

# TO BOAST OR NOT TO BOAST

(No. 1210 – 10/18/21 – Sermon Online Zoom)

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. God's choices and ways are often very different from ours:

1. **Isa. 55:8-9:** <sup>8</sup>*“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.* <sup>9</sup>*“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.”*
2. **1 Cor. 1:18-31:** <sup>18</sup>*For the message of the Cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.* <sup>19</sup>*For it is written [Isa. 29:14]: “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate.”* <sup>20</sup>*Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?* <sup>21</sup>*For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know Him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe.*

<sup>22</sup>*Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom,* <sup>23</sup>*but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles,* <sup>24</sup>*but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* <sup>25</sup>*For the foolishness of God is wiser than man's wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than man's strength.*

<sup>26</sup>*Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.* <sup>27</sup>*But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.* <sup>28</sup>*He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,* <sup>29</sup>**SO THAT NO ONE MAY BOAST BEFORE HIM.** <sup>30</sup>*It is because of Him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.* <sup>31</sup>*Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”*

- B. Many stumble over Christ and the message of the Cross (GM and all of his books, seminarians, etc.—foolishness!)
- C. God frequently rejects the powerful in their high positions and chooses the lowly instead (**Luke 3:1-2**):

*<sup>1</sup>In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene—<sup>2</sup>during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, **the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the desert.***

- D. God often deliberately uses people and methods that are weak or foolish in the eyes of the world. Consider the following...
1. God used the blood of lambs on the doorposts of the Israelites to liberate 2 million slaves from 400 years of Egyptian captivity in one single night!
  2. After venomous snakes began killing many Israelites who grumbled in the wilderness, God told Moses to make a bronze serpent (they were to make no graven images!), put it on a pole, and anyone who looked at the image was healed! Crazy! [See Num. 21:1-9; John 3:14-15]
  3. Trumpets & shouts brought down the walls of Jericho!
  4. God reduced Gideon's army from 32,000 to 300 to defeat the Midianites without a single sword (**Jdg. 7:2**):

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*The LORD said to Gideon, "You have **too many** men for Me to deliver Midian into their hands. **In order that Israel may not boast against Me** that her own strength has saved her..."*

5. Shamgar killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad [Spanish: "una aguijada de bueyes"] and Samson defeated a whole army of 1,000 with the jawbone of a donkey!
6. A young shepherd boy with a sling and a stone killed Goliath
7. In the days of King Jehoshaphat, three massive enemy armies attacked Israel. The Lord put the choir at the head of the Israelite army to sing, "Give thanks to the Lord, for His love endures forever." What foolishness! Oh, but what power! All of the enemies were annihilated without a single Israelite sword or spear!

Moses  
& Red  
Sea  
story

8. Jesus fed 5,000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish!
  9. God's math is very different from ours—be careful with numbers and counting!
- E. The Gospel: What a strange way to save the world! (Mary & Joseph, born in a stable, Nazareth, carpenter's son, arrested, rejected, crucified, etc.)

## II. THE GOSPEL EXCLUDES BOASTING!

- A. **Rom. 3:23-27:** <sup>23</sup>*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* <sup>24</sup>*and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.* <sup>25</sup>*God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood. He did this to demonstrate His justice, because in His forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—* <sup>26</sup>*He did it to demonstrate His justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.* <sup>27</sup>***Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith.***
1. Shall we boast about our works and accomplishments?  
NEVER: "I did all the sinning, Jesus did all the saving!"
  2. Justification by faith eliminates all boasting (**Rom. 4:2**):  
*If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, **he had something to boast about—but not before God.***
- B. **Eph. 2:8-10:** <sup>8</sup>*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this **not from yourselves**, it is the gift of God—* <sup>9</sup>***not by works, SO THAT NO ONE CAN BOAST.*** <sup>10</sup>*For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*
- C. God knows the human heart—how prone we are to pride and self-exaltation: the Gospel is the ONLY CURE!
- D. **1 John 2:15-17:** <sup>15</sup>*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* <sup>16</sup>*For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the **boasting of what he has and does**—comes not from the Father but from the world.* <sup>17</sup>*The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.*

### III. GOD'S REAL "FIVE-FOLD MINISTRY" (not Eph. 4:11 – nowadays, everyone is an "apostle" or "prophet"... how many churches are you *over* or *under*?)

- A. God deliberately chose most of us based on one or more of these *five qualifications*:
1. **Foolish** [Gk. *moros* = "dull, stupid"] things of the world to shame the wise
  2. **Weak** [Gk. *asthenēs* = "without strength, helpless, unimpressive"] things of the world to shame the strong
  3. **Lowly** [Gk. *agenēs* = "unborn, of no family, ignoble, base, vile"] things of this world
  4. **Despised** [Gk. *exoutheneō* = "contemptible, rejected"] things
  5. **Things that are not** ["nobodies" MSG] to nullify the things that are

- B. The ultimate purpose is to shame/nullify all that the world boasts in

- C. God didn't choose us because of some greatness in us—He chose us for the praise of His glorious grace (**Eph. 1:4-6**):

*<sup>4</sup>For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love <sup>5</sup>He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will—<sup>6</sup>to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves.*

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& ME

- D. How could we use the ministry to glorify ourselves? (**Jer. 45:5**):

*Are you seeking great things for yourself? Don't do it!*

- E. We are all nobodies—zeros—things that are not, but a *ONE* in front of (before) zeros makes them all significant! Whiteboard:

\$ 000,000,000,000,000 = ZERO DOLLARS

\$ **1**,000,000,000,000,000 = ONE QUADRILLION DOLLARS!

- F. Jesus prayed all night, but look at the disciples He chose—what a motley crew!

1. **Luke 6:12-16:** <sup>12</sup>*One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.* <sup>13</sup>*When morning came, He called His disciples to Him and chose twelve of them, whom He also designated apostles:*

<sup>14</sup>Simon (whom He named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, <sup>15</sup>Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, <sup>16</sup>Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

2. Peter was a loudmouthed, hotheaded fisherman who denied Jesus 3 times to whom Jesus said “Get behind Me Satan!”
3. James and John wanted positions at His right and left hand and wanted to call down fire on their enemies!
4. Peter, James and John couldn’t even pray for one hour in the Garden of Gethsemane—they all slept!
5. Matthew was a despised tax collector
6. Thomas thought Jesus was taking all of them to die with Lazarus (**John 11:14-16**):

<sup>11</sup>So then Jesus told them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, <sup>15</sup>and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.” <sup>16</sup>Then Thomas (called Didymus) said to the rest of the disciples, “**Let us also go, that we may die with Him.**”

7. Thomas didn’t know where they were going (**John 14:4-6**):

<sup>4</sup>You know the way to the place where I am going.”

<sup>5</sup>Thomas said to Him, “Lord, **we don’t know where You are going, so how can we know the way?**” <sup>6</sup>Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

8. And Thomas refused to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead unless he saw Him (**John 20:24-29**):

<sup>24</sup>Now Thomas (called Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. <sup>25</sup>So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “**Unless I see the nail marks in His hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe it.**” <sup>26</sup>A week later His disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” <sup>27</sup>Then He said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see My hands. Reach out your hand and put it into My side. **Stop doubting and believe.**” <sup>28</sup>Thomas said to Him, “My Lord and my

God!" <sup>29</sup> Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

9. NONE of the Twelve ever understood anything Jesus was saying/teaching, He rebuked them repeatedly for their lack of faith and unbelief, and they ALL argued about which one them was the greatest!
10. They ALL forsook Him when He was arrested, and only John and a few women were at the Cross to witness the crucifixion.
11. NONE of the disciples believed Mary Magdalene's report about the empty tomb (**Mark 16:9-18**):

<sup>9</sup>When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, **He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had driven seven demons.** <sup>10</sup>She went and told those who had been with Him and who were mourning and weeping. <sup>11</sup>When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen Him, **they did not believe it.** <sup>12</sup>Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form to two of them while they were walking in the country. <sup>13</sup>These returned and reported it to the rest; but **they did not believe them either.** <sup>14</sup>Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they were eating; **He rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe** those who had seen Him after He had risen.

[NOTE: We usually skip over vv.9-14 to get to vv.15-18, but they are more powerful in light of the preceding]

<sup>15</sup>He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. <sup>16</sup>**Whoever believes** and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. <sup>17</sup>**And these signs will accompany those who believe:** In My name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; <sup>18</sup>they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

12. Judas, one of the Twelve, betrayed Him!
- G. BUT, after the Holy Spirit fell on these weak, foolish men at Pentecost, they became LIONS for the Lord, turning the world upside down for Jesus Christ! All the glory goes to Jesus! There's hope for you and me!

#### IV. BOAST IN THE LORD

- A. In 1 Corinthians 1 (vv.29-31), right after declaring that no one may boast before the Lord, Paul encourages *boasting*: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.”
- B. Yes, it’s okay to brag... brag about the Lord!
- C. I wrote a book about this, *God Helps Those Who Cannot Help Themselves*, because *that* is the story of my life—God helps the helpless, He gives wisdom to the foolish, and He makes somebodies out of nobodies!
  - 1. **Heb. 13:5-6:** *<sup>5</sup>Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” <sup>6</sup>So we say with confidence [“boldly” KJV], “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”*
  - 2. We should look for every opportunity to brag about our Heavenly Father and the great things He does!

#### V. FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

- A. God doesn’t make any mistakes in those He chooses
  - 1. Moses, Gideon, and Jeremiah each thought God had the wrong man when He called them
  - 2. Jesus prayed all night before choosing Peter, James, John... even Judas Iscariot—He didn’t make any wrong choices.
- B. When Jesus called blind Bartimaeus, the disciples told him, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” (Mark 10:49)
- C. If God has chosen you, jump up and down for joy! His grace is sufficient—He can use you even if you’re weak, slow of speech, low social status, or despised and rejected by the world.
- D. God has promised to transform little worms into mighty threshing instruments with teeth to harvest the nations (**Isa. 41:14-15**):

*“Do not be afraid, O worm Jacob, O little Israel, for I Myself will help you,” declares the LORD, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. “See, I will make you into a threshing sledge, new and sharp, with many teeth. You will thresh the mountains and crush them, and reduce the hills to chaff.”*