

THE PASTOR'S MESSAGE

THE GLORY OF THE CROSS

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"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto Me, and I unto the world." Gal. 6:14.

In the text we note that in which a Christian should not glory and that in which he should. Paul does not want to restrict his boasting, but rather to make it a power for God. Sinful men boast in most everything else save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. This, however, is the source of all true glory. Everything else savors of the human and of the flesh. There is true glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and all who embrace His cross will have this glory.

In the two-fold crucifixion mentioned in the text the apostle is shut out from all the glory and vanity of the world and is shut up to the glory of God. It might seem to some that Paul is limiting his usefulness, but such is not the case. The opposite is the truth. We read of "the glory of the celestial and the glory of the terrestrial," and again "the glory of man," but the glory of the cross outstrips them all. The reason we have glory at the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ is because this is the meeting place of God and man. This meeting place constitutes man's glory. Man knows not the meaning of glory apart from this. While it is true that we can see God in nature and worship Him there, yet He is obscure until we see Him at Calvary. The cross of Jesus Christ is the provision God has made for man's redemption. Nothing else is adequate in saving man from the curse of sin. We note that it is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Some would emphasize the cross without the Christ, while others emphasize the Christ without the cross. They are invariably joined together, and what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

God forbids us to glory in another gospel. "But if even we or an angel from Heaven should bring you a Good News different from that which we have already brought you, let him be accursed—"For is it man's favor or God's that I aspire to? Or am I seeking to please men?" (Weymouth translation). It seems that there were certain Jewish teachers, who were trying to persuade the Galatians to renounce the rugged way of the cross for that which was less offensive. Says Dr. Adam Clarke: "The Jewish religion as it was then practised among the Jews, had nothing very grievous to the 'old man,' an unrenewed nature might go through all its observances with little pain or cross-bearing. On the other hand Christianity could not be very popular, it was too strict. A Jew made a 'fair shew' according to his carnal system, and it was a temptation to a weak Christian to serve in Judaism that he might be exempted from persecution. They received circumcision and professed Judaism not from a desire to be conformed to the will of God, but because Judaism was popular, and the more converts the false teachers could make, the more occasion of glorifying they would have. Thus they would have gloried, or boasted, not that the people were converted to God, but that they were circumcised (immersed or confirmed)." This way of carnal worship the apostle definitely renounces, and every honest Christian will do the same. It is adherence

to the Cross of Christ that alone will bring victory. At the time of this writing there are those who are compassing sea and land for the purpose of making church members, only to make them ten-fold more the children of hell. How many religious people are actual enemies of the Cross of Christ?

The crucifixion referred to in the text makes dead to everything but the Cross of Christ, and yet what boasting there is of knowledge, achievements and worldly wisdom. All this, says the apostle, is put to death at the cross. And so it is if we have experienced the two-fold crucifixion. The glory that radiates from the Cross of Christ is the **only true glory**; and all else is as sounding brass and a tinkling symbol.

We stated that salvation through the cross does not restrict man's boasting, but on the contrary it increases it and gives it power and glory. The two-fold separation brings the Christian into fellowship with the sufferings of Christ. It reproduces the Christ-life. Says Rev. Joseph H. Smith: "The glory of the Lord is in His person; and in His nature of life and love and righteousness. The glory of man is in the apprehension of his spiritual possibilities, which embrace a personal life, love and righteousness like his Lord's. Man glorifies God and likewise enjoys Him when the divine nature is reproduced in him and reflected in him. Life in Jesus is analogical to the life of Jesus in the flesh, while the more abundant life is analogical to the resurrection life of Christ after His crucifixion." This is clear in John's gospel where he states that the river fulness of the Spirit was not yet given because Jesus was not yet glorified. He was glorified after the "Cross" experience. Likewise Jesus is not glorified in our lives until we have been crucified with him. Thus in the cross, and in the cross alone, is room and place for boasting. When the boasting is in the cross, then are others edified and Christ glorified. Otherwise our boasting is vanity and results in egoism.

"He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." While we glory in the person of Christ, etc., let it be known to all that an attempt to draw men to Christ by a worldly-wise lifting up of his excellence of character and work, together with a shrinking and shirking of the cross, will result in an impotent gospel. Jesus is only lifted up as He is lifted up upon the cross. He can only be exalted in our lives as we embrace His cross. As stated before we cannot have Jesus unless we also have His cross. Jesus said: "When the Spirit of truth is come . . . He shall glorify Me." Thus we see that Jesus is glorified at the advent of the Holy Ghost. In this order the Cross precedes the gift of the Spirit, death precedes life; crucifixion precedes glory; darkness precedes dawn and Good Friday precedes Easter Sunday. Thus to glorify Jesus we must boast in the cross. To do so carnality must be destroyed, that our boasting be of the Spirit and not in the flesh.

Finally to quote again from Rev. Joseph H. Smith—"There is a kind of vicariousness in the Christian Cross, for said Paul, 'it worketh death in me but life in you' . . . knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." Is it not wonderful that God has made it possible for us to share in His

sufferings, and to be workers together with Him? At this season we thank God for the cross, the precious blood, the marvellous resurrection of our Lord Jesus and the advent of the Holy Ghost.

"Death cannot keep his prey,

Jesus, my Saviour;

He tore the bars away—

Jesus, my Lord.

Up from the grave He arose,

With a mighty triumph o'er His foes."

Christian friend, have you experienced the two-fold crucifixion with the advent of the Holy Ghost as witness? Are you filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ? Is your life a testimony that Jesus was raised from the dead?

"There is no gain but by a loss,

You cannot save but by a cross—

The corn of wheat to multiply,

Must fall into the ground and die.

Wherever you ripe fields behold,

Waving to God their sheaves of gold,

Be sure some corn of wheat has died—

Some soul has there been crucified;

Someone has wrestled, wept and prayed,

And fought hell's legions undismayed."

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POINTS FOR PREACHERS

The following points were given as a description of the kind of evangelist desired by one pastor.

1. A man personally regenerated, baptized with the Holy Ghost, called of God to do the work of an evangelist, and who is blameless in life and character.
2. One who is an interesting, anointed preacher, whose language is always chaste, and who, if he touches on delicate matters, does so with rare prudence, and knows when to quit.
3. One who does not regale his hearers with vivid accounts of his unchastity and rascality previous to his conversion.
4. One who is not finicky or fussy about heat, cold, ventilation, late comers, early goers, or fretful babies.
5. One who, under testing conditions maintains his balance, keeps sweet, exhibits no petulance, and publicly scolds nobody.
6. One who has had sufficient pastoral experience to have learned how to direct a church successfully, and therefore can comprehend and appreciate a pastor's problems.
7. One who has discovered that people need sleep, and therefore does not make his sermons unreasonably long.
8. One who preaches as earnestly to small congregations as to large ones.
9. One who, in the matter of his personal financial offering is modest and trustful, having little if anything to say on the subject, except when asked to do so by the pastor or finance committee, and who accepts, with equal grace, what has been raised for him, whether little or much.
10. One who is tasteful and tidy in his personal appearance and good for refined people to look at, as well as to listen to.
11. One who has little to say about his sweet wife, dear mother, darling children, unprecedented revivals he has conducted elsewhere or how much more money he could be making at some other business.—Sel.