

Boast

Good Friday 2017

MPS: Jesus Christ is the one boast for the Christian in all of life.

OBJ: Every Christian can refine their boast in Christ's cross through four questions.

But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Galatians 6:14

INTRO We gather tonight to boast in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. One man asked, "why do they call it good Friday? The Lord died on this day." His friend paused and responded, "what would you call what Jesus did for you on the cross?" The man replied, "good!" **Good Friday is the greatest good we could imagine, when all that was against us was removed so the One who is for us could bring us into God's presence.**

Paul sets our entire lives as Christians in the reality of good Friday with Galatians 6:14. He says that Good Friday is SO good that Christians live our whole lives in its goodness. **All the Christian life is boasting only in the cross of Jesus Christ.**

Consider what "boast" means. Most people have some understanding of "boast". Boast means to display or proclaim publicly (and ostentatiously) a satisfied contentment with one's own or another's achievements. Boast includes words, but is about more than just words, it includes how you live. **Boast is not just about what you say, but about what you believe so much that you are willing to live it out, regardless of what it costs you.**

The cross of Jesus Christ is the Christian's only boast for the same reason this day is labeled "good", because without it we know no real good. Jesus died on the cross in my place as a sacrifice for sin to appease the wrath of God. I am the guilty one. He was the perfect, innocent One. I owed a debt I could not pay. He paid a debt He did not owe. I was condemned guilty of sin and sentenced to death. Jesus stood in my place and died for me. **The cross of Jesus Christ is my death that I did not die to take care of everything in me that stole all good from me, so that I could live as Jesus gave me life.**

The Christian's only boast is the accomplishment of Jesus on the cross. Think about this for a moment. It doesn't mean that the cross is all we talk about, or live out. But, that in all we talk about and live out, we do in light of the cross. When we consider what Jesus did for us on the cross, we have nothing else to boast in because we could not do what Jesus did. **BOASTing** in the cross begins with understanding **WHAT** the cross means for us. Tim Keller recently stated, "When you get the doctrine of the cross wrong, you become Satan's missionary."¹ Boasting about the wrong things is wrong for obvious reasons. But, a wrong boast about the right thing sends a wrong message, too. There is plenty of wrong boasting in our day. **Good Friday reminds us of what must inform all of and our only boasting in this life, the cross of Jesus Christ.**

When we BOAST in the cross, Paul says that the world is dead to me and we are dead to the world. He's saying that the world's influence, values, morals, philosophies and ideologies holds no allure for us, and no allure in us. When we consider this effect of Jesus' cross on us, we must look more deeply into our lives to consider if this is true in order to know whether our boast is **ONLY** in the cross.

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TRANS So, the question becomes, "**is the world dead to you and in you?**" If, when and where you hold love for the world and the world holds allure to you, you cannot live by boasting in Jesus' cross. Rather, you scorn it through your life by settling for a lesser love. You may "speak" a boast of Christ, but your life demonstrates friendship with the world. And, friendship with the world is enmity toward God. **James4:4 You cannot boast in the cross of Christ as long as the world is alluring you or living in you.**

¹ Tim Keller, The Gospel Coalition 2017 sermon.

Tonight I want us to spend time at the cross and ask Holy Spirit to search our hearts and purify our boast. [IF Good Friday is truly good to us, then it's good will be enough for us. Let us boast in nothing, save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.](#)

OBJ: When our boast is ONLY in the cross of Jesus Christ, there are [four areas of life](#) in which we will live by faith alone in the cross alone AS our Boast. I want to introduce each are, then lead us to individually reflect on [four Questions to refine my BOAST in the Cross of Jesus Christ](#).

AREA #1: We boast in the cross when we source our [Identity](#) in the truth of Jesus.

When we talk about our Identity, we mean who we believe ourselves to be that determines our worth or value as a person, and what we find that worth or value in. The world tries to tell us what we should be, what and how we should think, who is most important, how we find our significance in life, and many other things about life. It tells us, "If you want to matter, you must impress the right people. If you want to be important you hold the right position. If you want others to respect you must achieve the right things. If you want to be loved you must prove yourself as loveable." [The world's source of identity always leads to self-destruction.](#)

God's Word says that our identity, our value and worth, rests in this; God loves us more than we could possible imagine or comprehend, and He accepts us just as we are. We could not improve ourselves enough to satisfy Him, but we do not have to because of the cross. The cross of Christ tells us that the whole of our identity is NOT determined by us, but by God's love for us. God bestows an unlimited and immeasurable value and worth upon us because He loves us. [When we source our identity in Jesus' cross we rest in this truth, that our life is valuable because God poured out His love upon us.](#)

Ask yourself: [Do I live as if my life only has value when I comply with what the world says should be valued or when I represent what the world says should be true of me? OR, Do I treasure the love of Christ for me as my first value?](#)

AREA #2: We boast in the cross when we find our [Security](#) in God's love displayed through Jesus Christ.

We all want to feel some sense of security in life. When we feel secure, we sense that our lives are on a solid foundation. Now, we all differ on how we define a "solid foundation", that's for sure. But no one lives without trying to build their lives on something that can sustain and protect their livelihood.

Jesus tells the parable of two men who built homes, one on the rock and one on sand. When the storms came only remained. Security requires us to consider what we build into our lives and put around our lives, to feel secure. A big and growing bank account, the right friends, the right clothes, car, or house can all tempt us to believe we have security, but any of those are just one storm away from total destruction. [Boasting in the cross to find our security means we entrust our well-being to nothing above, beyond or outside of God's will for our life through the saving work of Jesus Christ and the leading of Holy Spirit through His Word.](#)

Ask yourself: [Do I feel secure when my life is full of all that the world affords or offers me? Or, Do I rest in God's will and plan for my life, knowing He makes it all serve His purposes?](#)

AREA #3: We boast in the cross when we recognize that every [Provision](#) in life comes from God through faith in Jesus Christ.

One key aspect of security includes this third area, the provision for life. We ask, "[Will we have enough? Will I have the right "thing"?](#)" Jesus says that worry and anxiety can do nothing to help us, but only steals what really matters from us. Paul goes on to tell us that what really matters is that we learn contentment that grows gratitude and turns into praise. Contentment in what we have that brings joys to life and who we are. [Boasting means we trust what God gives us "over and above", and "altogether more glorious and good" than all we could gather and achieve in this world by learning contentment with those things and in our situation.](#)

ILLUS A sign in a restaurant that tells the story of the high-power executive who told the Caribbean boatman how to make his life happy.

Ask yourself: Do I trust what God has for me more than and instead of what I can grab hold of or attain in this world? OR, Do I trust what God provides for me, in the way and with the measure He gives it to me, so that I grow gratitude and worship for Jesus?

AREA #4: We boast in the cross when we **Delight** in God's glory through the righteous, peace, joy and pleasures that He gives through obedience.

Delight means that we love NOTHING like you love Jesus, neither in savoring in the heart, serving with the hands, speaking with the tongue, seeing with the eye or following in action. Paul states, *For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,* **Romans 7:22** Paul's words direct our hearts to consider our own delights.

Q? When was the last time you truly delighted in God's Word, when your heart overflowed with the presence of God because of what His Word said?

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. **Psalm 1:1-2**

Boasting in the cross of Christ means we delight in God's Word as His source of life-giving wisdom.

I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart. **Psalm 40:8**

Q? When was the last time and how often are you wrenched in your heart to stop, re-read, pour over, pray through and labor in a verse, phrase or word to pray, "O Lord, I want THIS to be true of me. I want to know you so that this is normal for me."?

If you law had not been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction. **Psalm 119:92**

Q? When was the last time you read God's Word and it struck your heart how God's wisdom held you through a hard time, guided you through a difficult decision, comforted you in deep hurt?

Ask yourself: Do I delight in that which glorifies God above all else, and more than that which glorifies me? OR, Do I take glory in self-pleasure and personal accomplishment as my first desire?

CLOSE **Where is your BOAST tonight?**

Boasting in the cross of Christ re-orient's our identity, security, provision and delight because it provides a new source for our life. Timothy George explains, "To be crucified to the world, then, means to walk in the light, to bear the fruit of the Spirit, and to live in the freedom with which Christ has set us free."² **We boast in the cross when we acknowledge that nothing in this world compares to all that Christ has accomplished for us and all that He has given to us.**

Every time we boast in the wrong thing, it's always because we boast in something other than Christ. The cross makes sense of everything, rights any wrong and makes beautiful every wound, hurt and scar for your good and joy, for strength to stand against anything. **Life will never make sense in a way that brings only good to you and glory to God, until you see it all through the cross of Jesus Christ.**

"Far be it from me", Paul begins. Paul's point is that it is never a matter of how much boasting in the world is allowed, but "how far from it do you live?" **"FAR" from the world's hope is the measure of the Christian life.**

Good Friday confronts us to ask of our lives:

Q? Have I separated myself from worldliness, from valuing what the world says is of value, from what the world says is beautiful, from what the world rewards me with and fills me with?

Q? Have I separated myself from worldliness, or am I still living in close proximity?

Q? How "far" am I from boasting in something other than Jesus?

² Timothy George, [Galatians](#), vol. 30, The New American Commentary, 437-438.