

“The Message of the Cross” - Beauty or Beast 6:56

CS Lewis said, "Brides are the most beautiful thing on this earth." And the bride of Christ is more beautiful than the fairest of them all." Almost all of us would agree with that first sentence. I agree ... this is my bride (27) - Fran.

Pic of Fran - There is something about brides - they do radiate and exude beauty. Why? Here is a Top 10 list from brides: 10) I spent more time to look good on this day than any other day I had been alive. 9) I had a great photographer, 8) I physically trained to look good in my dress and pictures. 7) I was young. 6) I was excited about my honeymoon. 5) I believed I would never be alone again. 4) I was happy. 3) I spent a lot of money to look good. 2) I was full of hope. 1) I was in love.

That is a powerful and “interesting” list. But what about the bride of Christ - do you believe she is the most beautiful bride of all? 1st - So, we are all on the same page - the Bride of Christ is the capital C church - **all of those across the world who have placed their faith in the person and work of Jesus to make them right with God and bring them into relationship with God. What makes us beautiful?** There is one thing no one said in the top 10 - **the groom.** That would be really chauvinistic and crazy to say in our world. But the simple - yet profound truth of the church - Christ's bride - is our beauty comes from our groom. Jesus is the head of the church - another way to say this. He is a part of us - the most significant part us. And, we are a part of him. That means - what makes us attractive to God and others is Jesus. Any ... and every part of our beauty is because of Jesus. He is the BEAUTIFUL ONE. That's crazy - we somehow reflect, or image the beauty of Christ as His bride. But as we are going to see all thru these passages in I Corinthians - we can also give a false, ugly or beastly image of God. **Beauty/Beast**

Here is the BIG IDEA we want to focus on today as we start talking about how we the church reflect the beauty of Christ: **The “Bride of Christ” is most beautiful - when we live in the humble boast of the cross.**

2 thoughts we are asking God to help us embrace & be moved by today: **beauty** and **humble boast** in the cross.

01. What about the cross of Jesus - makes us beautiful?

Guys - thinking about being beautiful can be awkward (for ladies too). Beauty - is not something we usually possess on our own, but we can be a part of something beautiful: a family, a restoration project, a relationship, a picture of you on a mountain or ocean. As part of the body - the bride - we can be a part of reflecting his beauty. We either reflect Jesus as beauty or beast. Let's ask God to help us embrace and be moved to reflect his beauty today.

02. How do we live in “the humble boast of the cross of Jesus?” 7:00

01. What about the cross of Jesus - makes us beautiful?

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **Ouch, right from the top God is outing us.**

Ever been outted? Sure you have! To be outted means people discover or we discover - we aren't as wise or strong as we have led others to believe or allowed them to believe.

- When people out us, or our mistakes out us, or our weakness or ignorance outs us - we don't like it!

Will @ 11 - “You're lost aren't you?” Me - Not really. Will - “You are going to say, we are not lost soldier, we're in France. But that means you really don't know where we are you - do you dad.” That was a line from Band of Bros when a soldier and the hero of the story Lt Winters first get dropped into France on D-Day way off course and they are lost. Will knew that line meant - yeah, we are lost, but we will figure this out - maybe. The significance of this day - it was the beginning of Will realizing or better yet, me realizing, that Will realized - I didn't always know everything. At some point - Mom, Dad - you are like the Wizard of Oz - all knowing. And then, the curtain get's pulled back and you are just some old man/woman behind the curtain. This happens to every parent and that's normal for our kids to discover we are not a god (wise & powerful). The question is are we outted or do you lead your kids to see this? Because when we are truly outted (not all that) - this is painful and we feel - shame, ugly.

When our mistakes in running our business outs us as less than wise - we feel stupid, foolish.

When our sin hurts others & damages relationships - we are outted as less than wise - we feel really dumb.

When we can't seem to bounce back from the hurt we've caused or endured - we feel weak, fragile - and when we can't fix the relationship - we feel powerless. We feel more like a beast than a part of something beautiful.

- Our response - is to cover ourselves.

We hide. We disappear from our friends or believers hoping the shame will fall off us. We lie. Hoping to avoid being outted even more. We exaggerate. Which is lying but it feels so much better than a straight lie. It sounds like, “I'm doing ok - he and I will work this out.” When you know you are not ok and things between you are a wreck.

We deflect. How's business – good news I've been looking for a new career for a while. Did I tell you about – **11:00**
Ultimately – we cover ourselves bc we are ashamed of being found out to be a fool or weak.

When was the last time you did that something that made you feel like a complete fool – not a little one, but where shame & guilt was like a stink you just couldn't get off - no matter how you hid, lied, or deflected?

When we cover our weakness our foolishness – we do so because we feel ugly, bad, or hopeless.

Which is what shame does to us – defines us as ugly, distorted, bad, hopeless all over us.

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. **27 But God** chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;

What has God said in this passage is the most foolish thing according to the world?

What has God said in this passage is the most weak thing according to the world?

28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, What is low and despised in this world?

even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. What did God choose to truly out us and show us our great need for Him? Did God use the wise or strong people of this world to out you? No. Did God use your own mistakes and sin? Not really – all those things do help us see we are not “wise or strong”. But remember our response to all those things – we cover ourselves. What did God use?

18 For the **word of the cross is folly!!!**- to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. What did God choose to completely out us – Jesus on the cross. The same cross that is foolishness to the world

19 For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”

20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ... 23 but we preach Christ crucified, ...

- The cross completely outs us – as a fool, as weak.

- Jesus, **became low and despised**, taking the shame and guilt for our rebellious wisdom & power.

28 God chose what is low and despised in the world,

Jesus, Almighty Son of GOD, left the beauty and splendor of heaven and came to this earth as a peasant.

He lived on this earth – despised by the powerful and the wise. Not just them – He was rejected by all.

He then was arrested and charged to be a “fool” – a blasphemer – one speaking as if he was God.

He was then crucified – beaten and hung on a cross – a fool – “one to be seen and shamed as a fool.” - Jews

His body – weakened by the punishment (for us, for our rebellion) – died.

Jesus on the cross became our foolishness, our weakness – he took our place as the fool, the weak. (time)

You and I can't stand before the cross and see holy God in our place – and not see we have been completely outted!

We are guilty of being the fool – who does not need or want our creator, savior God in our wisdom.

BUT GOD ... doesn't just out us at the cross – He covers us! This is what makes the gospel, good news! Soak this in!

28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, ... 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him **you are in** Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

- The cross completely covers us – with the wisdom and power of God Himself. (Baptism a pic)

30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

Through the cross – we are united with Jesus. **We are one: the church, he is head / the bride, he is groom.**

- **Our rebellious soul, that presented itself in foolishness and weakness ...**

- * **has been forgiven / redeemed by the very presence of Jesus.** redemption: bought by Jesus, in Jesus

- **Our soul is now being restored by the very presence of Jesus ...** sanctification: done by Jesus, in Jesus

- * **Our foolishness – is covered by & being transformed into wisdom by the very presence of Jesus.**

- * **Our weakness – is covered by and being transformed into power by the very presence of Jesus.**

Mercy is great when we have been found out! Ever tasted that? Fran at the beginning of our marriage. But she couldn't cover, take my shame and transform it. Mercy yes – cover no. God doesn't just love us or have mercy on us – He covers us at his cost – by the very presence of Jesus. **No, more do you have to cover yourself.**

The wisdom of the cross – that seems like foolishness to the world – covers our foolishness.

The power of the cross – that seems like weakness to the world – covers our weakness.

24:00

What makes the Bride, the Church – most beautiful – is our message – the cross of Jesus – JESUS!

You in Christ – oh, may we embrace this and be moved to live in the humble boast in the cross of Jesus.

02. How do we live in the humble boast of the cross of Jesus?

- Gospel Circle (*Speaking of Jesus – engaging others with the gospel in day to day life.*)
- The Seven

1) – What do we mean – live in the humble boast of the cross and then practically - How?

I can boast in Jesus, *but not humbly boast.* (*When I talk of Jesus with arrogance – or just talk and don't listen – am I speaking of the same Jesus who walked this earth and lives at the right hand of God today? No!*)

I can appear humble & never boast in Jesus. *I can be quiet but rarely does the Jesus of the cross become my boast. This is usually a false humility that is driven by fear of people. Confession – I boast here, but not much there>.*

Humble = kind, gracious: *Jesus displayed this as power under control*

- To live in the humble boast of the cross means - with kindness and grace, allow the cross to be the greatest thing that impacts your life and stories.

- Why humbly “with kindness and grace”?

19 For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,

* *Outted at the cross – we can't condemn and we can be patient and let the Spirit out others at the cross.*

30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom ..

* *Because you have been covered at the cost of Jesus' – you are moved to tell others of His covering love and love them as Jesus loves us – at our cost. (Which means you may be thought of as foolish or weak.)*

This humility only comes from Jesus – the humble one – who is now living in us – united with us.

When was the last time you were a humble fool - like Jesus? Scripture says this is what Jesus is.

- Why “in the cross”?

* *Because only the cross has the power and wisdom to out the wisest and strongest. Do you believe this?*

Confession - I often fear the wise and strong are wiser and stronger than me, and even Jesus and his cross.

25 For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

* *Because only the cross can cover the weak and foolish who know they are but don't believe they could ever be anything but – a fool or weak.*

* *Do you believe the power of the cross is greater than the brokenness of your friend, family member, neighbor? Is God's power in the cross – greater than their strength or mess they have made of their life?*

- What do we mean by “allow the cross to be the greatest thing that impacts your life & stories”?

31 so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”

* Boast – to brag, exalt, or sing the praises of something or someone publicly.

* You and I boast in what we deem to be the “greatest”. *Our kids, our team, a specific achievement (marathon, starting a business/ministry, reconciling a relationship).* These boasts – become our story.

* Your “life story” – has a macro story (*what has most impacted your story*) and micro stories (*the reoccurring stories that prove what has most impacted your story*). What do you boast in? What do your micro stories say is the most impactful in your life? *Amway was Darren's boast – “changed my life.”*

* As Jesus/cross starts to be the greatest impact in you life – he will be echoed in the stories of your life.

- Gospel Circle / 7 *Why are we serving, what is changing in us, who is changing us, the struggle, the joy, the pain, the gospel – Jesus. We are asking God to help move us further into this humble boast – by the 7.*

30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, ...

- Living in the humble boast of the cross of Jesus means – we enjoy the presence of God and intentionally let the cross echo thru the stories of our life.

* *We enjoy the presence of God – knowing he is covering and changing us to reflect his beauty.*

* *When the cross shows us we are boasting in other things in the micro stories of our life – we repent.*

* *When the cross shows us we are arrogantly boasting in Jesus, repent. **condemning, lecturing, not listening***

* *Live with intentionality – enjoying God, echoing the cross. (The 7 – Brandon)*

Romans 10:15 (NLT) “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”

We – the bride of Christ - are most beautiful when we live in the humble boast of the cross.

Response:

Lead in Repentance

- *Lord, we often are humble – but silent about you. Forgive us!*
- *Lord, we can boast in you – and not be humble. Forgive us!*
- *Lord, we want to live in the humble boast of the cross – and let our Jesus, the Jesus of the cross and empty tomb echo thru the stories of our life – because he is beautiful – our wisdom and power. In Him we are covered in his wisdom and power. May we be a humble fool for.*

Blessing: Isaiah 52:7