

## Glory in the Cross

But may it never be that I would **boast**,  
 except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
 through which the **world** has been **crucified** to me,  
 and I to the **world**.

Gal. 6:14

The idea of the world that Paul says he has been crucified to, is directly related to the false teachers that had infiltrated the churches of Galatia. These were known as the Judaizers who promoted a spurious, man-made gospel of salvation by works and of living under the law, in direct contradiction to salvation by grace through faith, and living by the Spirit. The immediate context is in relation to circumcision, which the false teachers taught was necessary for salvation.

Verse 13 says, “For those who are circumcised do not even keep the Law themselves, but they desire to have you circumcised to that they may boast in your flesh.”

The false teachers were bragging about how many people they had turned away from Christianity back to Judaism, specifically through the ceremony of circumcision.

The choice is between a religion of achievement or of Christ’s divine accomplishment that saves those who believe in Him.

“The religion of divine accomplishment is the gospel of Jesus Christ, who, by God’s sovereign grace, provided for man’s redemption through the sacrifice of Himself on the cross. The religion of human achievement encompasses all the other religions of the world, which share the common basis of works righteousness, of seeking to please God by various forms and methods of human merit and effort.”<sup>1</sup>

Two kinds of Glorifying:

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Galatians*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1987), p. 203.

1. Glorifying in the Flesh – human achievement
2. Glorifying in the Cross – divine accomplishment

All false religions are grounded in human merit and works righteousness. Paul's only boast was in the cross of Jesus Christ – in Christ's accomplishment.

Three key words in this verse: ***boast***, ***world***, and ***crucified***.

## I. **Glory in the Cross**

To ***boast*** – often refers to evil boasting

- Here it carries the idea of good glorying or rejoicing as it does in Rom. 5:2,3, and 11 (“exult”) and Phil. 3:3 (“glory”)
- English word ‘boasting’ is an expression of pride.
- Greek: (kauchaomai) carries the basic meaning of “**praise.**”

Paul's thought is of praise in the cross of Christ as opposed to those who would praise themselves for their accomplishments.

Paul gloried in the cross because it is the reason that all believers are made righteous and accepted by God. The cross is the supreme symbol of the gospel. It was on the cross that Christ's sacrifice purchased our redemption and eternal life.

### **Why is the Cross so important?**

#### **1. Sinful men are justified**

“No matter how relatively good a person manages to be in his own power, he falls far short of the absolute moral and spiritual perfection that God requires.”

Jesus said of God's divine requirement for men,  
 “Be perfect as God is perfect.” (Matt. 5:48)

On the cross God's righteousness is made available to sinful men.  
 God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

#### **2. Lost men are saved.**

“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him” (Rom. 5:8-9).

Those who believe in man’s innate ability to save himself have difficulty saying that the cross was a demonstration of God’s love.

If a man were sitting safely on a pier and someone jumped into the water and drowned in a supposed effort to rescue him, the act would be considered pointless and mad, not loving.

John wrote, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John. 4:10).

Jesus’ crucifixion was necessary because mankind is not sitting safely on the pier of life but is lost in sin and doomed to death...there was no other way for man to be saved.

“He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed”  
(1 Peter 2:24).

### **3. We Identifying with the cross**

When believers identify with the cross the Father identifies them with the perfect righteousness of His Son, whose blood was shed there. “Now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Eph. 2:13).

God sees our identity in Christ more than our identity as a sinner before Christ. As Paul states in Romans chapter eight:

--no condemnation in the beginning, and no separation at the end.

That’s why Paul strongly stated with the highest form of negative- me genoito – “May it never be!” that he gloried in anything but the cross.

Glory in the Cross

## II. Die to the World

through which the **world** has been **crucified** to me,  
and I to the **world**.

Paul glories in the cross because it has the power to free him from bondage to the world system of evil.

**The World** – from kosmos (the opposite of kaos from which we get the English word chaos) and speaks of an ordered system.

- Cosmetic is derived from kosmos and has the basic meaning of covering up disorder with something that brings order.
- In the New Testament, kosmos refers to the order of the evil world system ruled by Satan and his agents

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“The life of a person apart from Jesus Christ is the life of a victim of that system. It 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 promoted by the world, whether in gross immorality or simply in day-to-day self-gratification.”<sup>2</sup>

Description of an unbeliever and his connection to the world:

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”

(Eph. 2:1-3)

John wrote, “The whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (1 John 5:19).

John also warned believers against the world,

“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh

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<sup>2</sup> MacArthur, pp. 206-207.

and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever” (1 John 2:15-17).

Paul’s solution to the grip of the world is to die to it.

- I. Glory in the Cross
- II. Die to the world
- III. Live Crucified**

The world is crucified to me and I to the world...

To the Romans Paul wrote,

“Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual/reasonable service of worship” (Rom. 12. 1-2).

Two evil sisters were converted to Christ. They had been active in the party scene before becoming Christians and were well known as the “life of the party.”

One day they were invited to a big party by some famous people in the area.

Despite great encouragement by the party givers the sisters wrote them back, “We cannot come, for we have died.”

Three times in Galatians Paul used the term, “**crucified**,” to describe his life:

“I have been **crucified** with Christ; and 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 up for me.”

Gal. 2:20

“Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have **crucified** the flesh with its passions and desires.” Gal. 5:24

“But may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.” Gal. 6:14

In 2:20 and 6:14 the word **crucified** is in the aorist passive voice, which conveys a past and completed action - that it was accomplished on the cross.

In 5:24 “**crucified**” is in the active voice meaning an ongoing action.

We realize that our identification with the cross of Christ is a crucial principle for victorious living. Conquering the flesh, the world and Satan, who rules this world system, was established by our having been crucified with Christ, and is put into practice as we apply Christ's work to our daily lives – living crucified.

I have totally identified with Christ's crucifixion so that I now live as a dead man. I die daily to my own fleshly desires and passions, and to the evil world system. When temptation knocks at my door, I answer, "I cannot come for I have died."

We don't just die to the flesh and world but we are alive in the Spirit.

I greatly appreciate the prayer of **Peter Marshall**:

"Lord... where we are wrong, make us willing to change,  
and where we are right, make us easy to live with."

**Conclusion:**

"For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:15-16).

All the marks of man-made religion involve acts of human merit and works righteousness. Paul says that the only thing of importance is the new creation.

When he was converted he left his world behind him.

This is a bottom-line statement, similar to what Jesus said to Nicodemus,

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again,  
he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

"Therefore if any man is in Christ he is a new creature" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Only one thing counts: being a child of God, a new creation, because of the cross.

Paul ended his 2<sup>nd</sup> letter to the Corinthians,

"Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you – unless indeed you fail the test?" (2 Cor. 13:5).