

Boasting in what really matters

Galatians 6:6-18

Today we are going to finish the book of Galatians. However, before I get started, I would like to take this opportunity to say a special word of welcome to my favorite son, Jon and my favorite future daughter-in-law, Ines. In the providence of God, Nancy and I only have 2 children. Jon, our only son and his older sister Sarah. Thus, I have always proclaimed Jon as my favorite son and Sarah as my favorite daughter. And just so that I would not get confused, thus far I have only one granddaughter Hayden and one grandson Ben. And yes, I have only one wife Nancy. All are my favorite son, daughter, granddaughter, grandson and wife. God has chosen to give a simple life to his simple servant. And as if God had not blessed me enough with my special guests and your gracious presence, God has chosen to enhance my delight by adding Steve and his wonderful family to our gathering this morning. Welcome everyone! Let's ask our gracious Heavenly Father to direct our hearts and minds to the passage we are to study this morning. **PRAYER.**

Now for the task at hand. If you will turn in your bibles or favorite electronic device, to Galatians 6:6-18 we will begin by reading the passage. **READ THE PASSAGE.**

Let us consider 3 main topics –

1. Sowing and Reaping – Explained and Applied 6-10
2. Boasting in the Flesh – Personal Gain/Heavenly Loss 11-13
3. Boasting in the Cross – Personal Loss/Heaven Gained 14-18

Sowing and Reaping – verse 6 to 10

One of the most common principals in the Bible is the principal of sowing and reaping. Since in biblical times most of society was agrarian, they were familiar with planting and harvesting. You plant various seeds, and you harvest mature plants of that seed. You do not plant wheat and harvest potatoes. You do not get peaches from an apple tree. What you plant you harvest. Jesus often used this principle in his parables. As an example, in Matthew 13:24-29 and 36-43 Jesus teaches the people a parable referred to as the parable of the weeds. In this parable 2 types of seeds are sown, and they mature to be just as they were sown. However, Jesus used this parable to teach a spiritual lesson. One day the weeds and the wheat will be harvested and separated. The weeds, representing the sons of the evil one, are judged and burned. The wheat, representing the righteous, will shine in the kingdom of their Father. Paul will use this familiar example to teach spiritual truth.

Sowing and Reaping – Explained verses 6-7

Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit

reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

God will not be deceived, and God will not be mocked. God is all knowing. In Psalm 139 we are reminded that God knows your thoughts and “Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether” and that before you were born God wrote in his book every day of your life. You cannot deceive the One who knows what you are going to say and do before you do it. And Hebrews 4:13 says “And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” God knows you and you will be held accountable for your actions. All of us, the bible tells us, have sinned and fall short of God’s glory. However, God is not only all knowing, but He is also merciful. In 2Peter 3:3-10 the word of God says “knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep. All things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation.” For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and the earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgement and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.” The all-knowing God who cannot be deceived wishes that all should repent of their sin and by grace through faith receive the gift of salvation. God loves you, and sent Jesus to die on the cross, to satisfy the righteous payment for your sin. He died so that you did not have to pay the price for own sin. This is truly good news. 2Corinthians 5:21 says “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” We will deal in more detail about the cross in later verses, however you must understand that apart from your embracing by grace through faith Jesus as your savior, you remain a scoffer, following your own sinful desires as Peter described earlier and the blessing of Heaven is not reserved for you. To the wise of this world, the mercy and grace of God displayed on the cross is foolishness. But to those of us who have by faith embraced the grace extended to us through the work of Christ on the cross, it is eternal life, salvation. I want you to know the love of God, however if you choose otherwise, be warned, God will not be deceived or mocked.

We must sow wisely. This passage gives us two sowing options; either to the flesh which reaps corruption or to the Spirit which reaps eternal life. In Chapter 5 Paul listed the works of the flesh. It is not a pretty list, and these activities lead to death. Also, in Chapter 5 Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit which are..... love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These lead to eternal life. So, we are encouraged to walk by the Spirit, live by the Spirit and keep in step with the Spirit and be led by the Spirit to avoid the works of the flesh. Sow wisely.

Finally, the admonition is to not grow weary in doing good. Learn to lean on the Lord. Look at Matthew 11:28-30 “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Do not grow weary. Willingly yoke yourself to Jesus and learn His ways and find rest.

Sowing and Reaping – Applied verse 6 and 10

Paul gives us 2 examples of sowing to the Spirit. Verse 6 encourages us to provide for those who teach. The modern-day application of this verse is to provide for the needs of the full/part time pastoral staff. In this matter you need no further encouragement. Your faithful giving is more than supplying the needs of Dave and Joe. Thank you for your faithfulness in this matter. Verse 10 encourages us to sow goodness towards those outside the church and especially to those inside the body of believers. My exhortation would be that you would abound more and more in this area. Be a hilarious Sower of the goodness of God with everyone you come in contact.

Boasting in the Flesh – Personal Gain/Heavenly Loss verses 11-13

See with what large letters I am writing you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh who would force you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh.

As Paul heads to the finish line in Galatians, he wants to remind the church of Galatia one more time about the danger of those who would have them become circumcised as a means of adding works to the finished work of the cross. Paul exposes their real motive. It is to boast in the flesh of the Galatians. These false teachers wanted the Galatians to follow Jewish ceremonial rituals in addition to believing in the saving work of Jesus on the cross. It is the age-old lie of the evil one that works must be added to the completed work of Christ on the cross to attain salvation. Today it looks like believe in Jesus Christ and you must be baptized into our church or speak in tongues or whatever else. Should we follow the moral laws of the Old Testament? Absolutely, but not to attain salvation but rather in obedience to how God wants us to live our lives. The 10 Commandments are still valid, however in keeping them we cannot attain salvation, for no one can keep the moral law perfectly. Thus, God intervened at the cross on our behalf. These false teachers wanted to boast in circumcision of the Gentiles and thump their chests in boasting in their so-called good work. But why would they want to do such a thing? “In order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ.” When one throws themselves at the foot of the cross for mercy, they are announcing to the world that all their righteousness is a filthy rag. That in exercising their faith in response to the grace extended to them at the cross that they bring zero to their salvation. They come empty handed and humbled. There is no boasting at the cross. To the world the cross is foolishness and offensive. How dare you say that I am not good enough on my own to merit heaven! Yet to the repentant sinner, the cross is their greatest boast. For these false teachers may have forced some to be

circumcised for personal gain, however their faith in Christ plus circumcision and following the ceremonial Jewish laws meant losing heaven. They believed a lie and it cost them their eternal soul. Boasting in the flesh, like sowing to the flesh, reaps death and corruption.

In what are you boasting? Is it your job? Could it be your family? How about your home or possessions? What is preventing you from boasting in the cross of Christ?

Boasting in the Cross – Personal Loss/ Heavenly Gain verses 14-1

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**. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but **a new creation**. And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen

Paul now turns his attention to the root of his boasting, the cross of Christ. While the false teachers wished to boast in their personal accomplishments, Paul wanted nothing to do with that. In Philippians 3:2-11 he writes “Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh – though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh. I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith – that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.” Paul’s boast was in the cross of Christ, for he had no basis other than the work of Jesus Christ to boast. For Paul, the world has been crucified to him. What does that mean? This language draws us back to chapter 2 verse 20 “I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Paul died to the ways of this world, the sowing to the flesh and reaping corruption. He exchanged his fruitless attempts to please God through works of self-righteousness for total surrender to the life of Christ lived through him. He now moved as God directed him and willingly submitted to the will of his Lord. He now sows to the Spirit and displays the fruit of the Spirit. The world rejected Paul’s boast in the cross and he bore the scars from beatings and stoning. The world will also reject your boasting in the cross, yet for those who God has chosen from the foundations of the world, you will find a receptive heart. God will use your crucified life to be a witness for Him in this dark world, just as

he did Paul. Paul was crucified to the world and the world to him. Paul willingly chose personal loss for Heavenly gain. What about you?

Would you describe yourself as one who has died to yourself and the world? What is keeping you from embracing the cross of Christ and living a life of being crucified with Christ?

I will leave you with one final thought. Matthew 16:24-26 "Then Jesus told his disciples. "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?"