

GLORYING IN THE CROSS
Galatians 6:14

Scripture Reading: Galatians 6:11-18.

Intro: One time as Spurgeon began to speak before a Communion Service, he started with these words:

We have nothing now to think of but the Lord. We come to Him that He may cause us to forget all others (Till He Come, p. 347).

He was referring to the purpose of the Lord's Supper which was first expressed by our Lord Himself: "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

The elements which we take, the bread and the cup, indicate that in our meditation upon the Lord we are to be most concerned about His death. The Apostle Paul made that clear when he wrote in 1 Cor. 11:26,

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

That is our purpose as we gather here tonight--to remember our Lord in His death. And so really any passage anywhere in the Bible which directs our attention to the death of Christ, is proper for us to consider at this time. I have chosen Galatians 6:14, and I trust that the Lord has led me in this decision.

We see, in the first place, that

I. THE APOSTLE PAUL GLORIED IN THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

Actually this verse is expressed as not only as a hope or great desire, but as a prayer. The words which have been translated, "God forbid," are the same words which Paul used in writing Romans which are also translated, "God forbid." But a literal translation is simply, "Let it not be." Probably the KJ translators recognized that this was a form of prayer, and so they made God the subject. It would mean, May God let it not be, or "God forbid."

Here in our text for this evening Paul was recognizing not only that man has a tendency to glory in something, but he has a tendency to glory in the wrong things. For example, in Gal. 5:26 we read these words:

Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Our sinful natures make us inclined to be ambitious for ourselves, or possibly for our children. It is easy for a college person to glory in his knowledge, or to glory in his

degrees, or to glory in the authority he has because of his knowledge. That, after all, is vain glory.

It is possible that we will glory in our possessions--our bank account, our home, our automobile or automobiles. This, too, is vain glory because they wear out, and they can be taken away from us so easily.

Thinking of the Apostle Paul, he once gloried in the fact that he was a Jew, of the tribe of Benjamin, that he spoke Hebrew, and that he had sought to be obedient to the Law. But after he came to the Lord he counted all of that but "dung," and so he realized that it was vain glory. To rejoice in, or to brag about, or to put our confidence in things that have to do with this life, is vain glory. It is empty.

The problem which led to the writing of the Galatian epistle had to do with the teachers of the Law who were emphasizing works and obedience to the Law as the way to find acceptance with God. Look at what Paul had to say about them in Gal. 6:11-13. Those teachers were just seeking to gain a following so, as Paul said, "that they may glory in your flesh." Paul knew that that was "vain glory." But, interestingly, as Paul wrote about the false teachers who were working among the Galatian churches, he recognized that he, too, had a strong tendency to glory in something, or someone, and so he expressed his desire as a prayer, lit.,

May it not be [and so, But God forbid] that I
should glory, save [except] in the cross of our
Lord Jesus Christ...

He knew that living in this world, with the world's way of life continually before him, and with the people of the world glorying in this or that which was related to the world, plus having a tendency in his own heart to glory in the wrong things, his heart cried out to the Lord to keep him from ever glorying in anything but the cross of Christ! And when he spoke about the Cross of Christ, he was not thinking about the wooden Cross upon which our Lord died. Nor was he suggesting that we all wear a cross around our necks, or hanging from our ears. He was not even suggesting that we have an ornamental gold cross on the mantle or on a table in our homes--or possibly hanging on the wall. When Paul spoke about the cross of Christ, he was speaking of the death of Christ, and his prayer was that God would never allow him to glory in anything but the sacrifice that the Lord Jesus Christ made for him on the cross upon which He died. And notice that he did not simply say the Lord died, or that Christ died, or that Jesus died, but "the cross of **our Lord Jesus Christ**"! Paul gave our Lord's full Name to show that he was not thinking of a wooden cross, but about the Person

Who died on that Cross.

We are inclined to glory in that which is most important to us, or that which we consider to be the most valuable, possibly that which gives us the most pleasure. Apply all of that to our Lord. Do we consider our Lord's death that which means more to us than anything else? Does it give us more pleasure to think about the cross than about anything else--not that we like to think of His sufferings there, but because of what He accomplished by His sufferings and death on the cross.

Paul was expressing the same idea when he wrote to the church at Corinth, and said,

1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified (1 Cor. 2:1-2).

Such a statement would have been sheer foolishness to the unregenerate in Corinth. It was a stumblingblock to the Jews to preach "Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1:23). But to the Apostle Paul this was his chief glory! Everything else paled into insignificance in comparison with what the Lord Jesus Christ did when He died on the Cross.

But let me call your attention to the last part of our text. Here we have:

II. TWO REASONS WHY THE APOSTLE GLORIED IN THE DEATH OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

There were certainly more than two reasons why Paul gloried in the Cross. Our Savior accomplished many things when He died. He did what no other human being has ever done: He perfectly fulfilled the will of His Father. He saved us from our sins. He saved us from the power of our sins. He guaranteed us a place in heaven. He defeated the Devil, and sealed his doom. Much, much more could be said. But here Paul focused attention on what the death of Christ means to us who know Him in our relationship with the world:

1) The world is crucified unto us.

2) We are crucified unto the world.

Paul was speaking just of himself, but what he said about himself is true of all of us who know the Lord. The world has been crucified unto us, and we have been crucified unto the world.

Back in Gal. 2:20 Paul stated a very important truth concern-

ing the death of Christ. (Quote.) One result of the death of Christ is that Christ is now living in us. Here in Gal. 6:14 we have another. Not only were we crucified with Christ, but the world was crucified to us, and we to the world. Paul was not speaking of the earth, but he was speaking of the world system over which Satan is the god.

We all have heard that we have a threefold enemy: the world, the flesh (our sinful nature within us), and the Devil. And when our Lord died on the Cross He set us free from our flesh; He set us free from the Devil; and He set us free from this ungodly world-system which in which millions of people tonight are held in bondage.

Now it is still possible for any of us to sin. It is still possible for the world to drag us down. The Devil still can ruin our lives. But the Cross of Christ teaches us that it does not have to be. Whatever was crucified with Christ when He died, no longer has absolute power over us. By the death of Christ the bondage has been broken. And, in the case of the world, the cross of Christ has taken away our desire to be a part of what is going on in the world.

We still need Rom. 12:1, 2. And we still need to understand 1 John 2:15-17. There must not be any compromise with the world, even the religious world. And Paul was glorying in the fact that what meant so much to him before, meant nothing to him now. He was free from life in that direction. Now he only wanted to live with Christ and to live for Christ.

Illus: I know a man (I have known him for about 30 years) who has been married over 40 years. He recently left his wife, and his explanation to her was that he felt he was missing life in the fast lane, and that is where he wants to be. He attends church, but it is clear that he knows nothing about salvation. Remember the Apostle John said, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15b). I have talked to this friend of mine. He thinks he is in charge of his life. He doesn't know that he is a slave to the world, and that if the Lord does not intervene in his life, he will continue on the fast lane right into hell.

Concl: With Paul, he was traveling a religious road that was leading him farther and farther from Christ every day. But then the Lord stepped into his life on the road to Damascus, and Paul learned that he was one of those who died with Christ when Christ died on the cross, and that, among other things that the Lord did for him, was to break that hold that a "vain glory" had on his life, he saw himself as a sinner, and he was wonderfully transformed by the One he had hated for so long.

What does all of this mean to us tonight?

It means that as we take the bread and drink from the cup, remembering our Lord's broken body and shed blood, we are reminded that we owe our freedom from the world with all of its sin and shame and sorrow to the One we remember tonight, our Lord Jesus Christ Who died to set us free. And may it always be the prayer of our hearts that we will never glory in anything or anyone but only "in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." We should shudder to think where we might be tonight if it were not for our precious Savior and what He has done to save us and keep us as His very own forever. May we come to the communion table with our hearts full of praise to Him.