

Let Him Boast

by H.J. Vine

The sermon emphasizes the importance of boasting in the Lord, rather than in the world or in ourselves, and encourages us to find our strength and confidence in Him.

Scripture: Jeremiah 9:23, Acts 15:38, 1 Corinthians 1:31, Ephesians 2:13, 1 Timothy 1:17

Topics: "Boasting In God", "Humility In Christ"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the importance of boasting in the Lord rather than in worldly achievements, assemblies, or ourselves. He emphasizes that God chooses the despised of the world to showcase His wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption through Christ, so that no one may boast in His presence. The sermon highlights the transformation brought about by God's grace, leading individuals like Paul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to boast in the Lord despite their past shortcomings and imperfections.

Transcript

1 Corinthians 1:31, N.Tr.

In what does this scripture ask us to boast? Certainly not in the state of the world! Its present condition has caused large numbers to abandon their former boastings as to its progress. Nor do the inspired words above quoted encourage us to boast in the assemblies, for the Spirit has pictured their downgrade state for us in Revelation 2 and 3 just as it is seen today. Much less are we exhorted to glory in ourselves, either naturally or spiritually. After showing that God's way is to choose the despised of this world and set them in Christ, who is their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, the context tells us that He has thus acted so that no flesh should boast in His presence, but according as it is written, He that boasts, let him boast in the Lord.

God has made Him everything to us, therefore our boasting is to be in Him. This citation is from Jeremiah, who, when he spake of the sad state of Israel and its leaders, said, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glories glory in this, that he understandeth and knows Me, that I am the Lord" (9:23-24).

Worldliness and worldly wisdom were dangers to the saints at Corinth; therefore the Apostle shows them that it was the worldly wise, the princes of this age, that crucified the Lord of glory; and He is the hidden wisdom of God, the One who is made wisdom to us who are in Christ Jesus. So he says, "If any one thinks

himself to be wise among you in this world, let him become foolish that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; for it is written, He takes the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knows the reasonings of the wise that they are vain. So let no one boast in men" (1 Cor. 3:18, 21). Why? Because we have the Lord Himself whom men crucified to boast in; and we belong to Him. And since we are His, the Apostle adds, "All things are ours. Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

The way of the Lord is perfect, and this is the way that He has taken to make Christ everything to us. It is the right way and the best way, because it is His way; and surely the Lord is justified in taking His own way--the way that pleases Him. It may be that many neither understand nor appreciate this faultless way of divine grace, for we should surely see and hear more boasting in the Lord if they did. Nevertheless, God graciously saves and sets the soul free by the truth, so that our blessed Lord might be gloried in. Christ who was crucified is God's power and God's wisdom, and He takes up those who are little thought of to make Christ their wisdom and glory. Our prosperity and peace and joy are therefore to be found in this way: and since it is the way of the Lord, they can be found in none other. Therefore let him that boasts, boast in the Lord.

"Yea, boast in Him, our living Lord,

Whose glory fills our sight;

In Him whom men once crucified,

We'd find our great delight."

It was the grace and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ which had brought about the marvellous change in the apostle himself--bringing a proud self-righteous overbearing man to turn from self and the things of self to glory in the Lord--to count all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. In me, he said, that is in my flesh, good does not dwell. He, however, learned that all good and all excellency was in Him whom the world had rejected. He was now his sole commanding object. His heart had found in Christ that which made him to be "always rejoicing." "Mercy was shown to me," he wrote to Timothy, "that in me, the first, Jesus Christ might display the whole long-suffering, for a delineation of those about to believe on Him to eternal life." Christ had saved him, the chief of sinners, and his glad heart gloried in Him who had shown such grace to him; and he says, "Now to the King of the ages, the incorruptible, invisible, only God, HONOUR AND GLORY TO THE AGES OF AGES. AMEN" (1 Tim. 1:17, N.Tr.). Zealous of the law he had been a persecutor of Christ: saved by grace he now boasted in Him.

And the same grace took others up for the same end--Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and any of us who belong to Christ. The writer of the first gospel knew this well, for when he set out to write the history of the King he mentioned in the genealogy of chapter 1 four women who could but be "debtors to grace alone" as placed in such regal associations. And Matthew himself had great reason to glory in the Lord--in the King of Israel; for, as a farmer of taxes for the Romans, he would be considered a lawless person by the leaders of the nation of Israel, and beneath their notice. Yet the true Head of the nation graciously called Levi. Such is the way of divine grace. With nothing to boast of in himself, and considered disloyal, he is used to give us the loyal and beautiful gospel of Israel's King.

Mark, too, must have specially entered into the theme which the Spirit inspired him to write of, on the same principle of grace. His is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Servant. In the Acts Mark is

distinguished as the one who turned back from the path of service, and left Paul and Barnabas. Afterwards, "Paul thought it not well to take with them him who had abandoned them, going back from Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work" (Acts 15:38). When taken up again by God for the service of giving us the gospel of the perfect Workman, how his heart would glory in Him whose faithful service was such a contrast to his own. The Spirit used him to unfold this in a most striking manner.

Luke is another blessed example. With what God-given elegance and beauty does his pen trace for us the Man of all perfection here upon the earth--the Man amongst men! And why should Luke be thus honoured of God for this wonderful service? He was a gentile--the only gentile used by the Spirit to write in the holy pages of the inspired volume. The gentiles were called dogs, and heathen; and it is out of this mass of human imperfection, so despised by the Jews, that grace takes hold on one to show the perfection of Jesus as Man. And his Gospel specially illustrates the teaching of "the apostle to the gentiles." Well might Luke rejoice in the grace that had taken him up, and glory in the perfect Man of whom he said, He was filled with wisdom and God's grace was upon Him.

And lastly John. What a vessel of divine grace was he! His brother James and himself were called the sons of thunder. They were characterized by a strong sense of God's judgment against sin and rebellion. They could not brook even an apparent slight against divine authority. John forbid another, who cast out demons in the name of the Lord Jesus, because he did not keep the company of the disciples, and he received the Lord's correction forthwith. Both James and John were also rebuked for desiring the Lord to call down fire from heaven to consume the Samaritans who did not receive Him. "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," He said to them. But divine grace had its way, and John was moulded and mellowed, and brought to rest on the bosom of Jesus, the Son of the Father's love. Then with a depth of delight and glory which is unparalleled, he penned the gospel of the Word who was God.

Grace brought them all to glory in the Lord--to boast in Him! They had nothing in themselves to boast in, and the heart needs something, or rather some one--a worthy object; therefore He is the One provided for this purpose. He that glories in men is not wise; and he that boasteth in himself is a fool.

It is because there is so much of this that the very word boast sounds a little out of place at first; but it is that which the Spirit of Truth has used for our edification, and we do well to seize hold of the forcefulness and healthfulness of it as so used--"Let him that boasts, boast in the Lord." We have good reason to do so. We were far from God once, but now in Christ Jesus we are become nigh. The judgment due to our sins would have sunk us to eternal depths of woe, but Christ bore our sins and their judgment away on the cross, and has secured an eternal redemption and an eternal inheritance in glory for us. We were under the authority of darkness even when ignorant of it, but our Lord Jesus Christ went into death to overthrow his power and deliver us, and we are now translated into the kingdom of the Son of the Father's love, who is the image of the invisible God. Strangers once to the rich promises of grace, we are now fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the Corner-stone. We were once darkness, but now light in the Lord--in Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour--in Him who is now exalted to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, who is Lord over all. Yes, we have indeed good cause to boast in Him.

Rejoice! O my soul, in thy gracious and glorious Redeemer! Art thou asked, What wisdom hast thou for the service of God?--Where is it found? Answer by pointing to Him who is the wisdom of God! Do they inquire of thee as to the righteousness which is thine for His holy Presence? Point again to Him who ever

lives before His face! And should any one question the holiness and sanctification which thou rejoicest in, turn the questioner again to thy Lord and Saviour! Yea, and still point to Him should a question ever be raised as to the full and eternal redemption which is thine through grace divine! Delight thyself, O thou soul of mine, in the unmeasured wealth of heavenly favour which is declared to be ours, in the blessed words of the Spirit of Truth, "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who has been made to us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification (or holiness), and redemption; that according as it is written, He that boasts, let Him boast in the Lord."

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