

Good Boasting = Boasting in the Grace of God

Small Group Follow-up Study for 2 Corinthians 1:12-14

RE-READ

[12] For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you. [13] For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand and I hope you will fully understand—[14] just as you did partially understand us—that on the day of our Lord Jesus you will boast of us as we will boast of you.

RECAP

Here, Paul addresses head on the fact that the Corinthians didn't believe a word he said. He says, "For we are not writing to you anything other than what you read and understand." The New Living Translation puts it this way: "My letters have been straightforward, and there is nothing written between the lines and nothing you can't understand." In other words, you can believe me. You can believe me.

Paul supports this claim by boasting about the testimony of his conscience. It's clear. It doesn't bother him. And this is one of two boasts that Paul talks about in this text that we would do well to learn from. In v. 12, Paul boasts in the testimony of his conscience. In v. 14, we see him boasting of his brothers and sisters in Christ at Corinth. In both cases, these boasts ought to be our aim. In other words, when we experience tension in the household of faith we should be able to boast, first, in the testimony of *our* conscience and then, second, in the very brothers and sisters we are at odds with.

As Paul points out, his conscience is clear because of the grace of God (v. 12). That together with the fact that the best thing about our brother or sister in Christ is that they are drenched in Calvary's love make it clear that both of these boasts are actually boasting in the cross (cf. Galatians 6:14).

RESPOND

1. What caught your attention from Sunday's sermon? What are you still thinking about/mulling over? What questions did Sunday's sermon raise that remain unanswered in your mind?
2. Practice what it would mean to make a personal boast concerning something that God has done in your life. Practice identifying and celebrating evidences of God's grace in someone else's life.
3. How does our future together impact our present brotherly boasting? Describe some ways you can keep that future focus and bring it into the present.
4. What is the relationship between boasting and what Jesus purchased in the new covenant?
5. What sort of things can we do and/or keep from doing to ensure we maintain a clear conscience in all our interactions with one another in the midst of difficulties?
6. Given our discussion tonight, what sorts of things should we be praying for our church?