



Introduction to Galatians 6:14

Sunday, June 4, 2017
Pastor Don Denyes

The sinfulness of the human heart can be seen in how many of us, if given the opportunity, would boast about ourselves before God. Some might boast in their involvement in religious activities—we think God ought to be pleased with the number of Bible studies we attend, or the fact that we never miss church. Others might boast in their service records—that God should be pleased with how much they “sacrifice” for others. Still others might boast in theological knowledge—believing that because they have greater insight into the Bible or theology that God is impressed with them. The reality of Galatians 6:14 ought to undo all of that in our hearts and minds.

The Apostle Paul was one of the most religious people who ever lived. He was one of the greatest Jews of his time. He perhaps sacrificed more than any mere human in the ways he suffered so that the message of the gospel might advance and others be saved. He definitely had more intimate knowledge of God than anyone as he himself was caught up into heaven and saw things that none of us could comprehend. Yet for him, it was not his religious resume, his service to others, or his theological credentials that gave him anything to say in the presence of God. Rather, it was the fact that Jesus died on the cross in his place that caused him to boast in God’s presence and in the presence of others.

Context

Galatians points out that the most dangerous things to our Christian lives are often not blatantly false, but only partially true. Or as another scholar put it, real wisdom is not discerning right from wrong, but discerning right from “almost right.” In Galatia, Jewish leaders had convinced the new Christians that circumcision was necessary in addition to Christ’s sacrifice in order to be right with God and a member of the covenant community. Paul vehemently opposed this idea and made sure that the cross stayed central.

Read and Reflect (*Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.*)

“When Boasting Is Beneficial”

Read Galatians 6:14

The Cross

1. Jesus died on it... the way of forgiveness

- Our great need – why the cross?
- His great love – revealed at the cross!

2. We died on it... the way of holiness

- Christ our substitute – died for us.
- Chris our representative – died with Him.

In the end... there is only one alternative before us. Either we boast in our own achievements, or we boast in His achievement on the cross. There is no other possibility!

Discuss

- 1) What kinds of things do we tend to boast about? (This could be something from your own life or something you've observed someone else doing.)

- 2) Over time, how does boasting about ourselves affect the way we think about God? How does it affect the way we think about other people?

- 3) Pastor Don mentioned that most people in our culture don't like to think of themselves as sinners who bring nothing to the table for salvation except the need to be saved. Why is that an unpopular view? What does that view require us to consider about ourselves?

- 4) Read Romans 5:1-11. In that passage, the same word translated "boast" in Galatians 6:14 is translated, "rejoice (v. 2, 3, 11). How does Romans 5 shed light on what it means to "boast" in the cross?

- 5) Read Mark 8:34. Boasting in the cross also manifests itself in putting our sinful, selfish nature to death on a daily basis. How have you done this in your Christian life? And how can we continue to encourage one another to make dying to self a regular practice?