

## [Jeremiah 9:23-24](#)

### Boasting Only in Christ

#### **Introduction**

In 1912, the Titanic was boasted as unsinkable. Four days after it departed Southampton, England for New York on its maiden voyage, the ship hit an iceberg in the North Atlantic and sank. In 1957, Ford Motor Company debuted its newest car, the Edsel, which was boasted as the car of the future. Two years later the Edsel was discontinued because it was a flop. In 1941, the United States boasted of its naval base in Pearl Harbor. On December 7 of that year, the unthinkable happened when the base was all but demolished by an enemy attack. David M. Kennedy in his book *"Freedom From Fear"* said this about the attack: "Many Americans instinctively believed that an inferior power like Japan could not possibly have inflicted such damage on the United States..."

Boasting indeed is man's nature. It's something we all do to one degree or another. Boasting in ourselves means we're desperate for self. In fact, boasting in self is pride and arrogance, which is evil ([James 4:16](#) and [1 Corinthians 5:6](#)). We're proud of such things as our wisdom, strength and wealth. It's a way of measuring our status among others. We can be prideful and arrogant in our boasting, even about our jobs, our families or how much stuff we have, and not even know it. In the church, if we're not careful, we can even boast about our theology, our worship music, our preaching or our new chairs. Boasting in self makes us feel good about ourselves because we think we're somebody; we're elevated above others. John Piper, author, pastor and founder of Desiring God Ministries said this: "We weren't meant to be somebody; we were meant to know Somebody".

So think about this. Nothing can be better than knowing God and boasting in Him. That's the theme of the text for this message ([Jeremiah 9:23-24](#)). And since knowing God is reason to boast, the Bible says do that; boast in the Lord. Here's [2 Corinthians 10:17](#).

Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord  
[2 Cor 10:17](#) (ESV)

Since knowing God is reason to boast, it's also reason to love and trust Him, as a child would love and trust their daddy. And knowing God is to delight in Jesus and to be desperate to know Him. That's the over-arching theme of this message! Boasting in anything or anyone else wells up pride and arrogance in ourselves, which is sin. That was God's message to His people through the prophet, Jeremiah. That's why Jeremiah angered the religious leaders of his day. They were more in love with themselves than God. But God wants His people to look to Himself as their delight because of His steadfast love, justice and righteousness. All of those things are who Jesus is, and we're in desperate need of boasting in Him instead of ourselves.

So with all of that said, what does it look like to boast only in Christ? Is it even possible to do that in a world that is so "self-absorbed"? Here's three (3) points that will enable us to comprehend what boasting only in Christ is all about. The three (3) points are:

- Boasting in ourselves - desperate for self
- Boasting in God - knowing Daddy
- Delighting in Jesus - desperate for Him

God's message to His people through Jeremiah over 2,500 years ago of treasuring Himself above themselves is still pertinent for us today. God wants us to see ourselves desperate for Him. God desires for us to know Him and delight in Him through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus is the preeminent person of God's love, justice and righteousness. We are to boast in Christ alone and no one else, not even ourselves. Because when we boast in ourselves, we are desperate for self.

### **1. Boasting In Ourselves - Desperate For Self**

In the Old Testament, God specifically says numerous times "Thus says the LORD". This implies that there's something really important being said by God. Listening to God and obeying His command is imperative for life and godliness. In this case, God is emphasizing the fact that boasting in self isn't what life is all about. Here again is [Jeremiah 9:23](#).

Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches...  
[Jer 9:23](#) (ESV)

When we boast in self, we further the kingdom of "me". We worship ourselves. We make much of our name instead of making much of Jesus' name. Think about your own life. If you're a believer in Christ, who do you boast in most often? Yourself or Jesus? You've heard of the JOY principle haven't you? J-O-Y. Jesus - first, others -second, yourself - last. That would be boasting in Christ because He is supreme above all things. Even others are placed above ourselves. That's the Christian life.

On the other hand, maybe you employ the YOU principle, much like I do all too often. Do you know what the YOU principle is? Y-O-U. Yourself - first, others - second, "Uh uh! I've got this Jesus. I've got this". It's all about you. It's all about furthering the kingdom of "self". It's all about ourselves in first place instead of Jesus or anyone else.

In a September 2014 *Our Daily Bread* devotional, Joe Stowell, pastor, author and former president of Moody Bible Institute related the story of his seven year old daughter asking "Dad, are we famous?" To which he replied, "No, Libby, we're not famous." She thought for a moment and then said rather indignantly, "Well, we would be if more people knew about us!" Even a seven year old's desperate need for boasting in self is fueled by sinful pride and arrogance.

The apostle Paul knew what it was like to have reason to boast in one's self. In fact, he had reason to brag about his Jewish upbringing. He had reason to boast in his righteousness in keeping the law as a Pharisee and his zeal for persecuting the church ([Philippians 3:5-6](#)). However, when Paul was rescued from his sin and from himself by Jesus on the road to Damascus, there was a dramatic change. He boasted in Christ instead of himself. Here's what Paul, inspired by God, wrote in [Philippians 3:7-8](#).

<sup>7</sup> But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. <sup>8</sup> Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ...

[Phil 3:7-8](#) (ESV)

Indeed the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus as Lord makes anything else pale in comparison. Boasting in our wisdom, strength and wealth is to be considered rubbish compared to knowing Christ. When we realize this truth, we begin to apprehend how desperate we are for knowing God. Not just knowing about Him, but knowing Him as Abba Father, Abba being the Aramaic word for Daddy.

## **2. Boasting In God - Knowing Daddy**

As mentioned a few moments ago, the greatest thing in life is knowing God and boasting in Him. Not just knowing about Him, but knowing Him in a relationship, such as a father to a son or daughter. There's an intimacy knowing God as Father and Friend that mere knowledge about Him cannot compare with. Again, here's [Jeremiah 9:24](#).

"...but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD."

[Jer 9:24](#) (ESV)

In the Westminster Catechism, there is a question that asks: "What is the chief end of man?" Answer: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever is an example of what it means to know God and to love God. And knowing God means to know Jesus. It means knowing the Holy Spirit and His indwelling power. Nothing can be better than that!

Knowing God as Daddy and knowing about Him are two totally different things. I could come to church every Sunday for decades, sing worship songs, listen to the preaching, and still not know God. I could memorize hundreds of Bible verses, attend a small group, take part in men's ministry and still only know about Him. Knowing God involves an intimate, loving, and trusting relationship as a father is to a son or daughter.

Over a half-century ago, when I was 11 years old, I attended a basketball camp at Duke University in Durham, NC. Being the home body that I am, I was really ready to go home by the end of the week. On Saturday morning, I was awakened by the sound of footsteps coming down the hallway. I knew whose footsteps those were. It was my daddy coming to take me home. That's how well I know my dad; I know he loves me; I trust him and I delight in him.

In a similar fashion, knowing Daddy, Abba Father, God, means knowing, loving, savoring and trusting Him through Christ. That's what the Christian life is all about. It gives reason to say "Let me tell you about my Dad; there's no one like Him!"

In a sermon a few years ago, Andrew LeCleir, one of the substitute preachers at La Crescent Evangelical Free Church, asked the rhetorical question: "Have you seen my Dad?" Andrew's point was that there's no one like God. No one protects His children better than Dad when sin, Satan and society pull at His kids. There's no one like Dad to turn to when life is painful and you're struggling with such things as a job loss, health issues or family problems. Daddy is greater than all of the pleasures of the world that we can boast in - money, security, popularity. "Have you seen my Dad?"

Here's one more reason why knowing Daddy is worth bragging and boasting about. Take a look at [Psalm 89:14](#).

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.  
[Psalms 89:14](#) (ESV)

Remember, knowing God is an intimate, love-laden relationship, not a well-polished religion of do's and don'ts. And to know God is to know Christ. Through God's great love, grace and mercy found in Christ, He provides the gift of eternal life to all who receive Jesus through grace alone by faith alone. That's the good news message of the cross. God practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness. He delights in those things. That's who God is. That's who Jesus is because He is God ([John 10:30](#)). Listen to these words from [Colossians 1:19](#) and [Hebrews 1:3a](#).

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell...  
[Col 1:19](#) (ESV)

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.  
[Heb 1:3a](#) (ESV)

The Lord Jesus is the fullness, the radiance and the exact imprint of God's nature. Sam Crabtree, teacher, pastor and board chairman at Bethlehem College and Seminary in Minneapolis, MN said "Jesus is not merely the echo of God; He is God." And since He is God, there is a desperate reason to delight in Jesus because He is everything.

### **3. Delighting In Jesus - Desperate For Him**

In the text ([Jeremiah 9:23-24](#)), God says that He delights in love, justice and righteousness. Therefore, He delights in His Son, the Lord Jesus, because He is all of those things. And if you're trusting Jesus as your only Hope for today and all of eternity, God delights in you. Christ's righteousness has been credited to you by God in His grace. By grace, the Holy Spirit has moved your heart to trust Jesus. Jesus is the perfect love of God displayed in the cross. Jesus is the only One in whom God's perfect love and justice intersect. Jesus is the true and perfect righteousness of God. And by His righteousness, sinners like you and I can come to the Father with empty hands. No merit of our own. No boasting in our wisdom, our strength or our riches. Boasting only in Christ. That's reason to delight in God. That's reason for desperately delighting in Jesus.

Let me give a warning here. Desperately delighting in Jesus means things are going to get costly for self. Accepting the cost results in a downgrade of self. It means living the JOY principle instead of the YOU principle. Boasting in Jesus and delighting in Him can be dangerous. In some places, delighting in Christ and knowing Him means church buildings are burned. It means abandonment, torture, imprisonment and even death. Just ask Christians in parts of Asia, Africa or the Middle East. Do you delight in Jesus and are you desperate for Him? Do you boast in knowing Him as Father, Friend, Lord and Savior?

Remember the sinking of the Titanic alluded to earlier in this message? Decades after this disaster, there was an exhibit of relics from the ship's wreckage. Visitors to the exhibit were given a replica of a ticket for the voyage with the actual name of a passenger. On a large board were listed all the names of those who were on the ship. A line was drawn between those who were "rescued" and those who were "lost". If your or my name were on the board, which side of the line would we want it to be? I dare say all of us would answer "rescued".

Sin is like a shipwreck. Deadly. Tragic. Disastrous. Unless we're "rescued" from sin, our name would certainly be in the "lost" column. Hopelessly lost for eternity in the deep and dark waters of God's judgment upon sin. But God made the way for sinners like us to be rescued ([Romans 5:8](#)). Jesus is the only way ([John 14:6](#)). He received punishment for sin on the cross ([Isaiah 53:5](#)). Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is like a man giving up his place on a lifeboat, so that another can be rescued and live. Those who receive that gift of life by faith are set free from judgment and death ([John 5:24](#)). To know Jesus is to be "rescued". To not know Him or just know about Him is to be "lost". Which side of the line are you on today? "Rescued" or "lost"?

If you don't know Him or you know about Him, are you desperate for Jesus to rescue you today? The Bible says repent and believe. You can do that by turning toward God and away from sin. That's repentance. Then trust Christ that He is who He says He is. Receive Him by faith alone in God's grace alone as Savior, Redeemer and Friend ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). You can do that now. Today could be the first day you boast in Jesus. Today could be the first time you can say "Have you seen my Dad?"

And what if you're already trusting Jesus, but much like me; you're still relying upon your own self. Will it be our wisdom, strength and wealth that gets us through the day? Or will it be trusting and boasting in the One who is supreme over all things. After all, it's because of the Holy Spirit that we boast in Jesus as Lord; He did the work in bringing us to Christ. And He'll keep working with us, through us, for us and in spite of us to become more like Christ. Let's take a look at [1 Corinthians 1:30-31](#)

<sup>30</sup> And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup> so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

[1 Cor 1:30-31](#) (ESV)

## **Conclusion**

Boasting in one's wisdom, strength and wealth seems right, but in the end it's actually desperation for self. And self is all about pride and arrogance, which is sin. On the other hand, boasting in God and knowing Him means knowing the Lord Jesus and loving Him more than self. The Holy Spirit reveals the truths of knowing God in Christ intimately, as the relationship of a father to a son or daughter. This is an example of what it means to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

And to know Jesus and boast in Him as Friend, Elder Brother, Savior and Lord is to know love, justice and righteousness. God delights in those things. That's why God delights in His Son. That's why God delights in those who delight in Jesus. That's why ambassadors for Christ are needed to share the message of the cross to everyone on this planet. Whether at your next door neighbor's house or in the jungles of Ghana, Africa, Jesus Christ is to be boasted in. Within this broken and sin-shattered world of despair, chaos and self-absorption, there's an urgent need for boasting only in Christ ([Galatians 6:14](#)). How will you and I serve the Lord to meet that need?

So, in conclusion, picture a pond with ripples emanating from a center. Think of the center of the "ripple effect" as boasting only in Christ instead of self. Christ is at the center, not ourselves. And the ripples of love, justice and righteousness are emanating from Jesus and impacting the world for His glory and the good of His people. With the Holy Spirit's guidance, we cannot help but proclaim the excellencies of His name. We cannot help but turn our eyes to Jesus, realizing our desperate need to delight in Him, to enjoy Him forever and boast only in Him. Nothing can be better than that. Amen.