

WHEN BOASTING BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE

Part 8 Ephesians Chapter 2

Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV **SLIDE**

... *By grace you have been saved ... ⁹not by works, so that **no one can boast.***

'boast' = *kauchēsētai* To boast; to glory (exult) proudly.

IN THIS CASE ... IT IS BEING PROUD OF WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED SPIRITUALLY TOWARD OUR SALVATION

It is being pleased with ourselves because we think we have gained some spiritual or moral righteousness and have gained God's favour.

COMING TO CHRIST WITHOUT PRIDE

I've told this story before but I want to bring out that **this issue of self-achievement** in salvation was the issue that brought me to Christ.

Before I had received Jesus as my Saviour, I started to seek God. At that time, I gave up many worldly things, such as smoking and drinking ... I gave up eating meat ... I started meditating ... reading spiritual books ... chanting ...

I believed that God was pure and that in order for me to merge into God, I had to also be pure ...

SO I STARTED TO 'PURIFY' MYSELF.

However, one evening, while I was telling a Christian lady everything I HAD GIVEN UP TO GET CLOSE TO GOD ... she yelled at me! SHE SAID, 'YOU'RE PROUD AND WHEN YOU GO TO JESUS HE'LL SAY, "I DON'T KNOW YOU".'

This statement impacted me so much I almost fell off my chair.

The room started spinning and I started to have hot flushes.

Somehow, I managed to get away from this woman and made it home ... but those words kept going round and round in my head, 'YOU'RE PROUD ... YOU'RE PROUD ... YOU'RE PROUD'.

And there I saw it! I realized that everything I did to make myself pure and holy, no matter how sincere the initial motive might be - it

SLIDE *would leave me wearing a great GOLDEN CROWN OF PRIDE and this would instantly corrupt my purity.*

I would think, 'LOOK AT WHAT I'VE ACHIEVED BY MY OWN SPIRITUALITY?'

I further thought ... 'EVEN IF I COULD ATTAIN TRUE HUMILITY ... IT WOULD BE CORRUPTED BECAUSE I WOULD BE PROUD OF ATTAINING THAT HUMILITY'.

SLIDE I WAS TRAPPED IN THE CIRCLE OF MY OWN EGO

SLIDE I WAS BOUND BY THE SHACKLES OF MY OWN SELF-EFFORT

SLIDE I WAS LOCKED IN THE PRISON OF MY OWN PERSONAL PERFORMANCE

I COULD NOT GET OUT BY MY OWN HAND ...

THE MORE EFFORT & ENERGY I PUT INTO BREAKING FREE ...

*THE MORE POWERFUL MY PRIDE BECAME ... **SLIDE***

THE STRONGER THESE SHACKLES TIGHTENED AROUND MY ANKLES ...

THE GREATER MY EGO BOASTED ...

IT WAS LIKE 'QUICKSAND' THE MORE YOU STRUGGLE ... THE DEEPER YOU SINK ...

SLIDE C.S. Lewis, 'As The Ruin Falls'

All this is flashy rhetoric about loving you.

I never had a selfless thought since I was born.

I am mercenary and self-seeking through and through:

I want God, you, all friends, merely to serve my turn.

Peace, re-assurance, pleasure, are the goals I seek,

I cannot crawl one inch outside my proper skin:

I talk of love – a scholar's parrot may talk Greek –

But always end where I begin.

NO ONE CAN SAVE THEMSELVES BECAUSE BOASTING CANCELS ALL PURITY.

It's like that story: 'The church gave me a medal for humility so I wore it with pride.'

One's self cannot become selfless by self-achievement.

SLIDES x 2 Poem, 'My Great Humility' (See End Notes)

Jesus of course knew this and escaped the trap of self-testimony.

John 5:31-32 NIV

"If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true (Worthy of Credit)

³²There is another who testifies in my favour, and I know that his testimony about me is true.

In other words, 'I will not tell you how holy I am ... how powerful I am ... How important I am ...

Jesus walked in the character of the Father and that character is truly, beautifully humble.

UNDER GRACE IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE FLESH TO BOAST

Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV **SLIDE**

*... By grace you have been saved ... ⁹ not by works, so that no one **can boast.***

In our text, Paul is not just commanding us not to boast because it's against God's Grace ...

THIS STATEMENT IS FAR STRONGER.

HE IS STATING ... IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BOAST WHEN YOU ARE SAVED BY GRACE. There's nothing to boast in because it's nothing we did ...

NO ONE CAN BOAST.

The Amplified Bible states it as follows ...

Ephesians 2:9 Amplified Bible **SLIDE**

*... No one will **[be able to]** boast or **take credit in any way** [for his salvation].*

Romans 3:27 NLT **SLIDE**

Can we boast, then, that we have done anything to be accepted by God? No! ... Literally - IT WAS SHUT OUT

SLIDE UNDER LAW BOASTING IS DEMANDED

UNDER GRACE BOASTING IS EXCLUDED

– IT IS IMPOSSIBLE

YOUR NEW BORN SPIRIT CANNOT BOAST ABOUT YOUR SELF.

Living in The Spirit you **CANNOT** boast about your self-righteousness.

Boasting is an obvious sign that the person telling about their religious achievements is walking in the flesh ...

LOOK AT THE WHOLE SCENARIO AGAIN IN EPHESIANS 2 –

- ***This Grace has delivered us from the power of The Prince of The Power of the Air ... (verse 2)***
- ***Changed our status from ‘Children of wrath’ to beloved children of God. (verse 3)***
- ***This Grace has brought life into our death-state. (verse 5)***
- ***It has raised us up into The Heavenly realms and has seated us with Christ in heavenly places. (verse 6)***

So well does Paul shout ... ***“By grace You have been saved ...”***

***This Grace has given us riches we didn’t even know existed ...
Far more than we could have ever earned in 10 million lifetimes –***

FREELY GIVEN – UNDESERVED & WITHOUT COST TO US.

This Grace has made us the privileged people of The Most High God ... with a dignity only possessed by the Most Holy and Noble –

FREELY GIVEN – UNDESERVED & WITHOUT COST TO US.

It has exalted us to the Greatness of His Position ...

Welcomed us into the Palace of His Presence ...

And seated us in His Power like great dignitaries.

And He has bestowed upon us titles ...

We could not have done it ...and neither did we deserve it ...

If you would dare to ask God ‘Why’? He would say, ‘Because I loved you’.

HE HAS PAID THE PRICE FOR IT ALL FOR YOU & ME

**WHEN YOU SEE WHAT THIS GRACE COST GOD & JESUS, YOU
COULD NEVER BOAST.**

IT COST US NOTHING ... BUT IT COST GOD & JESUS EVERYTHING

THE COST OF SUCH EXTRAVAGANT GRACE IS BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION ...

SLIDE GRACE COST THE FATHER HIS SON & THE SON HIS LIFE.

IT COST THE FATHER THE MOST PRECIOUS THING HE HAD – HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON.

IT BROKE GOD'S HEART WHEN HE HAD TO JUDGE HIS SON UPON THE CROSS FOR OUR SIN.

IT COST THE SON HIS HUMAN LIFE – THE DARKNESS OF THE SOUL OF SIN ... THE ABANDONMENT OF HIS FATHER ...

THE FATHER GAVE HIS SON FOR US.

THE SON GAVE HIS LIFE FOR US.

IN THE LIGHT OF SUCH GRACE ... WHO COULD EVER BOAST OF THEIR OWN EXPLOITS ...

IT IS LUDICROUS!

BUT THIS GRACE EXTENDS BEYOND OUR REGENERATION

Ephesians 2:8-9 NIV **SLIDE**

*By grace you have been **saved** ... ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.*

WHEN PAUL SPEAKS HERE ABOUT BEING SAVED

He didn't only mean being saved from sin and hell ... or even seated in heavenly places which has happened 100% by grace.

PAUL ALSO MEANT OUR ONGOING WALK OF SALVATION

'SALVATION' IS A COMPREHENSIVE WORD WHICH COVERS 3 MAIN AREAS

REGENERATION / TRANSFORMATION / GLORIFICATION

- THERE IS THE ESTABLISHED ASPECT OF SALVATION ... CALLED REGENERATION – **100% BY GRACE**
- THERE IS AN ONGOING ASPECT OF OUR SALVATION ... CALLED SANCTIFICATION OR TRANSFORMATION – **100% BY GRACE**
- THERE IS THE FINAL MANIFESTATION OF OUR SALVATION ... CALLED GLORIFICATION – **100% BY GRACE**

'Ongoing salvation' is what most believers get tripped up in and where they go back into works.

We must understand that this daily aspect of salvation is also 100% by grace. That is: it is not by any work we do to improve ourselves or try to become more like Jesus. If it was, we would have cause to boast in our self-righteousness (as many do).

THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT THE GALATIAN CHURCH WAS DOING

Galatians 3:3 NLT **SLIDE**

How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort?

THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT DID IN THE 19TH CENTURY & WHAT MANY CHRISTIANS STILL DO TODAY ... BECAUSE THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND THAT SALVATION IS 100% BY GRACE

The 'Holiness Movement' was a movement that fell into this trap of boasting in their own self-attainment.

'Look how I'm not sinning ... Look how consecrated I am to the Lord ...'

It produced religious elitists ...

Methodist minister Timothy Merritt of Boston founded a journal called 'The Guide to Christian Perfection', which he later renamed 'The Guide to Holiness'.

Another term used is 'Entire Sanctification'.

Holiness groups believe the moral aspects of the law of God are pertinent for today and so expect their adherents to obey behavioral rules - for example, many groups have statements prohibiting the consumption of alcohol, participation in any form of gambling, and entertainments such as dancing and theatre-going.

WHAT IRONY -

Amanda Smith, a preacher in the African Methodist Episcopal Church testified that she became entirely sanctified in 1868 and then began to preach Christian holiness throughout the world. She was referred to as "God's image carved in ebony".

THE ONE THING THESE PEOPLE DIDN'T CONSIDER WAS THEIR CROWN OF PRIDE THAT THEIR SELF-ATTAINMENT OF HOLINESS OR SANCTIFICATION LEFT ON THEIR HEAD ... AS **THE CONCEPT OF TRUE HUMILITY ELUDED THEM.**

THAT INTERNAL, LEGALISTIC VOICE

WE MAY NOT YELL IT OUT OR BOAST OUT LOUD ABOUT OUR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS ... BUT – WE ARE CONTINUALLY NAGGED BY THAT INNER VOICE OF LAW THAT CONTINUALLY POINTS OUT OUR FAILURES AND DEMANDS WE DO BETTER ...

IT IS OUR WEAK CONSCIENCE SAYING ...

What have you done today ... are you really good enough ... are you living up to the standards?

And we answer with internal boasting –

'I've done this ... I'm getting better. I'm not as bad as some people.'

Subconsciously we justify ourselves saying, 'I don't swear ... my marriage is good ... my children are good ... I have a good job ...'

1 Corinthians 4:7 Berean Study Bible

*For who makes you so superior? **What do you have that you did not receive?** And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?*

PRIDE IS UGLY

PRIDE IS THE ORIGINAL SIN OF SATAN

Isaiah 14:13-14 ESV

You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'

HUMILITY IS BEAUTIFUL

HUMILITY IS THE CHARACTER OF GOD HIMSELF

SLIDE

**THANK GOD THERE IS A WAY OUT OF PRIDE UNDER GRACE.
THANK GOD TRUE HUMILITY IS POSSIBLE UNDER GRACE.**

UNDER GRACE WE ARE SET FREE FROM THIS HORRIBLE PRIDE
AND **CAN EMBRACE BEAUTIFUL HUMILITY**

TWO THINGS WE DO IN THIS WONDERFUL PLACE OF GRACE

1. GIVE PRAISE TO GOD

2 Corinthians 10:17 ESV

Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord." (see also [1 Corinthians 1:31](#))

*Peter was a great drummer / percussionist who had recently found
The Grace of Salvation. When we played in church, He had in his
hands a great talent to help minister to people.*

*However, a few times when I was leading and the music was
building ... suddenly **the drums dropped out** ...*

SLIDE *I turned to see why this had happened and I saw Peter ... HIS
STICKS DOWN ... HIS HANDS RAISED TO GOD IN GRATITUDE FOR
HIS SALVATION ... **BOASTING IN THE GOD OF HIS SALVATION
NOT IN HIS TALENT OR MUSIC MINISTRY** ...*

Ephesians 1:6 NLT

So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us ...

2. GROW IN THIS GRACE BY GRACE

Peter signing off his last letter says ...

2 Peter 3:18 – **SLIDE**

*... **Grow in the grace** and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus
Christ ...*

This is the only way a Christian Grows spiritually ...

**THIS IS HOW TO MATURE IN OUR CHRISTIAN WALK AND STAY IN
THIS BEAUTIFUL HUMILITY ...**

**I WILL MATURE IN MY SALVATION ... NOT BY OWN EFFORTS
(WORKS) BUT BY GOD'S GRACE WORKING IN ME**

Relax ... it's Grace that is working in you and for you.

Let the Grace of God work in you.

NEXT WEEK:
WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP

END NOTES

MY GREAT HUMILITY SLIDES 9 & 10

*Of all the noblest ones of earth
To whom this world has deemed to birth
Twix borders stretched from sea to sky
There comes no humbler one than I

A trait perfected through the years
Amongst the ones they call my peers
I've left them all so far behind
'Cause I am of a humbler kind

And greater still I grow each day
And pay the price most cannot pay
For clearly they have not attained
This humble state that I have gained

Yes by myself I have achieved
This place for which the others grieved
It's obvious to all who see
In me, there's great humility.*

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Deuteronomy 8:17-18 Berean Study Bible SLIDE

You might say in your heart, 'The power and strength of my hands have made this wealth for me.' ¹⁸But remember that it is the Lord your God who gives you the power to gain wealth ...