Christ and His cross. Look with me at Galatians chapter 6 verse fourteen.

Galatians 6:14

"May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

"May I never" (me genoito) a strong negative that carries the idea of virtual impossibility.

-It was inconceivable for Paul even to think of boasting in anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,

"Boast" kauchaomai = it means to glory in, trust in, rejoice in, revel in, live for. The object of our boast or 'glory' engrosses our attention, and it absorbs our time and energy.

-The religious people boasted in their works and good conduct, especially the Pharisees.

-Paul's boast and praise on the other hand was in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

-Wherever Paul went he *"determined to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified"* (1 Cor. 2:2).

-We cannot boast in our works, self efforts or personal merits for obtaining our salvation. Salvation is a total work of Christ. Apart from making our decision to follow Christ, we contribute nothing to our salvation except our sins.

Eph. 2:8-9 *"For it is by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is a gift of God - not by works so that no one can boast."*

Paul's boast was in the cross of Christ.

The cross to the average Roman citizen was regarded as an object of shame, disgrace and even disgust. The Roman poet Cicero wrote: "Let the very mention of the cross be far removed not only from a Roman citizen's body, but from his mind, his eyes and ears."

To the Jewish mind it was synonymous with being cursed by God. In the Scriptures we read:

"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." (Gal. 3:13).

But for Paul it was his pride, his boasting and glory. Why?
Consider the following reasons:

The Power and Blessings of the Cross of Christ

1/ Christ Suffered Pain

To die by crucifixion was to die a most horrible, degrading, slow death a human being could ever face. Christ succumbed himself to physical suffering and pain.

Those who follow Star Trek may recall a particular episode where Captain Kirk and his crew arrive on a primitive planet. When Captain Kirk is seen by the people of the planet they are struck with awe. Cringing in fear and pointing to him and saying, *"He is a god."* During the episode Kirk fights one of the natives. The native strikes Kirk and he bleeds and upon seeing the blood flowing down Kirk's arm, he says contemptuously, *"You're not a god, gods don't bleed."*

In the ancient world many religions believed that deities are far removed from suffering and pain. They don't bleed. There are those who believe that, if there be a God, He is above and beyond feeling and suffering.

But Christ bled because God became human. God in Christ identifies with our suffering and pain.

John Stott confesses, "I could never myself believe in God, if it were not for the cross... In the real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it?"

A God who allowed himself to bleed. A God who was a true human being and who connects with human suffering.

2/ Christ became a victim. He identifies with our weakness, our violation, our abuse, mistreatment and injustices. He identifies with the marginalized, the discriminated, the abandoned, the lonely, and the rejected. Because He too suffered all those things.

3/ Christ bore our sins and condemnation - we are free from sins bondage and consequence. That's why Paul boasted in the cross of our Lord Jesus.

4/ Christ appeased God's anger - propitiation, to turn away wrath...

5/ Christ showed God's love toward us – in that He took our place of death.

Nikolai Berdyaev, who abandoned Marxism for Christianity, insists that neither history nor theology, nor the church brought him to the Christian faith but a simple Christian woman called Maria. He was at a concentration camp when the Nazis were killing Jews in the gas chambers. One distraught mother in the camp refused to part with her baby. When Maria saw the officer was only interested in numbers, without a word she pushed the mother aside and quickly took her place. This action revealed to Nikolai the heart of Christianity and what atonement meant.

Christ took our place and took our death.

6/ Christ reconciled us to God - enemies become friends...

7/ Christ justified us – declared us innocent and accepted by God...

8/ Christ brought us salvation - delivered from sin and hell...

The well known British preacher Charles Spurgeon once said, "Morality may keep you out of jail, but it takes the blood of Jesus Christ to keep you out of hell."

9/ Christ made us righteous. No matter how relatively good a person manages to be in their own power, they fall far short of the absolute moral and spiritual perfection that God requires. It is only through the cross that divine perfection is graciously made available to those who believe. That's why Paul boasted in the cross of our Lord Jesus.

10/ Christ gives us pardon and forgiveness. The person without Christ is often haunted by the past. He cannot free himself from the guilt of things he has done and failed to do. The person who belongs to Christ, however, is freed from their despair. One's past, present and future sins are forgiven through Christ. The cross brings us to repentance. That's why Paul boasted in the cross of our Lord Jesus!

11/ Christ values and loves us deeply. We live in an increasingly depersonalized society. It seems to me that more and more we are just a number on a long list with other numbers. Are we unique and special? From the cross God cries our "Yes!" How easy it is for people to depreciate themselves, to forget their dignity and self-worth as human beings.

We are of infinite worth to God, we are the only creatures created in His image and we are very precious to God. God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Christ died for us in order to bring us closer to the heart of a loving God.

We are important. Our souls are priceless in God's eyes. We are of infinite worth to God. That is why Christ went to the cross. Though it may be hard to understand, much less to believe, it is nonetheless true. If you were the only one in all the world that stood in need of help and saving, Jesus Christ would have come for you alone. That's how precious we are to him. That's why Paul boasted in the cross of our Lord Jesus!

12/ Christ is preparing our eternal home. In John 14:2 Jesus states that he is preparing a place for us and that he will return to take us there.

THIS IS WHY PAUL BOASTED IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST!!

Conclusion

I came across this story of an expert swimmer who taught college students how to swim and dive. One night he couldn't sleep. He decided to go to the swimming pool and have a swim, hoping that the exercise would induce sleep. He said, "I didn't put the lights on. I knew every inch of the place, and the roof was made of glass. The moon shone through, throwing the shadow of my body on the wall at the other end of the pool. I started to dive. My body and arms made a perfect sign of the cross! I cannot explain why I did not dive at the moment. I had no premonition of danger of any kind. As I stood looking at the shadow of the cross, I began to think of the cross of Christ and its meaning. I was not a Christian. I found myself repeating the words of a hymn I had heard as a boy: 'He died that I might be forgiven.' I cannot tell you how long I stood poised on the diving board, or why I did not dive. I came down from the diving board and walked along the pool to the steps that I knew led to the bottom of the pool and began to descend. I reached the bottom and my feet touched the cold, smooth bottom of the pool! The night before the caretaker had drained the pool dry and I knew nothing about it. I realized then that had I dived, I would have dived to my death! The cross on the wall saved me that night. I was so thankful to God for His mercy in sparing my life and I knelt on the cold bricks and asked the Christ of the cross to save my soul. I experienced a twofold deliverance that night!" (Source: published in *The Listening Post*).

Let us boast about the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!