

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Boasting Only In The Cross

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Paul writes, “*But far be it for me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world hath been crucified unto me and I unto the world*” (Galatians 6:14). As a Jew, Paul could glory in circumcision which signified a Jew’s covenant relationship with God through Abraham. But now through his knowledge of the Lord, Paul gloried only in the cross of Christ which made all other achievements in the flesh of a Jew as “refuse” (Philippians 3:8).

The cross is inescapable death. Paul viewed the Lord’s death on the cross as the basis for his relationship with the world. He was dead to the world, with all its vain glory and tempting wisdom. It had no drawing power, for he was drawn to the Lord, and Him crucified. But the world was not drawn to Paul either. While the Gospel of God’s love and solution to deadly sin opened honest hearts with a drawing power to God, Paul’s preaching of Christ crucified was foolishness to the worldly mindset of the Gentile and a stumbling block to the Jewish mind which gloried in the flesh.

The cross was an instrument of capital punishment. It was a disgraceful way to die. Hanging impaled on a wooden stake was an object of shame. Jesus “endured the

cross, despising shame” (Hebrews 12:2). To boast in the cross would be like glorying in the “hangman’s noose,” or the “electric chair.” Who would say, “I glory only in the electric chair!”? The cross was the instrument, but Jesus the Christ was the object of glory whose death on the cross was the means to life.

While Paul gloried in the cross, he also boasted in other things. He gloried in his tribulations because they provided an opportunity for steadfastness issuing into approval before God (Romans 5:2). He boasted in his infirmities which exposed his weaknesses (2 Corinthians 11:30). He boasted in brethren like the Corinthians unto Titus and was vindicated when Titus rejoiced in the Corinthians’ reception of him and his teaching (2 Corinthians 7:14-16). These same Corinthians were Paul’s boast before the brethren in Macedonia on their preparedness, stirring up zeal in Macedonian hearts to assist the poor saints in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 9:2). He boasted in the Thessalonians to all the churches for their persistence of faith through persecutions (2 Thessalonians 1:4). Paul even boasted in the boundaries God had set for his ministry, not in the work already established by others (2 Corinthians 10:13-15).

Wait a minute...did Paul say he only gloried in the cross? If so,

how could he boast in all these other people and things? Is Paul’s life contradicting this statement of boasting only in the cross?

There is no contradiction in Paul’s exclusive focus in glorying in the cross. The cross is the foundation for the glorying in the other spiritual realities in which he boasted. Without the cross there would be no ministry in the Gospel. The Gospel message would not exist to promote above personal glory. No brethren saved in Christ would be putting God first above their material possessions to help fellow saints. Without the cross, there would be no hope in heaven to reward steadfastness through tribulations in connection with the faith of the Gospel.

Paul’s boasting is like the crown on the top of an umbrella. All the spines on an umbrella unite at the single crowning point. The cross is the spiritual crowning point of glory, that unites all the other connecting spines. Paul’s Gospel ministry, faithful brethren, personal weaknesses, and steadfast hope in Heaven could not exist without the cross but all unite at the cross like the spines at the single crown of an umbrella. No man should boast before God (1 Corinthians 1:29), except in the cross which focuses all boasting upon our wise and saving God!