How We Boast

2 Corinthians 1:12-24

12 For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity[c] and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you. 13 For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand— 14 just as you did partially understand us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.

15 Because I was sure of this, I wanted to come to you first, so that you might have a second experience of grace. 16 I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia, and to come back to you from Macedonia and have you send me on my way to Judea. 17 Was I vacillating when I wanted to do this? Do I make my plans according to the flesh, ready to say “Yes, yes” and “No, no” at the same time? 18 As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No. 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes. 20 For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. 21 And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, 22 and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.[d]

23 But I call God to witness against me—it was to spare you that I refrained from coming again to Corinth. 24 Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

1. Intro
   1. Boasting has been given a negative connotation
   2. For good reason.
      1. Boasting deals in the emotion of Pride, and Pride is a dangerous thing.
      2. If we have PRIDE in the wrong things, we will fall: Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.
   3. So, as Paul teaches proper behavior, we see this behavior as a point of action.
   4. The theme for this passage:
      1. Don’t tell people how GODLY your are, just be GODLY.
      2. Your behavior matters more than your boasting
   5. Paul had done a hard thing in correcting this church, and now he was trying to remind them that it is for their good.
   6. John F. Kennedy wrote in Profiles of Courage, “Great crisis produces great men and great deeds of courage.”
      1. This is true in some ways.
      2. IF we grow through crisis, it can make us stronger
      3. IF we do not grow in the midst of crisis, we are set back.
2. Text
   1. Verse 12: Behavior matters
      1. Boast by behavior rather than empty words
      2. Let your words and deeds match
      3. Let your behavior speak for your reality
   2. Verse 13: I hope you will fully understand
      1. They may have been scolded in the first letter, but Paul is writing to tell them its for their own good and God’s glory.
      2. Discipline and discipleship are not always easy.
   3. Verse 14: We will get through this, and in the end will be better for it
      1. This is a verse of growth
      2. This is a verse of correction leading to growth
      3. This is a verse of Hope
   4. Verses 15-22: Personal note
      1. God establishes us
      2. God anoints us
   5. Verses 23-24: not seeking conflict, but seeking God’s continued empowerment of Faith
3. Point
   1. Glorify the right things
      1. We boast only in the work of Christ
      2. We glory only in the work of Christ
      3. How do we celebrate?
         1. We celebrate victories, but why not defeats?
         2. We celebrate open doors, but why not closed doors?
         3. We celebrate when things go our way, but why not when things go another way?
         4. We celebrate the things that immediately bless us, but why not the things that aren’t so obvious?
      4. 2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
   2. Do the right things
      1. Does your behavior bring glory to God
      2. Do you serve with diligence and excellence out of a conviction?
      3. When we do the wrong things, we respond sin many ways
         1. We deny
         2. We redirect
         3. We justify
         4. We dismiss
         5. We seldom find ourselves in immediate repentance…WHY?
      4. There is no greater joy for the believer to repent of sin and be made whole again.
         1. Just as when we were first saved, we find great joy in being made white as snow
         2. The purity of Christ changes our reality
      5. 1 John 1:9-10: 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.
   3. Security in the right things
      1. He has put HIS seal on us, and given us HIS Spirit in our hearts
      2. There is security in the work
         1. Christians do not LORD over one another, but work together for the common cause.
         2. This is how the body is equipped
         3. It brings a sense of security in our service
      3. 1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.
      4. Ephesians 1:13: In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,
      5. Find no security in your own strength, but in the strength of God!
         1. Jeremiah 17:5 Thus says the LORD: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD.
         2. Psalm 73:26: My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
4. Close
   1. All this to say:
      1. There is only security in Christ
      2. There is never security in Flesh
   2. God’s GRACE has been given us
   3. So we boast in Christ, and Him Crucified
   4. 1 Corinthians 2:2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.