

“Breaking Arms to Pat Backs!” **Jeremiah 9:23-24 and selected passages**

Intro. – An egotistical young salesman was composing a letter to the president of the firm he felt he so ably represented. The salesman dictated the following to his secretary:

“I feel that you should know, sir, that in order to obtain the above-mentioned contracts, I found it necessary to employ every ounce of my personal charm and magnetism, my diplomacy and flawless tact. However, I am now pleased to report that my untiring efforts were crowned with success.”

Upon hearing and writing all this down, the secretary asked, “Sir, is that ‘CROWtation’ marks on that last paragraph?”

An ant climbed on an elephant’s back and asked for a ride over a bridge. After they had crossed, the ant exclaimed, “My, but didn’t we shake that bridge!”

E.C. McKenzie said it well, “Few people need voice lessons to sing their own praises.” Paul, under God’s inspiration said it best, “*Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.*” (1 Corinthians 1:31)

Scripture makes clear there is a right type of boasting and there is a wrong type. The Bible also makes clear that you and I are quick reads when it comes to the wrong type. In other words, we’ve learned the fine art of patting ourselves on the back and thus the title.

Purpose: to examine the Biblical right and wrong about boasting

I WRONG Types of Boasting

A. Boasting of That Which is False

- two ways this can be illustrated:

1. The making of claims which is the product of inflamed imaginations:

- a. there are numerous illustrations of this in modern times... e.g. false claims in advertising...
 - b. Illus. – story told of man going through job interview – “One reference says you have problems with exaggerating and embellishing.” “Yes, I’ve shed millions of barrels of tears over this matter.”
 - c. simply put this is lying... Illus. – Federal Trade Commission ruled that a college in Ohio would “cease and desist.” Upon investigation this was a college with no student body, faculty, campus, or curriculum, but offered numerous college degrees.
- ##### **2. Painting one’s past worse than it really was in order to have a “testimony” is false.**
- a. remember as a young man hearing “testimonies” from youth who had horrendous pasts... made me think as if I had nothing to share...
 - b. to exaggerate evil deeds is to trifle with truth and to make light of sin...

B. Boasting of That Which is True

- Proverbs 25:14 “*Like clouds and wind without rain is a man who boasts of his gifts falsely.*”

1. Boasting of some accomplishment, knowledge or experience which is a figment of one’s imagination but then can be thought to be real:

- a. how many non-Christians think they have a good standing with God because of their “moral life” or “good works”?...
- b. Isaiah 64:6a “*For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment...*”
- c. Pharisees (Luke 18:11-12) and the elder brother (Luke 15:29) examples of those who are self-deceived through their self-righteousness...
- d. how many today boast of treating neighbors right, attending church, giving to charities etc. and by doing so EARN ACCEPTANCE before God, depending on their righteousness?...

2. Christians are often deceived as to the state of their Christian progress/maturity:

- a. spiritually deceived is one who thinks having received grace, there is nothing left...
- b. the more we grow in holiness the greater realization of the need for further growth...

May we constantly examine our claims to see whether or not they are true!

C. Boasting of That Which Isn't Worthy

- boasting of things we know to be untrue is lying. Boasting of things not known to be untrue is self-deception. Boasting of things that may be true but not worthy of glory is pride:
- 1. Many glory in education..., reason..., intellect... Note: none of these will effect salvation!
 - wisdom of the world is foolishness with God.
- 2. We boast of that on which we place greatest importance and value...
- 3. We boast because we often overrate temporary matters and place too much dependence upon them
- 4. Illus. – Goliath boasted much and promptly came to a humiliating end... Nebuchadnezzar boasted of much and also came to humiliating end... Naaman told to dip in Jordan 7 times = “*But Naaman was furious and went away and said, ‘Behold I thought...’*” (2 Kings 5:11).

D. Boasting of That Which is Future

- Proverbs 27:1 “*Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.*”
- 1. How many put off the gift of God’s grace because they think they have plenty of time?
 - a. to say, “I’ll think over the gospel’s claims later.” Is presumptuous at the very least...
 - b. Jesus told of a wealthy farmer (Luke 12:16-21) “*...I’ll build bigger barns... ‘Soul you have it made, eat, drink and be merry.’ You fool! Tonight your soul will be required.*”
- 2. James 4:13-16 warns of such presumptuous planning...
- 3. What about vaunting/bragging about our future faithfulness – case in point: Peter boasting about not denying the Lord... willing even to die for Him...!
 - better to keep such to an absolute minimum and take heed lest we miserably fail!

Such is a quick summary to wrong types of boasting.

II RIGHT Types of Boasting

- our text cuts to the point = if we’re going to glory at all it better be in the Lord = His righteousness, goodness, judgment, patience and all other attributes.

A. Proper Boasting Examples

1. Joseph – when summoned from prison to interpret Pharaoh’s dream (Genesis 41:16) = “*...It is not in me; God will give Pharaoh a favorable answer.*”
 - i.e. Joseph gave God the glory and refused any credit.
2. David before Saul and Israel’s army (1 Samuel 17:37) “*The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of the Philistine.*”
3. When Paul boasted of his infirmities and sufferings it was strictly for the glory of God!

B. Man Was Made to Boast (for God’s Glory Alone)

1. If boasting is to glorify self, this type of boasting will always be wrong...
2. Conversely, if the basic motive is to boast of God = such is the very reason for life!
3. Psalm 34:2 “*My soul shall make its boast in the Lord.*”
4. Psalm 44:8 “*In God we have boasted all day long, and we will give thanks to Your name forever.*”
5. Illus. – almost a century and half ago lived a famous man who was an outstanding portrait painter, artist, and sculptor. He also wrote hundreds of published articles. For years was a college professor. He was known for years as the “father of American photography.” Any idea of whom I speak? Last but not least, he invented the telegraph. His name? -- Samuel F.B. Morse. When Morse was nearing his death, telegraphers of the US and Canada chipped in and had a statue made in his honor. They unveiled the statue with over 2,000 in attendance. This crowd watched as Morse sent his final message of thanks over the wire. The crowd cheered wildly and the man who invented the telegraph signed the message simply, S.F.B. Morse.” Now Morse could have easily said, “Look at me! I’m the King of the World! Look what I did...” But in the hour of victory, do you know what the message is that Morse signed and sent? “Glory to God in the highest, on earth, peace, good will toward men.”

Conclusion: The usual items in which men boast are temporary and can flit away in a moment's notice – wealth, prestige, wisdom of the world... you name it! Our Lord, however is eternal and those linked to Him and His purposes can glory in Him and in His salvation for these are eternal matters.

Because of this, brethren, may we say with Paul, "*But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.*" (Galatians 6:14)

WHEN I SURVEY THE WONDROUS CROSS

When I survey the wondrous Cross,
On which the Prince of glory died.
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast.
Save in the death of Christ my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.