

“God’s Glory, Not Man’s Approval”

Christian Liberty

Galatians 6:11-18

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Bruce: Holy, holy, holy art Thou, Lord God of hosts! Father, thank You that You are all the things that we are not. Father, I just pray that Your Holy Spirit would be our teacher this day, that You would open our eyes, that we might behold You more clearly for Christ’s sake. And all the Brave Men said,

Men: Amen!

Bruce: Let’s turn in your Bibles, please, to the book of Galatians, coming to the end of our study in this wonderful little book. We now come to a part of the Scripture where he is summarizing the whole issue of human achievement versus divine grace. We pick it up in chapter 6, beginning in verse 11 to the end of the chapter. I’ll be reading once again from the English Standard Version of the Scripture.

“See with what large letters I am writing to 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. Even those who are circumcised do not themselves keep the law. But they desire to have you circumcised, that you may boast in your flesh. 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, upon the Israel of God. From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear in my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.”

Men: Amen.

Bruce: This is the word of the Lord.

Men: Thanks be to God.

Bruce: Now at the very beginning of this wonderful little book of Galatians, for the church of Galatia Paul’s mindset has really been upon the theme of grace. To the end of this very letter Paul has had grace in mind. He’s basically telling us that the Christian depends upon grace through the work of the Holy Spirit and will always bring glory to God. The Christian who depends upon grace through the ministry of the Holy Spirit will always bring glory to God. That’s his theme in these closing sections.

Contrast that with the legalist who Paul would say practices religion. They will earn the approval of men. The world honors religious people, but how it hates devoted Christians! There’s a difference. The world likes religious people because they’re going to find some religion that falls into the category of human achievement.

Remember my introduction? There are two kinds of religion: the religion of human achievement and the religion of divine grace. And Paul is summarizing for us, as we come to the end of chapter six in the book of Galatians, saying this: that the Christian who depends upon grace, which is his theme, divine grace, under the power of the Holy Spirit, will have a lifestyle that will honor God.

And Paul usually used a secretary to record his writings. But notice what he says here. He’s writing in verse 11. *“See with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand!”*

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Now there is some question about this. Did he write the whole letter with these large letters or just the end, the benediction? There’s a good answer on either side, so take your pick.

Now what he really means is this. He knew the Galatians personally. And because of his poor eyesight—you can see that in Galatians 4:15—he had to write in large letters.

Transcriber’s Note: Unless otherwise noted, Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version.

Galatians 4:15. “*What then was the blessing you enjoyed? For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me.*”

Bruce: Now *large letters* does not mean the number of words because this letter is relatively small in numbers of words. But it means the size of the individual characters of the writing that he’s doing.

The important thing we can learn is this: that Paul did not permit a physical handicap to hinder both his obeying God and warning his Christian brothers of the evils of legalism. I think the point we can learn from that statement, whether you hold the position that the whole book was written in large letters or just the benediction, either one, I think the principle we can learn from that is this. He did not let his physical hindrance, his physical disabilities; hinder his work of the Lord and honoring God. I think that’s something all of us can put into the center of our lives, and realize that he didn’t permit physical handicaps to hinder his service to the Lord.

So Paul now talks about God’s glory, not man’s approval. That’s his contrast in these last verses.

Paul first of all testifies concerning his submission to Christ. Now I’m going to go through a contrast between what Paul is saying about being submitted to Christ and some of the things the legalists, these people who were saying that you need to be circumcised to be saved, were saying. On the surface, they believed in the cross of Christ. But they said that you have to be circumcised in addition to that for your salvation.

Now I’m going to go through a couple of things that Paul says about these people just in summary. But I think it’s also a symptom that we see in our world that’s very, very similar to what Paul is talking about with these legalists. In the ministry of the religion of human achievement there are some similarities that exist in the book of Galatians. And you’ll see that as we go through these final verses.

So Paul now talks about God’s glory and not man’s approval. Notice that the legalizers boast in the ceremony of circumcision. You can read about that in chapter 6, verses 11-13.

Transcriber’s Note: See above.

Bruce: Now if you recall, the whole testimony of this was that they preached the counsel of Christ, but said that you have to be circumcised in addition to having faith in the Person and work of Christ in order to be saved. And so they were legalists, and they were trying to get people to be circumcised just to get their approval. And so Paul says that these legalists posed to a ceremony of circumcision.

Now this is really the denunciation of these Judaizers, which corresponds to what we talked about in chapter five. What he is now going to summarize for us is really what he talked about in chapter five, which we studied previously.

Notice that they were *insincere*. You’ll notice that in chapter 6, verses 12 and 13. They were insincere. The first thing he says about these legalists is that they were

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insincere. They teach circumcision not because of outward conviction, but because of selfish desires. They really did that because of their selfishness. They teach circumcision that they may escape the persecution of the cross.

Look at chapter 6 verse 12. They did that, and here’s the reason why. These Judaizers, as they were called, outwardly accepted Christ and the cross. Outwardly they did that. This caused them to be persecuted by the unbelieving Jews. So they added circumcision and law keeping to the cross as necessary for salvation. And the offense of the cross would be eliminated.

The offense was really about the gospel. We’re told that the gospel is offensive. Now what are the two things that are offensive about the gospel? I think there are two main reasons. First of all, when you preach the gospel of salvation in Christ alone, divine grace, there is no place for human merit. There’s no place for human merit when you are preaching the cross. And there’s no place for boasting. You can’t boast and say that I did it.

Now that’s what they were offended by. The unbelieving Jews were saying, “You’re offensive when you talk about the cross of Christ.” It’s an offensive message because there’s no chance for me to have any merit and earn my salvation. That’s the doctrine of the ministry of the religion of human achievement.

And the second thing is that there is no way you can boast about the cross of Christ. You can’t boast about it because you can’t do anything. God was pleased to grant you salvation because of the work of Christ.

So, in summary, the offense of the cross consists basically in two things—no human merit and no boasting. And if they added circumcision to the preaching of the cross, then the persecution because of the offense of the cross would be eliminated and their persecution would cease. That’s one of the reasons they added circumcision to the preaching of the cross. They teach circumcision that they might receive the approval and praise of men. You’ll see that in chapter 6, verses 12 and 13.

So the first thing we can see is that they are very, very selfish—very, very self-motivated. It wasn’t for the glory of God; it was for the glory of themselves because they added circumcision to the cross in the ministry of salvation.

Now this little phrase that you see in verses 12 and 13—“*to make a fair showing in the flesh*”—means to please in connection with the flesh. These Judaizers could glory in the circumcision of the Galatians’ flesh with the praise of the unsaved Jews. In other words, they took pride in the fact that they got them to be circumcised. In other words, they took joy in the flesh. They did this because they were selfish.

The second thing he tells us is that these Judaizers were *inconsistent*. Not only were they insincere because their motives were not pure, but the Judaizers were inconsistent. Look at verse 13. Paul tells us that they taught circumcision and law keeping as being essential to salvation. But they themselves did not keep the law. Their lifestyle was such that they were loose and lawless livers.

Now we need to understand this. There are some similarities in the ministry of human achievement in our day and age. There are a lot of well-meaning people who are insincere, and there are a lot of well-meaning people who are inconsistent. Now that’s because they are not preaching the message of the cross of Christ. They come up with something else so that they will not be persecuted because Christ’s message is offensive.

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There is no merit in the cross of Christ and there is no boasting in the message of the cross of Christ.

So we really need to be very, very careful that we see that the same similarities in the ministries of human achievement today are not only insincere, but they are also very inconsistent. Sometimes their lives do not live up to what they teach. And that’s exactly what the Judaizers experienced. And as a result, Paul says that they were inconsistent. They would glory in the circumcision of the Galatian believers and they would win the praise of unsaved Jews. But they were inconsistent, living lawless lives.

Now it’s interesting. Go to Matthew chapter 23 verse 15.

Transcriber’s Note: Matthew 23:15. *“Woe to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves.”*

Bruce: It’s just a cross reference to help us understand the inconsistency of these Judaizers. These Judaizers, like the Pharisees of Christ’s day, would cross land and sea to make a convert. They would do anything they could to make a convert, not to help the convert grow in grace, but to add more glory to their own names.

Several years ago, when I was with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, I was at a conference dealing with sports evangelism. They came from all over the world. About thirty countries were involved. There was one particular gentleman who spoke and addressed the whole group of about two hundred men and women. And I was just really amazed that the only thing I heard was this: “I.” He kept saying, “I led somebody to Christ. I did this. I led somebody else to Christ. Do you know that in my ministry I did this? Do you know that the reason I’m so popular and the reason I was asked to speak is because I’ve led so many people to Christ?” And it was really very interesting. I heard the words “I led, I did, I achieved, I accomplished, I made it happen.” All those things were really centered around himself.

Now I was really struck by the contrast. Contrast that with the young African from Kenya who suffered immensely. And all he spoke about was the cross of Christ, how the cross of Christ had radically changed his life and his family. And there was no mention of the word *I*.

With the American who spoke, all I heard about was *I*. This is what I have done. With the young man who had suffered immensely for the cause of Christ, all he could talk about was the cross of Jesus Christ and His glory. It’s quite a contrast.

You see, men, we have to be careful of that. There are so many inconsistencies that we have to watch out for from the ministries of human achievement. There is also not only inconsistency, but there is some insincerity, and that we have to be observing.

And I think there’s some correlation between what’s going on in our culture today and what Paul was addressing to the church from the Judaizers at Galatia.

So Paul says that rather than glorying in himself, he boasts in the cross of Christ. Notice verses 14 and 15. Rather than boasting about himself, he boasts in the cross of Christ.

Now I think these verses summarize what Paul taught us in chapter three and chapter four. Now Paul teaches us that Christians should glory only in the cross of Jesus Christ, for the cross has freed us from glorying in fleshly works and human achievement. He has made us new creatures whom Paul will call spiritually circumcised persons. And they are

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the only ones who can have acceptance with God. It’s somebody who has been spiritually circumcised.

Now circumcision, as you know, for the Galatians, was a Jewish rite. But Paul was talking about a circumcision of the heart. Go to Ezekiel chapter 36. Here is the prophet Ezekiel speaking about the New Covenant, the new covenant of grace as opposed to the work of human achievement, beginning at verse 22 of Ezekiel 36. I want to show you what it means to have your hearts circumcised—circumcision of the heart.

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the LORD God, ‘It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of My holy name.’”

Notice. Who is it about?

Participant: God.

Bruce: It’s about God’s glory. *“It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of My holy name which you have profaned among the nations from which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the LORD God, when through you I vindicate My holiness before their eyes.”*

What are the means by which God is going to vindicate His holiness? You! Me! Notice what He says. *“When through you I vindicate My holiness before their eyes.”*

Now if that’s going to happen, God is going to have to do something to us to make us want to be vindicating His holiness and living for His glory. Verse 24. *“I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean from all your uncleanness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and be careful to obey My rules.”*

Now notice. We are never the reason that God does anything. We need to understand that. We are never the reason. Twice God says this. “For My sake I am going to do this.” This is always about God’s glory; it’s never about our vanity. It’s always about His glory.

Here’s what He does. The first thing He does is that He calls us to Himself. Look at verses 24-26. He calls us to Himself. He cleanses us from ourselves. He creates a new heart within us. He completes us with the Holy Spirit. And He ends up causing us to be obedient.

How is it that you and I are going to vindicate the holiness of God’s name? Through our what?

Men: Obedience.

Bruce: Obedience. Who takes the responsibility to put you in the position of being willing to be willing to be obedient?

Men: Jesus. God.

Bruce: God does. That’s the whole point. That’s why Paul boasts in the cross alone, because there’s no reason for merit. There’s no achievement in his own strength. He’s saying this. I glorify in the cross alone because God called me to Himself. He cleansed me from myself. He created a new heart within me. He took that heart of stone that was not sensitive to spiritual things and gave me a heart that is now active and sensitive to spiritual things. He created a new heart within me. He created a new life within me. He

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completed me with the Holy Spirit, the Source. He would be the Paraclete who will walk with us, who will make us willing to be willing, who will give us the desire to want to be obedient. And the end result is our obedience.

Now that’s a picture of what it means to be a spiritually circumcised believer. God has done something with your heart—regeneration. He calls you to Himself. He cleanses you from yourself. He creates a new heart within you. He completes you with the Holy Spirit. And He causes you to be obedient.

But that is the means by which God is going to vindicate the holiness of His great name. That’s why Paul summarizes the book of Galatians by saying that it’s about God’s glory. It’s not about me. He contrasts the glory that was sought by the Judaizers, contrasting that with the glory that Paul was after, for God’s glory alone. It’s about God’s glory, not about us. And Paul is teaching us that you must be a spiritually circumcised person to be acceptable to God. Ezekiel 36 is a very clear picture of what that looks like. Yes, Brian?

Brian: I was with somebody recently, and I asked him, “Do you believe in the sovereignty of God?”

And he said, “Well, He’s sovereign in most areas.” *(Laughter)*

“Where is He not?”

And he said, “He’s not in that you can go up to a certain point, and then you decide whether or not you’re going to believe.” I mean that’s just really showing how destructive that thought process can be.

Bruce: The doctrine of the religion of human achievement. That’s the contrast. It’s either that or divine grace.

I had a conversation with a young woman recently. And she wanted to make it very, very clear to me that she was not going to believe in Jesus. *(Laughter)* She was of a Jewish background. She wanted to make sure that I knew that she was not going to believe in Jesus.

So the conversation went something like this. “You know, I could never believe in Jesus. I just never could do that.”

And I said, “I agree with you.” *(Laughter)*

And she said, “Well, I could if I wanted to.”

I said, “Then do it.” *(Laughter)*

But she said, “I can’t! I can never do that.”

I said, “I agree with you. You can’t do that. You don’t have the power to do that.”

“I could do it if I wanted to.”

“Then do it.” *(Laughter)* “Believe in Jesus right now.”

“I could never do that.” *(Laughter)*

I said, “I agree with you.” *(Laughter)* “You could never do that.”

“What do you mean I could never do that?”

“I just said you could never do that. I agree with you. You’re never going to do that.”

She said, “I could if I wanted to.”

I said, “Then do it.”

She said, “I just can’t.”

I said, “You must.”

She said, “I don’t want to.”

“And that’s because you can’t.” *(Laughter)* It’s the sovereignty of God.

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Participant: Amen.

Bruce: God calls you to Himself, cleanses you from yourself, creates a new life within us, completes us with the power of the Holy Spirit, and causes us to be obedient.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: In other words, He gives you the will to be willing to be obedient. Before you were spiritually circumcised, before your regeneration, you had no desire to be obedient. Now all of a sudden you have a desire that you didn’t have before.

That doesn’t mean that you’re going to lead sinlessly perfect lives. John tells us this in 1 John. *“If we say we have no sin, we are liars and the truth is not in us.”* We’re not talking about sinless perfection. Remember, do you have to be perfect to get to heaven? Yes, absolutely. And how does God do that?

Participant: He kills us.

Bruce: That’s true. He kills our human nature and gives us a new nature. He spiritually circumcises us. That’s the contrast between what Paul is talking about—the cross of Christ—versus the circumcision that is added to the cross in the book of Galatians.

And so Paul is teaching us this. The only way you’re going to be acceptable to God is when he justifies you by giving you strength in the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ.

That’s how we meet His standard. He does that for us. That’s the sovereignty of God.

In summary, the sovereignty of God means this. Whatever happens in your life and my life is for God’s glory and my good. It’s for God’s glory and my good. That’s why we trust in the cross of Christ alone. So Paul boasts solely in the cross of Christ, not in external activities such as physical circumcision.

Now why does Paul glory in the cross? I just got to thinking about this recently. Why is it that he glories in the cross alone, and not in the ministry of human achievement?

Well I would say this: that the cross is about the last thing that natural man would have selected as a reason for boasting. Remember, the offense of the cross is twofold. There’s no room for human merit, and there’s no room for human boasting. It’s the most unnatural thing that the world would pick the cross as the reason for boasting.

Notice 1 Corinthians 1:23. *“To the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishness.”* And here’s why. *The cross exposes man’s desperate state.* It’s our bankruptcy that makes the suffering of the cross necessary. That’s what the cross does. It exposes man’s desperate state, his utter bankruptcy that made such suffering at the cross necessary.

Accordingly, it reveals the folly of human pride. It teaches man to say this. When you see the cross, you say this. I never knew myself as a sinner. I never saw myself as a sinner, nor did I recognize Christ as my Savior. I just never did that until I was confronted with the cross.

*“Upon the cross I saw my God
Who died to meet the law
That I had broken. And then I saw my sin,
And then I saw my Savior.”*

That’s what happens when you see the cross. No one is ever able to see the cross, and on that cross the wonders of God’s glorious love, unless he sees his own unworthiness.

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When you see your own unworthiness, then you can see the glories of the cross. And that’s when I pour contempt upon all my personal pride.

Now by God’s marvelous grace, Paul had come to view the cross as several different things in his life. Just looking at other passages that he has written, here’s how I think Paul viewed the cross and why he boasted in it alone. First of all, there is no room for human merit, and second, no room for human boasting. Now here is what I believe it meant to Paul in his own life.

First of all, *it was a mirror* not only of his own unworthiness, but also of God’s glorious attributes. It touches on the excellencies of God’s righteousness, which we must receive, as I do.

Look at Romans 8:3-4 for an example of what I mean by the excellency of God’s grace that the cross reveals, and why Paul saw this as a mirror not only of his own unworthiness, but also of the excellencies of Christ.

Romans 8:3-4. *“For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”*

You see, there are so many excellencies where God demonstrates His righteousness to us. 2 Corinthians 5:21. *“And He made Him who knew no sin to become sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God.”* You see, at the same time that you see your unworthiness, you see the excellencies of Christ.

It’s interesting that the great sermon that Jonathan Edwards preached, “Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God” is the most popular sermon he ever preached. But it’s not the most frequent subject matter that he preached. Do you know what he talked about more than anything else?

Participant: Heaven.

Bruce: Heaven and the excellencies of Christ, the beauties of Christ. He had some wonderful, wonderful sermons on the beauties of Christ. Men, you will never see the beauties of Christ until you see the cross. And when you see the cross, the first thing you see is your unworthiness. And the moment you begin to see your unworthiness is when you begin to see the beauties of the cross and the beauties of Christ. You can’t have that without the Holy Spirit working in your lives through regeneration.

Let me give you some other verses that might help us understand why he saw the excellencies and beauties of Christ. Colossians 1:24—God’s power and wisdom.

Transcriber’s Note: Colossians 1:24. *“I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church.”*

Bruce: Also His love, His mercy and His grace—2 Corinthians 5:19-21 and Galatians 2:20.

Transcriber’s Note: 2 Corinthians 5:18-21. *“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*

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Bruce: All of these, all of these excellencies and beauties of Christ at the cross, are in harmony with each other. Look at Psalm 85 verse 10

*“Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;
Righteousness and peace kiss each other.”*

All of the excellencies of Christ come together in the Person of who God is in all of His glory. And that’s what you see when you see the cross.

The second thing I think Paul understood was this. Not only did he see it as a mirror of his unworthiness and also for the excellencies of Christ. He saw it as *the means of redemption*. The cross is the means of redemption in its most comprehensive sense. In other words, you talk about justification, sanctification and glorification. You would look at such passages as Romans 3:25 and 26.

“Whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins. It was to show His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Christ.” In other words, he saw the cross as describing three things for him—his justification, his sanctification and his glorification. He saw the cross not only as a mirror of his own unworthiness and the glories of God, but he saw the cross as a means of redemption in all of its complexities and all of its completeness.

Justification, sanctification, glorification. Justification is *freedom from the penalty of sin*. Sanctification is *freedom from the power of sin*. Glorification is *freedom from the presence of sin*. Paul saw all of that in the cross. That’s why he glorified in the cross.

Participant: Bruce?

Bruce: Yes, please?

Participant: Would it be fair to say that justification is instantaneous, as is glorification, which will be instantaneous, but that sanctification is—

Participant: It takes time.

Participant: It’s an experience and it takes time.

Bruce: It’s called growth, maturity.

Participant: Yes.

Bruce: Yes. It takes some maturing, yes. Sanctification is instantaneous in that God declares you as sanctified. But it’s worked out in your life. So you can’t really say that it’s a process per se.

Participant: That’s right.

Bruce: Because there is an instantaneous aspect to it. But there’s a degree of maturity where there is more of Christ being shown in our lives and less of us. Good point.

I think the third thing he saw was this. He saw the cross as a mirror. He saw it as the means of redemption in all of its completeness. He also saw it as *a magnet by which every tribe and nation is drawn to Christ crucified, and are drawn together as the one body*. He saw it as a magnet creating the body of Christ. Galatians 3:23 and 29 would be verses to help us to understand that.

Transcriber’s Note: Galatians 3:23 and 29. *“But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”*

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Bruce: He saw that when God was pleased to draw people together, he brought them together as the children of God and they became one body. That’s what the cross did. It unified us in one body in the work of the body of Christ.

And I think that the last thing is that it was a *model*. It’s a model for people to imitate. It’s a mirror, the means of righteousness, a magnet, and now I think of it as a model for people to imitate.

The redemptive acts can never be imitated. They can never be imitated. But the spirit of self-sacrifice and love that is revealed in these acts should be reflected in the hearts and lives of God’s children.

Romans 15:1. *“We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.”* In other words, we can’t replicate and imitate the activities of the redemptive act. But the love that is expressed in those acts should be reflected in us. The mercy that is reflected in those acts should be reflected in us. The consistency that is reflected in a redemptive act should be reflected in us. That’s why Paul says that it is a model for us to imitate.

Now is it any wonder that Paul gloried in the cross? He saw it as a mirror, as the means of redemption in all its complexities. He saw it as a magnet to draw the body of Christ together. And he also saw it as a model in which we need to have the visible activities of the redemptive act expressed and reflected in our own body and by our lifestyle.

So my next question is this. How did Paul glory in the cross? That’s *why* he did it. That’s why he gloried in the cross. But how did he do it? Here are some insights that might be helpful for us.

By surrendering himself to Christ crucified as his own Lord and Savior. Galatians 2:20.

Transcriber’s Note: Galatians 2:20. *“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”*

Bruce: *By praying that the power of the crucified and risen Christ would more and more assert itself in his own life through prayer.* I would suggest that to be Philippians chapter 3, verses 7-16.

Transcriber’s Note: Philippians 3:7-16. *“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.*

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal of the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

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“Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind.”

Bruce: I think that this is also how he did it: *by proclaiming the crucified and risen Lord.* Notice the full title: *“our Lord Jesus Christ.”* Wherever he went, he would always talk about the Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 1:16.

Transcriber’s Note: Galatians 1:15:16. *“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood.”*

Bruce: It is the love of Christ that constrains him to do so, by proclaiming the crucified and risen Christ.

You see, quite honestly, men, there should never be a pastor who doesn’t have a theme to talk about every Lord’s Day. It’s Christ and Him crucified. Somehow, the whole message of every sermon we ought to preach is Christ and Him crucified. And I think that’s what Paul did. He proclaimed the crucified and risen Lord wherever he went.

I think that he also did this. *He courageously defended the gospel of the crucified Christ over against every attack.* Of course, that’s the whole book of Galatians. There was an attack upon him because of what he wrote in the book of Galatians. For the people of Galatia he courageously defended the gospel of Christ crucified against every attack that came up against him.

I think those are some of the insights that we gain from Paul about how he gloried in the cross.

And what is next? He talked about bearing in his body the marks of Christ’s sufferings. In ancient times three classes of people—soldiers, slaves and the devotees of pagan religions—had brands of identification upon their bodies. I guess you would call them tattoos. There were three kinds of people—soldiers, slaves and devotees of pagan religions who had different marks on their bodies to identify their allegiance.

Paul had a brand of identification upon his own body, the scars resulting from the persecution suffered for Christ’s sake. He had those scars on his body. These scars wedded him as Christ’s servant because of the marks on his body

So in these few moments, how do we conclude this? I think of Paul’s final word in Galatians 6:18, and I call your attention to this benediction. *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers.”*

Notice: *“Lord Jesus Christ,”* the full title. I think the reason that he penned this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit was that it is full of beauty and full of meaning. Let’s just examine that for a minute.

I think that one verse concentrates the attention of those to whom he is writing of the magnanimous grace of our loving Lord. He draws us to remind us of the marvelous grace of our loving Lord. Remember, the whole book of Galatians is a contrast between the religion of human achievement and divine grace. And so it’s no wonder then that the very last moment that he writes these words in his large handwriting that he talks about the marvelous grace of our loving Lord. This is a grace, love to the undeserving. That’s what he’s talking about. Grace is love to the undeserving.

This is the grace that atoned for their sin, that brought about the operation of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and accomplished their adoption as children and heirs of the

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Kingdom. That’s all found in that little expression. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be theirs.

It’s the grace that sustains them, that equips them to be living witnesses, filling their hearts with peace that passes understanding and the joy unspeakable, and joy full of glory that brings them at last to their inheritance—incorruptible, undefiled and never ending. That’s all wrapped up in that last phrase, “*the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

It’s a reminder of the summary of grace. It mentions Jesus in all the fullness of His saving power, giving Him His full title, “*our Lord Jesus Christ.*” Now there’s meaning to that. And it deserves some consideration as we briefly explore its meaning.

As *Lord*, He owns us.

Participant: Wow!

Bruce: As *Lord*, He owns us. He governs us. He protects us. And we belong to Him. And we should do His bidding. That’s what the word *Lord* refers to in that phrase, “*our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

The Lord Jesus, He and He alone is our Savior. Matthew 1:21 and Acts 4:12.

Transcriber’s Note: Matthew 1:21. “*And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.*”

Acts 4:12. “*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*”

Bruce: He alone is our Savior. And thirdly, as Christ, *He is the Anointed One*. In His human nature, in His capacity, He is largely qualified to be our Mediator, our chief Prophet, our High Priest and our eternal King.

And so our little phrase, “*the Lord Jesus Christ*” is the full title. Now men, I think the world needs to hear the full title of Christ rather than just earing, ‘I love Jesus.’ There’s nothing wrong with that. Please understand what I’m not saying. But when you use the phrase “*the Lord Jesus Christ,*” that’s His full title. It’s saying this. He owns me, and I must do His bidding. He means that He alone is the One who can save me. There’s no merit in my religion. There’s no human achievement in my religion. It’s all because of His Saviorship, not my following-ship.

And lastly, He is the *emerging One*, who brings about my eternal life and all of my dignity in heaven, where I will be with the Lord in all of His glory. Tom?

Tom: In verse 15 Paul gives us this little phrase that is very helpful. “*What counts is a new creation.*” As I look at my life, it’s not what I do. No, it’s a new creation in Christ. That’s what He does.

Bruce: Amen. The spiritually circumcised believer is the only person acceptable to God. He calls you to Himself. He cleanses you from yourself. He creates a new heart within you. He completes you with the Holy Spirit. And He causes us to be obedient. That’s how God demonstrates His glory. And may it be so that we will follow Him to the point of recognizing this: that we serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Participant: Amen.

Bruce: Amen and Amen. Let’s pray. Father, it’s all about Your glory. It’s not about our merit. It’s all about Your glory, not our reputation. It’s all about Your glory. It’s not about us. It’s not about our human achievement. It’s about Your divine mercy and Your divine grace that is given to us in the Lord Jesus Christ. May it be so that we demonstrate the fact that He owns us, He governs us and He protects us, and puts us on display to demonstrate the excellencies and obedience of Christ. And we will need to pour all

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contempt upon our pride, and for the rest of our life to follow the Lord Jesus Christ. And all the Brave Men said, “Amen!” (*Applause*)