

Galatians 6:14

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 August 2026

Preacher: Paul Levy

[0:00] And open your Bibles to Galatians chapter 6. As I said this morning, we're going to flip over next week and Ruben is going to preach through the rest of 1 Corinthians in the evening.

! And try and unpack that.

And it's the phrase in chapter 6 of Galatians and verse 14. Where it says this, but far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Far be it, far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. All of us boast. All of us glory. Sometimes we're entitled to boast. We boast about our own nation, our own language, our own culture. We can say with pride we're from a certain part of the country.

[1:17] We can be proud of our city. You can be proud of the city that you're from. I hope you are. You can be proud of your own traditions. Proud of your music.

Proud of your literature. Your poetry. Proud of your sport. Be proud of your own church. You can be proud of your people's contribution to national affairs and world affairs.

It's a good thing to be proud of. Proud of the sacrifice of so many. Proud of young people who bring credit to you. Proud of your family.

The Jews were proud. Proud of their history. They were proud of the law. They were proud of the Torah. They were proud of the temple.

They were proud of the great heroes of their faith. Moses. Elijah. David. Many others. Ruth. And Paul.

[2:13] And the Apostle Paul too was proud. In fact he'd always been proud. He was proud of his nation. He was proud to be a Jew. He was proud to be a Pharisee.

A Pharisee of the Pharisees he calls himself. But then God turned his life upside down indeed. And Paul was still proud. And Paul still boasted.

But now Paul has different boasts. He was still boasting but none of the old things. In fact he uses the word. This word time and time again.

He was proud of the hope of the glory of God. Paul was proud of his sufferings in the service of Jesus Christ. Proud of his scars. He was proud of his marvellous God.

And the kind of God who took on our human nature. And came into our human situation. And bore our human state. And shared our pain.

[3:17] And the God man empathised and sympathised with us. And Paul thought that his God was beyond compare.

As he thought about God and what he'd done. He thought that his God was the greatest God imaginable. No greater God could be conceived for the Apostle Paul.

But there was something that towered over all of that. Over all of those things. Of which Paul speaks. It tells us that he boasted above all. In the cross of Jesus Christ.

That above everything else. Was what Paul was most proud of. He thought that the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. Was the most amazing. And stupendous. And greatest event in human history.

That nothing like it had happened before. And nothing like it would happen ever again. There never had been. And there never would be a man like the Lord Jesus. And there never would be an event like the cross of Christ.

[4:18] And Paul was so proud of what God had done. At the cross. Where his Lord had died.

And that was Paul's boast and his pride. That he followed the Lord crucified on the cross of Calvary. What a thing to boast of.

The Lord that he loved had been crucified. And it wasn't only that. But there was so much else that made it kind of anomalous and extraordinary.

As a boast. It was the cross of Christ as Lord. That means that the cross that Paul boasted in. Was the cross of one who had known no sin.

And because he knew no sin. And because he was without sin. And in Paul's Jewish mind of course. Death was linked to sin.

[5:20] The wages of sin is death. Why had this sinless one died? And yet Paul was so proud of it. Proud that the one who had known no sin.

Had received the wages for sin. And Paul was so proud of that. And beyond that. This crucified one was God's own son.

He was the one who was in very nature God. He was in every respect God. The Lord Jesus had all the qualities of God. He was the image of God.

The image of the invisible God. He had all the perfections of God. He had done all those God things in his lifetime. And Paul teaches us that he created the world.

He designed it. He upheld it. He was omnipotent. Omniscient. Omnipresent. Very God.

[6:21] Very God. He was all those things. He was the Lord. And yet. The God man had been crucified. And Paul was proud.

Christ. Christ. God the son. Was crucified. The supreme object of his adoration.

And the one that he loved the most. The one that he admired. More than anyone else in the world.

Had been crucified. And the cross was above all else.

To Paul the ground of boasting. And the reason for pride. Because on that cross. A sinless man had died. And on that cross.

God's own son had suffered. And expired. And died. And Paul was boasting about it. And. Not only that. But in the last analysis. It was.

[7:18] God himself. Who had done it. God had made him. Who knew. No sin. To be sin. It pleased the Lord.

To bruise him. God. Did not spare his own son. But delivered him up for us all. God delivered up. His own son.

Most of us here. Have grown up in a. A Christian home. In a covenant home. Most of us here. Have never known a time. When we didn't know about the cross. That is a great privilege.

It's always been there. Hasn't it? You've always known about it. And often. I think. We. We don't stop to think. How utterly stupendous.

It is. How utterly astonishing. It is. That the apostle. Of. The Gentiles. Should be. Proud. Of the cross.

[8:16] Above all else. He doesn't say. How proud he was. Of. The meekness. Of Jesus. Although Jesus was meek. Wasn't he?

The apostle doesn't boast. That Jesus was a great teacher. Although he was the greatest teacher. That's ever lived. The apostle Paul doesn't boast. About how accessible. Jesus was.

Though he was so accessible. He doesn't boast. About his tremendous sympathy. With us. In our human weakness. And in our human pain. And it may be that Paul was proud.

Of all of those things. But he singles out this one thing. The cross. The cross. On which the only sinless man. That the world has ever seen. Was executed.

That cross. That is what Paul is proud of. The cross. On which the prince of glory died. And Paul is so proud. The cross.

[9:13] On which the light of the world. Was extinguished. The light of the world. Was put out. And Paul says. I am proud. Where the word of God.

Is reduced to silence. There. At that cross. Paul is proud. The cross of the sinless man. The cross of God's own son. This act of God. This inexplicable.

Act of God. That God ordered. And God arranged. The crucifixion. Of his own son. And Paul is. Boasting about it. And I suppose.

I want to do tonight. Is I want to think. How. Why and how. Why did Paul boast. Of the cross. In this way. And how can he boast. Of the cross. In this way.

And it's the same for us. How can we. As a church family. Be proud. Of. The cross. And that we. As God's people. Would make this.

[10:07] Our boast. Above all other boasts. And two reasons. First of all. What the cross achieved. And secondly. What the cross demonstrated. So what did the cross achieve. Paul would say.

That the cross achieved. The theological word. Is the expiation of sin. That is the covering over. Of my sin. And your sin. The apostle Paul.

Was. Was incredibly conscious. Of his own sin. You may be tonight. But the apostle Paul. Was too. He describes himself. And he says. That he was the chief of sinners. The ultimate sinner.

And the apostle. Was under no illusions. As to the quality. Of his own life. He knew his guilt. He knew his disobedience. And he saw. In the cross of Jesus. A covering for his own sin. And I wonder tonight.

What. Burdens. Of guilt. We bear. Those things. That still pain. Our consciences. Our souls. Our souls. We may think of our parents.

[11:08] Our souls. We may think of our children. Our souls. We may think of those other people. Who we've mocked. And. Insulted. Who we've sneered at. Our souls. We may think of those moments.

In our lives. Where we knew something was wrong. And we did it anyway. Or those times. When we knew something was right. And we refused to do it. And there are.

In the life of every one of us. Aren't there times. That we would not want to revisit. Every single one of us. And yet. There are moments. Where we constantly revisit them. The pain faces. Of those we've disappointed. And those we've hurt. Pain face. Of the son of God. Whom we've maligned. What I want to say to you.

Is this. Sin. Is no abstract thing. And there's a danger. Isn't it. In the way that we explain it. We can explain it. As a. A missing of the mark.

[12:06] You know. The arrow. And it never hits the target. And yes. That's right. You can describe it as iniquity. The. Bending of our hearts. Constantly away from God. You can describe it as transgression. That we deliberately.

And. Defiantly. Rebel against God. But sin is not abstract. It is personal. Sin is what we've done. The pain.

And the injury. And the grief. That we have caused. And there is no remedy for it. And there is no place of peace. There is no place of peace.

Apart from. In the obedience. Of the Lord Jesus. In my place. And that obedience. Climaxes. In his death. On the cross at Calvary. In my place.

And it is there. That I find. Relief from my own guilt. And peace from my own sin. That Christ has availed.

[13:03] In my place. And so. There is no need. Tonight. For my sins. To come back and haunt me. Because God has cast them. Into the depths of the sea. And my disobedience.

Is covered by the obedience. Of the Lord Jesus. And so tonight. Why live. Why live. In the torment. Of a guilty conscience. And the fear of judgment.

George Herbert. He's a great writer of poetry. I know some of you. Think that all I watch. Is Spider-Man. And Toy Story. And things like that. But George Herbert. I've discovered a little bit. This summer. And he wrote a poem. About judgment. About sinners. Coming on the last day. To the throne. Of God's judgment. And the picture is this.

Of their sins. Being read out. And sin. After sin. After sin. Is read out. Those sins of believers. And in the poet's imagination. The books are opened.

[14:07] And God is the judge. But Jesus Christ is there. As the advocate. And as the sins. Are being read out. The Lord Jesus. The advocate.

Steps forward. And he says. I think you will find. My Lord. That that sin. Has my name on it. And I died. For that sin. The books are opened.

The next sin is read out. And again. The Lord Jesus. The advocate. Steps forward. And he says. I think you will find. My Lord. That that sin. Has. My name on it.

And the judge. Looks up. And reads out. The next sin. And yet again. The advocate. My Lord Jesus. Stands forth. And says. I think my Lord. You'll find. That that sin. Has my name on it too. He bore. The sins. Of his people. At the cross. Of Calvary. On that. Good Friday. In that small. Body.

[15:09] Of his. My Lord Jesus Christ. There. Gathered. The sins. Of his people. And God. Condemned it. And there. Christ. Expiated it. He.

Covered it over. And I am. Loosed from my sin. It is no longer. My sin. It is his sin. It's against his name. On the ledger. And that's the glory.

Of the cross. And that's why Paul. Boasts about it. So much. Because it's by this cross. That his sin. Was covered over. His sin. Was expiated. But it's also.

That God's anger. Was propitiated. That's another big word. Isn't it? That God's anger. Was satisfied. At the cross. God's anger. Was appeased. Propitiated. And I don't know.

How it is. Between. With you. And the anger. Of God. The Bible makes it really clear. Doesn't it? That God hates. Our sin. And that God is angry.

[16:05] With sin. And even the atheists. Self-proclaimed atheists. Sometimes their conscience. Comes back to bite them. And tells them things.

They rather. Would. They'd rather not know. And sometimes. And those atheists. They have their own fears. Hamlet said. Didn't he? Conscience.

Doth make cowards of us all. And so the anger of God. That you know. That you deserve tonight. And every single one of us. Knows it. The anger of God.

Which you know. And I know. That we deserve. The anger of God. The Lord Jesus Christ. Dealt with at the cross. Where in my name. Jesus experienced. Rejection.

And judgment. In agony. He bears my sin. He says on the cross. My God. My God.

[17:01] Why have you forsaken me? God. Forsaken. By God. Who can understand this? Why won't you hear? Why are you hurling me away.

Into this terrible. Terrible black hole. In which there is no light. Why are you so angry with me? In my place condemned. He stood. Covering my sin.

Dealing with the anger. That my sins deserve. It achieved. The expiation of sin. It achieved. The propitiation. Or the appeasement of God. And it achieved redemption.

For believers like you and me. A redemption that we offer to everyone. What is redemption? It's freedom. It's liberation.

It's emancipation. Paul says in Galatians. It's for freedom that you've been set free. What is that freedom from? It's freedom from the curse of the law. It's freedom from condemnation.

[18:06] It's freedom from damnation. It's freedom from the fear of death. Freedom from the oppressiveness of legalistic religion. Of a tick box religion.

Freedom from the minutiae of human taboos. And traditions. And from all the burdens of human religiosity. Freedom from all those.

It's an incredible word spoken by the Lord Jesus. Where he says you shall know the truth. And the truth shall make you free. As the people of God tonight.

We are free. Is that the impression that we make on the world? Sometimes I like going and preaching places.

I only use the same illustrations over and over again. But you do this kind of word illustration game. You know the word association game. Where I say a word and you think of the immediate thing.

[19:03] You say black. I say black. You say white. I say salt. You say pepper. I say fish. You say chips. And then you say all Presbyterianism. No one ever comes back with freedom.

Joy. People come into this church and they say these people are so free. Free.

They come on a Sunday and they no longer serve God as slaves in craving and servile fear. But they serve God as sons. And they call him Abba, Father.

Because he loves them. And they know he loves them. And they know how much he cares for them. And they've been redeemed from fear and phobia. They've been redeemed from the burden of legalism and the law.

They've been redeemed from the oppressiveness and the burdens of trying to be good. It's what Galatians is about. They've been freed from the own overbearing demands of their own personality.

[20:10] Trying to match their own standards. And they've been freed from trying to match other people's standards. And so can I plead with you. I worry sometimes for a moment in churches like this.

That people think you have to try to be good before you come to Jesus. You have to try to kind of smarten up your act a bit. And can I plead with you for a moment just to stop that.

Because if you wait until you're good, you will never come. And the irony is this. Once you come, he'll make you good. But you come to the Lord Jesus as you are.

You come without a thing commanding you. And so Paul boasts in the cross because it achieves great things.

It achieves the covering of my sin. It deals with the anger of God against my sin. And it redeems me and it makes me free. That's why Paul says, doesn't he, stand fast.

[21:11] Therefore in the freedom which Christ has made you free. Go and be free. Go and be free. Don't be afraid of each other. Don't be scared in case people find you out.

Be yourself. Be your Christian self. Be your Holy Spirit redeemed selves in the presence of God. Because God loves you as you are. And God calls you as you are.

So go and dare to be free with all your quirks. And all your oddities. The cross achieves all these things and it demonstrates all these things.

It's made certain declarations. Two declarations. First of all, the cross declares the love of Jesus Christ. How much he loved you. So that verse, we love it, don't we, in Galatians 2.20.

The Son of God loved me. When you think of the Lord Jesus, what do you think?

[22:19] How do you think of him? Who is this man? Who is the Son of God? The Son of God is the one who loved me and gave himself for me.

That is who he is. And when Paul thought of the Lord Jesus, he thought of the love of Jesus. And he sees that love coming to its fullest expression on the cross of Calvary.

He loved me and he gave himself for me. Loving and giving. And that's how Paul saw the cross. He sees that in chapter 1 and verse 4 and in chapter 2 verse 20.

And so come with me to the days before Calvary. The shadow of Calvary in the life of the Lord Jesus. And in those days and hours that led up to the cross. And you think of Jesus Christ as our Lord.

As he knows that closer and closer he is coming to this point of unimaginable pain and torture and trauma. And what keeps him going? What keeps him going towards the flogging and the stabbing.

[23:32] And the wounding and the humiliation. And the mocking. And the rejection. And the nakedness. And going towards the cross. That dreadful moment when his hands and his feet are nailed to the cross.

Those long, long hours hanging, nailed, naked to the cross. And in his human finitude. Not knowing quite how awful it is going to be.

The Lord Jesus, he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He lived a life of suffering. But he'd never known suffering. Like it was to come on Calvary. Remember that the human mind for the Lord Jesus.

All information. He didn't kind of have this kind of little button he pressed. And suddenly he had all knowledge. He did not know how it would unfold.

What it was going to be like. He moves into the darkness. He moves towards the moment of execution. Why? Because having loved his own who were in the world. He loved them to the end.

[24:46] And from Gethsemane on. There's greater clarity. He understands what it's going to mean. That you have to love them all the way. That you've got to go through with it. You've got to love them to the end.

And as the full horror dawns on him. Of what the cross means. He moves further and deeper into its anguish. And he still loves them. And he loves you this evening.

And he says to you. This is why I went through the cross. Because he loves you. There is so much isn't it? He gave himself for you. But the cross also demonstrates the love of God the Father.

God so loved that he gave. God did not spare his own son. But delivered him up for us all. How much does God the Father love you?

He has loved you with an everlasting love. A love that spared no cost. Never did anyone love a son or a daughter. The way that God loved his son. And so tonight you have sons or daughters.

[25:51] You have brothers and sisters. Would you give them a way? Would you give them the way that God gave? Would you give what God gave? God so loved the world. A world in rebellion against him.

He so loved you. A love with your name on it. Your name engraven on the palms of his hands. The story of Abraham and Isaac is there to teach us this.

God said to him, You are to sacrifice. And you are to take Isaac, your son, your one and only son to Mount Moriah. And your heart bleeds for Isaac, doesn't it?

And you feel his pain. But you also understand the pain for Abraham. And we need to stand at the cross with God the Father loving you so much that he gives his only son for you.

That his son would bear the damnation due to my sin. And God the Son loves you so much.

[26:55] And God the Father loves you so much. And the cross is the great proof of that. And so Paul boasts of it. He's so proud of it. And I want us today to be proud of it.

For us as a church to be proud of nothing else but the cross of Jesus Christ our Lord. That that would be our great theme. I want you tonight to put all your faith in it.

To put all your faith in it as God's answer to your sin and my sin. As the key to our salvation. To put all your trust in it. To put all your weight on it.

To cast your soul upon it. Because it does not need supplements. Maybe that you feel that you're not very good at witnessing.

I'm useless at it. Or maybe that you feel you're not good at praying. You're not great at reading your Bible. And that therefore the cross somehow is not enough.

[28:03] And you need to kind of get better at witnessing. Get better at praying. Get better at reading your Bible. Can I plead with you just to abandon that madness.

And what Paul is saying to you tonight. And what scripture is saying is. Let the cross of Jesus Christ be your whole righteousness. Whoever you are.

And whatever your sin has been. However utterly ashamed you are. Whatever it was. How religious you are. Or how irreligious you are. This is God's answer. It is all you need. Christ's righteousness. His obedience culminating at the cross of Calvary. Paul knew what it was to live with a guilty conscience.

He knew what it was to live with unimaginable guilt. Because he almost strangled the church of God in its crib. And Christ bore his sin.

[29:03] Martin Luther. The great reformer. Tormented by his conscience. Horrified by the quality of his own religion. And yet he found peace at the cross. John Bunyan found his peace with all his kind of introverted depression.

He found his peace here. And this church is full of people who have found their peace at the cross of Calvary. I need this cross and it's all I need.

And you need this cross and it's all you need. You need nothing else but the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so let me add two more things. That are involved in glorying in the cross.

First of all we are to emulate it. And that is we are to live by the spirit of the cross. And by its example. Now of course that's not where the real power of the cross lies.

I know that. In my imitating it. And yet those of us who boast in it. Will imitate it. When we are conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[30:10] That is the pattern of the Christian life. The crucified one. We saw it last Sunday night. Didn't we in Philippians 2? The crucified one who made himself. Nothing.

And the Lord Jesus died. Because he was willing to be a nobody. Nobody. We all want to be somebody don't we? We all want to be someone who people look up to.

There's something good about that. There's something bad about that too. Jesus chose the road towards insignificance. Jesus chose the road towards being a nobody.

He chose the road again and again day by day. Towards being despised and towards being rejected. Jesus chose the road. He chose the road. He chose the road. He chose the road. He chose the road.

And those who owe everything to the cross of Calvary. Will live by the mind that was in Christ Jesus. The only truly really great person who ever lived was willing to be a nobody.

[31:17] Imagine churches up and down this land that were like this. We've seen something like that I think this week in Holiday Bible Club. People just willing to be nobodies. People wanting to serve.

Quite content to be nobodies. To simply be at God's disposal. That's what he asks of you this week. And you might think today you're somebody. It's absolutely absurd.

How absurd do your pretensions look when you place them next to the cross of Calvary? And my last thing to say is this. If we glory in the cross as a church family we will become heralds of the cross.

We'll want the world to know. And we'll want the world to sing. Coca-Cola had a famous motto. And their motto now is to refresh the world.

Refresh the world and make a difference. Coca-Cola had a famous motto. It was coined in 1923 by Robert Woodruff. And it's this. To put a Coca-Cola within the reach of every person in the world.

[32:26] To put a Coke within the reach of every person in the world. I'm very glad for that. And what is the mission of this church?

It is to put the story of Christ within the reach of every man, woman and child. When Paul went to Corinth.

He was conscious of certain pressures. He had a reputation as a great preacher. As a great apostle. He's coming. He's going to have a wonderful delivery.

And Paul was horrified because he actually wasn't a very good communicator. He wouldn't be asked to speak at conferences. Paul didn't have a great and magnetic presence. He didn't have a wonderful personal message.

We've seen him where he writes to the Corinthians. He's saying, I'm not a charismatic preacher.

When you see me, you're going to be disappointed. Particularly, we see that in 2 Corinthians. Paul would say, I've got nothing original to say.

[33:27] All I'm going to say is this. We preach Christ crucified. I've got nothing original. Nothing new. Nothing you haven't heard before. Nothing that you haven't heard better. Others will preach my gospel better, says Paul.

But no one will preach a better gospel. Because God forbid that I should glory. Save in the cross. Of Christ, my God.

may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may
may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may
may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may
may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may
may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may
may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may
may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may
may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may
may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may
may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may may
may