

Introduction:

- We are going to look at the cross this morning in light of the Kingdom of God.
 - A question: Was Jesus King before creation? Was Jesus King when He stood before Pilate? Was Jesus King after the resurrection? So the cross is not about His Kingship. The cross is about an unconquered domain that needed conquering. It was about getting back what man had lost in the garden.
 - Why was the cross necessary? To satisfy the justice of God. To deal with our sin. To establish a new covenant with man.
 - The Apostle Paul sees the cross as central to the Christian faith. It is a demarcation! It is the demarcation between the old world and the new creation. Between the law and faith. The cross renders the old system of works inoperable in regards to justification and righteousness.
- Lewis Carroll's book ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND: Alice walks through a mirror and ends up in a house that is a mirror image of her own, and has strange mirroring properties, so she has to learn to reorient herself. She finds she has to walk left when she wants to go right. *Jabberwocky* is written backwards, so Alice can only read it by holding it up to a mirror. Everything is backwards. **APPLICATION** Those are Jesus' Kingdom instructions. If you want to get to life, you have to walk towards death. If you want to get to freedom, you have to walk towards powerlessness. If you want to get to eternity, you have to take up your cross. *"Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it"* (Matthew 10:39). It makes very little sense to the human mind but it is what Paul the apostle boasts in.
- "The cross is a picture of violence, yet the key to peace;
 - A picture of suffering, yet the key to healing;
 - A picture of death, yet the key to life;
 - A picture of utter weakness, yet the key to power;
 - A picture of capital punishment, yet the key to mercy and forgiveness;
 - A picture of vicious hatred, yet the key to love;
 - A picture of supreme shame, yet the Christian's supreme boast." By David Watson
- *"As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died."* (Galatians 6:14, NLT)

I. If You Have To Boast May It Be In The Cross

- A. We learn to boast at a young age. So we boast of what is most central to our lives. It is what we take our greatest pride in. It has to do with our accomplishments. It has to do with what we have done. Where our strength and identity are derived.
 1. We are raised this way:

- a) A common trait of modern western culture is the proclamation of self-esteem.
 - b) Kids are educated to think they can do whatever they set their minds to.
 - c) People are told to take pride in their work, family, and country.
 - d) This thought is not a new one. Greek philosophy reflecting Hellenistic culture, greatly valued all forms of human assertiveness as badges of excellence, strength, and virtue (from the Latin *virtus*, meaning “manliness” or “worth”). Physical prowess, military feats, speaking abilities, intellectual acumen, political power, monetary success, social status—all these were things to be proud of and to glory in.
2. The Jews: The Judaizers of Galatia likewise put all their weight in their works. Their works, like all human effort, cannot bear the weight of divine perfection required for standing before God. Their boast in the flesh (Gal. 6:13) is such a dangerous practice that Paul exposes the folly of it.
 3. Paul: Paul could have boasted in his high class learning, his literary degree/pedigrees, his power as a preacher, his travels, his evident success as a missionary, the esteem in which he was held by countless believers, his high standing as an apostle, as well as many other things. But Paul sought and found joy and satisfaction in Christ.
- B. Paul is the only one of the NT writers to use the word ‘boast’ so often.
1. Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible: **Boast**. To speak of deeds, abilities, or characteristics in a manner showing pride or self-satisfaction. In the Bible the word also has a more positive connotation (“to glory in”). Price, J. D. (1988). [Boast](#). In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 1, p. 368). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House. So we boast of what is most central to our lives. It is what we take our greatest pride in. It has to do with our accomplishments. It has to do with what we have done.
 2. Pauls boast was in the cross of Christ. Boasting will then be an occasion for thanksgiving and joy, since it will be acknowledgment of God’s grace. Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament](#) (p. 424). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
- C. “Paul exalts the cross of Christ as the sole ground and object of his boasting, thereby showing conclusively the absolute centrality of the cross in his thinking.” Fung, R. Y. K. (1988). [The Epistle to the Galatians](#) (p. 306). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. In Roman culture you only carried the cross if you were going to die on it.
1. *“If you refuse to take up your cross and follow me, you are not worthy of being mine.”* (Matthew 10:38, NLT)

2. *"Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me." (Matthew 16:24, NLT) Mk 8:34*
3. *"Looking at the man, Jesus felt genuine love for him. "There is still one thing you haven't done," he told him. "Go and sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." (Mark 10:21, NLT)*
 - a) The one thing that still remained that the man put trust in, was his money.
 - b) He was trusting in his works...his wealth.
4. *"The message of the cross is foolish to those who are headed for destruction! But we who are being saved know it is the very power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18, NLT)*

II. We Boast In The Power Of the Cross

- A. Paul expresses in Gal 6:14-ff, three clear things about the cross. They are the reason as to why he can and chooses to boast in the cross.
 1. The cross has power to rendered me dead to the world. vs. 14
 2. The cross has power to do what the flesh cannot...transform me into a new creation. (The flesh can do nothing to bring about salvation.)
 3. The cross has the power to save...filling me with peace and mercy.
- B. The Cross has power to render me dead to the world.
 1. Only the cross has power to free a believer from this worlds system of evil.
 2. Life without Christ is a meaningless life, a life with no hopeful plan, purpose, or reason for being. It is also a life ruled by the flesh, which naturally and inevitably follows the system of evil that this world promotes, whether in gross immorality or simply in day-to-day self-gratification.
 3. Even if you manage to do good works you will still live with out peace. *"Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us." (Romans 5:1, NLT)* The righteousness that God expects comes only in justification by faith. *"For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God." (1 John 5:4-5, NLT)*
 4. We can only boast in what Christ accomplished on the cross.
- C. The Cross has power to do what the flesh cant. We are powerless to save our selves! That is what that means. We can't trust in anything that we do only in what He has done. That is why it requires faith. vs 15
 1. Again, we cannot take pride in what we do.

2. It must be what God does - a new creation! Most Christians try to live as if they remodeling who they are. *ie. London businessman Lindsay Clegg told the story of a warehouse property he was selling. The building had been empty for months and needed repairs. Vandals had damaged the doors, smashed the windows, and strewn trash around the interior. As he showed a prospective buyer the property, Clegg took pains to say that he would replace the broken windows, bring in a crew to correct any structural damage, and clean out the garbage. "Forget about the repairs," the buyer said. "When I buy this place, I'm going to build something completely different. I don't want the building; I want the site."*
 3. My flesh can do absolutely nothing when it comes to may salvation! Nothing!
 4. *"For when I tried to keep the law, it condemned me. So I died to the law—I stopped trying to meet all its requirements—so that I might live for God."* (Galatians 2:19, NLT) Two requirements in Christ: 1. Love God and others. 2. Faith. Therefore life becomes faith expressing itself through love.
 5. *"But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.""* (Galatians 3:13, NLT) The new creation implies a new nature with a new system of desires, affections, and habits, all wrought through the supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer.
- D. The cross has power to bring salvation. vs 16-18. That is what peace and mercy are about.
1. Paul is concluding this epistle by summarizing the basic theme of peace and mercy which represent salvation.
 - a) Peace referring to the believer's new relationship to God and mercy referring to the divine removal of sins.
 - b) Peace is the positive side of salvation, the establishing of a new and right relationship to God. Mercy is the negative side, the forgiving of all a believer's sins, and the setting aside judgment.

III. The Cross Makes Me Part Of The Kingdom Of God

- A. *"All who walk by this standard are the true Israel of God—his chosen people. Peace and mercy on them!"* (Galatians 6:16, The Message)
- B. This reality, Gods saving act on the cross, by faith ushers us into the Kingdom of God.
- C. Jesus did not go to the cross to become King. The King went to the cross to redeem His people.
- D. I did not get born again to become a Christian. I got born again that I might be ambassador that represents Him in word and action, in the earth.

Conclusion:

- Like Alice in Wonderland, the way to peace seems backwards: “The cross is a picture of violence, yet the key to peace; A picture of suffering, yet the key to healing; A picture of death, yet the key to life; A picture of utter weakness, yet the key to power; A picture of capital punishment, yet the key to mercy and forgiveness; A picture of vicious hatred, yet the key to love; A picture of supreme shame, yet the Christian’s supreme boast.”
- To save your life you have to lay down your life. To the one who gave His life that you might find true life.
- *“Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me.”* (Matthew 16:24, NLT) When you live this you will boast in the cross of Christ.