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Sermon Notes

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## **May I Never Boast in Anything But the Cross**

### **Galatians 6:14**

I want to begin this sermon today with two moments that God used to make a powerful impact on my life... unforgettable actually... and they are both relevant for the sermon today.

- 1) The Holocaust Museum: A number of years ago, my family and I had the sobering experience of walking through this museum in Washington, D.C. There are so many feelings and thoughts that run through your mind in such a sad place which documents the atrocities of the Nazi attempt at genocide against European Jews. At one point in the museum, I came to a scale model diorama of Auschwitz, the most notorious concentration camp of the war. It was all one color, beige, and it depicted people standing in line to go into the “showers” where they were gassed to death. At that moment, a thought hit me... “It is possible to go from Auschwitz to hell.” In other words, just because you suffered extreme injustice from human tormenters didn’t mean that your sins were forgiven. I’m not at all saying that everyone who died in a Nazi concentration camp went to hell... just that almost certainly many people did. Then I kept going in my thoughts... if someone were in hell, experiencing the torments of that dreadful place, where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth, total darkness, a Lake of Fire, for all eternity... and if, contrary to the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus that Jesus told, it were possible to escape and come back to earth, would anyone refuse to leave hell and go back to Auschwitz? ABSOLUTELY NOT! Hell is infinitely WORSE than any earthly condition... and 100% of the people who died from the concentration camp and went to hell would be weeping with JOY if they were ever allowed the return trip... Then the Holy Spirit showed me one more thing: I DESERVED HELL! ME... actually all of us do! If I really believed that, how grateful should I be that I’m not there... shouldn’t I be constantly filled with DEEP JOY NO MATTER WHAT THE EARTHLY CIRCUMSTANCES OF MY LIFE????
- 2) The John Piper Sermon...

***Galatians 6:14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.***

A transformational sermon: Learning to BOAST IN THE CROSS in everything I experience in life

Riding my bike... listening to Piper... it has changed my perspective in a more lasting way than anything I've heard in years

## I. May I Never Boast In Anything...

### A. Surprisingly Exclusive, Jealous Verse

1. Piper's church in a time of fundraising for their new sanctuary
2. Four sermons: "Education for exultation"
3. He had planned a series of sermons on "boasting"... this was the third
4. When he got to it, he realized the whole project didn't work
5. Galatians 6:14 is a surprisingly exclusive, jealous verse... ALL OTHER BOASTING IS EXCLUDED by it

***"May I NEVER BOAST IN ANYTHING except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..."***

6. Similar to Paul's other outcry:

***Romans 6:1-2 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?***

It is UNTHINKABLE!!!

Or like this teaching on sexual immorality in 1 Corinthians:

***1 Corinthians 6:15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!***

In other words, it is UNTHINKABLE that I should ever boast in ANYTHING except in the cross of Jesus Christ!!

Nothing at all! May nothing ever move me to boasting... may my heart never be moved in any way at all toward glorying, or exulting, or elevation in any way, except in this one thing: THE CROSS OF JESUS CHRIST

This is a JEALOUS verse, an exclusive verse... everything else in the universe is rejected when it comes to BOASTING

### B. Paul Boasts in Many Other Things

1. The word "boast" is sometimes translated "glory" or "take pride in" something

2. Paul uses this word more than any other Biblical writer... probably because Paul was a very prideful boaster in his religious achievements before knowing Christ
3. But even as a Christian, in other verses, Paul boasts in many other things:

***Romans 5:2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice [lit. boast] in hope of the glory of God.***

***Romans 5:3 Not only so, but we also rejoice [lit. boast] in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance***

***Romans 5:11 Not only is this so, but we also rejoice [lit. boast] in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.***

***1 Corinthians 1:31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."***

***2 Corinthians 12:9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.***

So... how do we understand this verse? How do we understand the **vehemence** with which Paul says,

***"May I NEVER BOAST IN ANYTHING except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..."***

#### C. Immediate Context: The Boasting of Legalism in Self-Achievement

1. The home base of this word "boast" is to "take pride in"... to feel as sense of personal connection to something and present it as a basis for PRIDE
2. In Galatians, Paul has been assaulting the religion of self-salvation, the false gospel of human works and achievements taught by the Judaizers, who were claiming that the cross of Christ was INSUFFICIENT for human salvation... you had to add the works of the Law

***Galatians 6:12-13 Those who want to make a good impression outwardly are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. <sup>13</sup> Not even those who are circumcised obey the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your flesh.***

3. This self-glorying boasting is the ENEMY of the humble state of repentance and faith God requires in the gospel
4. It is the spiritual résumé building that the arrogant human heart does when confronted with sin... okay, I may have committed adultery, but I'm basically

a good person—I gave \$10,000 to the city’s homeless shelter last year; I try to treat people well, and I learn from my mistakes and try not to make the same mistakes more than once...

5. The arrogant, independent human heart which seeks to save itself by good works, and when it is achieved, it will stand on the winner’s podium in heaven and say “Look what I did! I overcame my weaknesses and now look at me!”
6. The essence of boasting is SELF-WORSHIP... and is therefore IDOLATROUS

#### D. Paul’s Humble Recognition: The Cross Has Stripped Me Forever of Proudful Boasting

1. Paul, on the Road to Damascus, realized who he was in comparison to the Lord Jesus Christ who appeared to him in heavenly glory
2. Paul realized instantly he had been completely WRONG about Christ... dead wrong... Christ was not a false prophet and a deceiver of the people... Christ Jesus was Almighty God, radiant in splendor, radiant in heavenly glory... and Paul was a dirty, filthy, rebel
3. The Law probed him at that time, and it exposed his corruptions... his arrogant tendency to boast in his Jewishness, to boast in his zeal and his legalistic Phariseism, to boast in his religious attainments, his superiority over all the unwashed Gentiles, his superiority over all regular Jews who didn’t take Judaism as seriously as he did, his superiority over even his fellow students who weren’t as accomplished and zealous as he was... all of it was like FILTHY RAGS and STINKING RUBBISH in the sight of this holy God, this resurrected Jesus who stood in front of Him with eyes of blazing fire and feet of burnished bronze
4. Blinded by that heavenly light, Paul fasted and prayed and allowed the Law to do its work on him: he was guilty, guilty, guilty! Crushed by the Law, he was lifted by the gospel: he came to understand the cross of Jesus Christ in a radically new way
5. The verse “cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree” had made Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah, the Savior of the World, seem blasphemous... how could God’s chosen Messiah die under the curse of God? How could he cry out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” How could someone who was despised and rejected by the Jewish authorities die such a shameful death on a Roman cross? Now... he realized, this Jesus was indeed who He claimed to be... the glorious Son of God... so why was He a curse? It came clear to Paul—Jesus was made a curse FOR US because we are so sinful in the eyes of such a holy God

***Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."***

6. Essential to his new understanding of the cross was a proper understanding of himself... I DESERVED THE WRATH AND CURSE OF GOD! I deserve to be condemned! I am not righteous after all, but unrighteous!
7. Furthermore, though I deserved to die under the wrath and curse of God, instead I LIVE... I am ALIVE!!! God has spared me! God loves me!! Jesus died for me!! Jesus loves me!!!
8. From that moment on, all self-boasting because BLASPHEMOUS!!

***"May I NEVER BOAST IN ANYTHING except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..."***

- E. Beyond That: Any Good Boasting I Do Would Not Even Be Possible If It Weren't For the Cross!
  1. So yes, Paul does boast in many things!
  2. Yes, he boasts in the hope of the glory of God... yes, he boasts in his sufferings... yes, he boasts in God Himself... yes, he boasts in the Lord... yes, he boasts in his weaknesses... yes, he boasts in the work God has done through him in planting churches...
  3. But ALL OF THAT BOASTING is preceded in his mind by this central reality towering over everything in his life: the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ
  4. That cross speaks a constant message of humility to him: Paul, you wouldn't even be alive if it weren't for the cross! You would be screaming in hell right now if it weren't for the cross! The cross of our Lord Jesus Christ has bought you the ability to boast in these other things

## II. Boasting in the Cross Means...

### A. Boasting is Speaking Words of Selfish Pride

1. Look what I did! Look what I achieved! Look at my powers, my works, my resume
2. This is what I'm presenting as worthy of your esteem when it comes to me
3. Paul says MAY I NEVER BOAST except in that I deserved to die under the wrath of God, and Jesus took that wrath instead
4. So... if someone starts to praise you or, even worse, you start to praise yourself for your achievements... this verses rises up to STOP YOU!!

## B. Understanding What I Truly Deserved

1. WHAT DO I TRULY DESERVE???
2. A set of simple bible truths answers that question
  - a. I am a sinner... I have violated God's holy law
  - b. God is just and will punish sin with perfect wrath
  - c. The just punishment of sin is hell
  - d. Hell is described clearly

It is called a LAKE OF FIRE in Revelation 20:14

It is a place of terrifying torment characterized by wailing and gnashing of teeth; a place of outer darkness; a place of tormenting memories and bitter regrets

And, it is ETERNAL:

***Matthew 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.***

***Revelation 14:11 And the smoke of their torment rises for ever and ever. There is no rest day or night***

3. So... I deserve to be in hell RIGHT NOW... and so do all of you!!
4. That's the key to understanding what Paul means by

***"May I NEVER BOAST IN ANYTHING except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ..."***

The gracious relief of the just sentence of God against you is meant to HUMBLE YOU FOREVER... to strip you of boasting in anything but Christ, and Him crucified

It means REJOICING THAT YOU WILL ESCAPE WITH YOUR LIFE... like Baruch:

Baruch was Jeremiah's secretary right before God destroyed Jerusalem in wrath... Baruch was complaining about all his trials... God rebuked him by reminding him that He was about to destroy the city He loved because of all their great sins.

***Jeremiah 45:5 Should you then seek great things for yourself? Seek them not. For I will bring disaster on all people, declares the LORD, but wherever you go I will let you escape with your life.'"***

God is allowing us to ESCAPE ETERNALLY with our lives!! We deserved to die!!

It is meant to make you feel UNDESERVING of every experience you have in life

- 1) The BLESSINGS you enjoy... all of them are blood-bought gifts from a loving God, and contrary to what you deserved
- 2) The TRIALS you experience... all of them are less painful than you deserve, and all of them are meant for your good, and all of them are blood-bought gifts from a loving God, and contrary to what you deserved

C. "Please feel undeserving", dear FBC!!

1. Pastor Piper: two sermons every Sunday...
2. In between services, a young woman came up to him and said these honest but revealing words:

"Pastor John, I understand what you're saying, but honestly, I just don't FEEL THAT UNDESERVING. I really don't."

Pastor Piper said her statement hit him like a ton of bricks... and he resolved to be even clearer in the second sermon... and to PLEAD with his people at Bethlehem Baptist Church:

PLEASE FEEL UNDESERVING!

3. So, I say the same to you, dear FBC: "PLEASE FEEL UNDESERVING!"
4. Please understand how the Law of God stood opposed to you and was ready to condemn you
  - a. Please understand that Almighty God has commanded you to love Him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength, every single moment of your life... AND YOU HAVEN'T, and NEITHER HAVE I!!!
  - b. Please understand that Almighty God has commanded you to love your neighbor as yourself, every single moment of your life... AND YOU HAVEN'T, and NEITHER HAVE I!!!
  - c. Please understand that that means you deserve HELL... it would be completely just with God to punish you forever for violating His holy laws and bringing the spiritual poison of sin into His universe
5. If you deserve Hell, and instead you're here... it's only by the grace of God
  - a. Either you are a Christian, and you will never experience Hell... you have been rescued forever by the grace of God through the cross of Christ

b. OR you are not a Christian... and God is bearing with your ongoing rebellion against Him patiently, and is PLEADING WITH YOU NOW to flee to the cross of Christ to find mercy

6. Either way, if you are here on earth now, listening to this sermon, it is CONTRARY TO WHAT YOU DESERVE!!

#### D. Applying that Understanding to Every Blessing I Get

1. There is not a single blessing in my life that I deserve!

a. Physical blessings

i) Air that you are breathing: think with wide-eyed amazement, it is the sweet, clean air of earth, not the sulfur-polluted stench of hell

ii) Freedom from searing pain of the Lake of Fire...

iii) Sights: light, color, beauty, order: a walk through a flowering garden, a trip to the ocean or the mountains... as you stand there on the shore and breathe the salt air and see the frothy waves crashing down one after the other... as you stand on a mountain crest and watch the multicolored sunset, feeling the gentle breeze on your face, standing next to your spouse, and with a couple of friends... you understand this truth: I AM NOT IN HELL RIGHT NOW... I have not heard those dreadful words, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!" You are not cast out into utter darkness... light and color and beauty are streaming into your eyes, all of those sights a gift of God's grace that you DON'T DESERVE!

iv) Relationships: you live your lives surrounded by people who love you, care for you, pray for you, laugh with you, cry with you, give you gifts, tell you jokes, care about how you're feeling... perhaps you have a loving spouse who has put up with your sins and weaknesses for years... YOU DON'T DESERVE THAT! You have friends who are committed to you... YOU DON'T DESERVE THAT EITHER! You even have the pleasure of seeing total strangers living their lives... you can go to the park and sit on a bench and watch beautiful little children playing on the swings or climbing on the monkey bars... they and their parents are total strangers to you, but you drink in the sights of their play, the sounds of their laughter, and you stop to ponder: I could be in HELL RIGHT NOW... hearing the wailing and gnashing of teeth of countless millions of the damned... but NO RELATIONSHIPS... no FRIENDSHIPS... everyone is in absolute isolation, unable to pause for a moment from their wailing and gnashing of teeth to develop a relationship... EVERY HUMAN ENCOUNTER you have on earth is a gift of God's grace when seen through the cross of Christ

- v) Many other blessings: food, with all its pleasures... its various flavors and textures, its healthfulness and nourishment for your bodies; every peach you eat, biting into its firm surface, the sweet juices flowing across your tongue and down your throat... every cool glass of water you drink, soothing your parched mouth... you don't deserve any of those blessings! You should realize I DON'T DESERVE THIS FOOD! I DON'T DESERVE THIS DRINK!!
- vi) So it goes with every experience in your lavishly blessed life: all your possessions—your home, your car, your education, your skills and abilities, your health, every single physical thing in life is CONTRARY TO WHAT YOU DESERVED!

b. Spiritual blessings

- i) You should go through your spiritual blessings as well
- ii) The blessings of justification: instead of being damned to hell, I have been completely forgiven; instead of the Law of God standing opposed to me as my condemner, it is now the guide of my life, teaching me how to live the best possible life I can live; instead of God coming after me as a consuming fire, He has ADOPTED ME into His Family and loves me as He loves His only begotten Son; instead of the Lord Jesus Christ as Judge of all the Earth consigning me to hell, He has become the love of my soul, my spiritual Head, my friend, my Savior; instead of the Spirit of God acting as avenger against me for my sins, I have the indwelling Spirit in my heart as constant friend, guide, instructor, counsellor
- iii) I have the Bible to read as a promise book of future blessings
- iv) I have Christian friends—brothers and sisters—who love me and pray for me
- v) I have spiritual gifts I can use for the glory of God and the building of an eternal Kingdom
- vi) I can actually STORE UP TREASURE IN HEAVEN rather than experience the wrath I stored up against myself
- vii) I am here, with you now, preaching God's word instead of screaming in agony in the Lake of Fire as I deserve
- viii) You are here, listening to this sermon, rather than wailing and gnashing your teeth in hell, with no escape
- ix) Neither you nor I deserve this!!!!

2. Doing an inventory of the richness of the blessings in my life, realizing that, instead of hell, I'm here, doing this instead!!!
3. Conversely: if you feel you deserve what you get, you will eventually be miserable no matter how beautiful the scenery or delicious the food or skillful the music or comfortable the clothes or engaging the entertainment... you will feel that imperious attitude of the connoisseur who coldly says to everything, "I've seen better" or "Been there, done that!"
4. Paradox: knowing you should be in hell right now is the most joy-producing idea you can possibly have
  - a. Every blessing—every morsel of nourishing food, every garment you put on, every friend who speaks a word of encouragement to you, every pleasing book you read or music you float away on, every gorgeous piece of scenery your eyes take in, every family member you cherish or comfortable chair you sit in is a CELEBRATION OF GOD'S GRACE TO YOU!!
  - b. You can think: "I have been rescued from HELL to eat this peanut butter sandwich! How infinite and marvelous are God's mercies to me!"
  - c. A person you lives like that, always close to tears or to shouts of exultation for even the slightest blessings in this world, is the HAPPIEST PERSON you will ever meet
5. PLEASE FEEL UNDESERVING, so you can be truly 1) joyful and 2) thankful!

#### E. Applying that Understanding to Every Trial As Well

1. A searing insight at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.: it is possible to go from Auschwitz to Hell... I'm not saying that everyone who died in those gas chambers DID go to Hell... Just that dying there was no guarantee that one would go to Heaven; no sinner is justified by dying in a gas chamber
2. Then, I pursued that idea backwards, based on Jesus' parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus in Luke 16... the Rich Man died and was IN TORMENT in Hell (Luke 16:22)... he asked to be released to go warn his brothers and was told it was impossible; but suppose it were possible? Is there any earthly situation so bad that someone in Hell wouldn't be willing to get out, even for a short time? Would someone be willing to leave Hell and go back to Auschwitz? Of course!
3. So... we should understand every trial the same way!!!
4. Would I be willing to leave Hell and experience THIS right now?

5. Every single trial in life is less than Hell... no matter how bitter our pain or suffering, it is LESS SUFFERING than we deserve
6. So measure all the great trials and the lesser annoyances of your life by this one declaration: this is better than I deserve!
  - a. If you are sitting in traffic, late for an appointment, and you are tempted to fume: Jesus has graciously paid your way out of torment so you can be here instead!
  - b. If you are lying in bed with a stomach virus and spent the night getting sick in the bathroom: Christ shed His blood to rescue you from destruction so you could be here instead!
  - c. If you just got laid off from your job and you wonder what you're going to do now, and dark thoughts start to push in and you're tempted to blame God, keep this one thought in mind: Instead of wailing and gnashing your teeth in utter darkness, you are here now, forgiven, adopted, beloved, on your way to heaven, and enduring this trial
  - d. If you are having a conflict with your spouse, you should understand that so much of the trouble comes from the PRIDE of thinking you DESERVE BETTER TREATMENT than he/she is giving you; it is NOT TRUE! Boast in the cross at that moment! Humble yourself and say, "I deserve to be dead right now... condemned. Instead, I'm alive!"
  - e. If you are annoyed at how the TSA agent is treating you at the flight security checkpoint, and you bristle at the rudeness... understand that some of your problem is you think you DESERVE BETTER TREATMENT than you're receiving... boast in the cross at that moment!
  - f. Even the greatest possible trials on earth are less than we deserve... some brothers and sisters in Christ are at this moment in jail, being tortured for their faith by some sadistic guards... but they can be comforted by several thoughts: 1) this is STILL less than the torment of hell; 2) God will soon rescue me; 3) I will be rewarded eternally in heaven so Jesus said I should rejoice and be glad; 4) the Spirit of glory and of God rests on them, giving them special powers to endure with love; 5) my tormenters will either be converted (in part by my faithful witness to them) or God will someday bring them to justice for what they've done

#### F. The Trials Are Actually Displays of Love on the Part of Almighty God

1. All of the trials of the Christian life are carefully measured out by God to finalize our salvation
2. Many verses teach this

***James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,<sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.<sup>4</sup> Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.***

***2 Corinthians 4:17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.***

#### G. Everything is Blood-Bought by Our Loving Lord

1. Every blessing we ever receive in our lives is COSTLY and BLOOD-BOUGHT... “Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe...”
2. Every helpful trial the God measures out for our growth and final salvation is COSTLY and BLOOD-BOUGHT... “Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe...”

Illus. Picture yourself as a homeless person; Jesus is the grown son and heir to the wealthiest most powerful Emperor on earth; he finds you in an alley, takes you by the hand, brings you to a stunningly expensive clothes boutique and starts taking expensive clothes off the rack—you see the price tag--\$500 for a jacket, \$175 for the pants; \$125 for the shirt; \$450 for the shoes... you gasp at the cost, but He smiles pleasantly and says “I’ll pay for it all.” So it is with your life... you need a wise blending of earthly blessings (like sunny days, nutritious and delicious food, caring friends, accurate bible study, answered prayers, generally good health, etc.) plus some earthly afflictions (medical troubles, disappointments, painful trials, harsh treatment from some people, a little persecution, etc.) This WISE BLENDING is what you need to be finally saved... and it is ALL OF GRACE from God and it is VERY EXPENSIVE... and Jesus’ blood paid for every bit of it...

#### H. Being Deeply Humbled

1. This verse should humble us forever
2. It should make us humble in our pleasures and our successes; humble when we feast; humble when we experience pleasant, sunny days; humble when we put on good clothes and experience successes
3. It should make us humble and patient under God’s mighty hand during our bitterest trials
4. This verse should quiet us and calm us and make us different people

I. Being Consistently Joyful... all of this has the power to make us quiet and humble and joyful

### III. Boasting in the Cross as Crucified Ourselves

***Galatians 6:14 May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.***

## A. Paul Speaks of the Impact of the Cross on His View of the World

1. He says “By the cross of Christ two things have happened...”
2. First—by the cross, the **WORLD HAS BEEN CRUCIFIED TO ME**
  - a. That means that I now see the world differently than I did before
  - b. Before, the world and all its splendor held a powerful attraction to me
  - c. Before, the world’s applause and power and prestige and possessions and pleasures were compelling... I yearned for them, I wanted to experience them, I wanted to taste the flavors and breathe in the aromas... I wanted to stand over the vistas and see it all sprawling out before me... the great cities of the world—Babylon, in all its glory—the shops and markets and restaurants and royal honors... they were very appealing to me, Paul would say
  - d. NOW... everything is different! The world appears **DEAD** to me, as disgusting in some sense as a corpse on a cross
  - e. NOW... the world has bled out and holds no ultimate appeal to me
  - f. Before, Satan basically stood and held out a part of the world to me and offered it to me if I would serve him, like he did to Jesus

***Matthew 4:8-9 Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. <sup>9</sup> "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me."***

- g. This was **WHY** Saul of Tarsus was pursuing so ambitiously his religious path—cloaked in zeal for God was a hidden agenda of **PRIDE** and yearning for the good things of this world which the chief priests held and could give him
- h. NOW... Paul would say “I realize the truth of what Jesus claimed about the world

***Mark 8:36 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?***

- i. The more you embrace the significance of Christ’s death for you on the cross, the more the world will seem dead to you

George Mueller:

“There was a day when I died, utterly died — died to George Müller, his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will; died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame even of my brethren and friends — and since then I have only to show myself approved to God.”

3. Secondly, Paul has been crucified to the world
  - a. This means that Paul is seen to be worthless, dead, vile, contemptible, foolish, etc. as disgusting as a corpse on a cross
  - b. Paul's status as a Christian changed forever his relationship with the onlooking HUMAN AUDIENCE of the world
  - c. They now despised him and all he stood for

B. Like a Man Condemned to Die in the Arena

***1 Corinthians 4:9-13 For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men. <sup>10</sup> We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are honored, we are dishonored! <sup>11</sup> To this very hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags, we are brutally treated, we are homeless. <sup>12</sup> We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; <sup>13</sup> when we are slandered, we answer kindly. Up to this moment we have become the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world.***

C. Do We Have This Perspective?

1. It seems to me that we seek too much praise and benefit from this Christ-hating world
2. It seems to me that it is TOO SURPRISING to Christians that the world hates us

***1 John 3:13 Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you.***

IV. Boasting in the Cross for Eternity

A. Our Adulation for Christ Crucified will Only Intensify in Heaven

B. We Will Continue to Grow Eternally in Our Praise for Christ

***Revelation 5:11-14 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. <sup>12</sup> In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" <sup>13</sup> Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!" <sup>14</sup> The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.***