

# No Room For Boasting

*Radio Broadcast*

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**Bible Text:** 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

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I want to speak with you today from 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 26 down to verse 31 and I've entitled this message simply "No Room For Boasting." I believe you'll see why that title after I read this particular portion. 1 Corinthians, chapter 1, beginning with verse 26 we read

26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

And now, here is the title,

29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

No room for boasting.

30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

There is no room for boasting before the Lord. You've heard of the two fishermen who get together each one having a tale of catching a fish larger than the other and fishermen love to tell stories. They love to boast, it's our nature. We always have another story that can be added and used to convince men of our abilities over against theirs. That's our nature but when we are talking about things of the Lord, there is no room for boasting. I need this message and I know each and every one of us listening needs this message. This is a message that we need to hear over and over again. So I pray that God would indeed not only give me a humble heart to hear his very word and the manner in which I present his word to you, but that also the Lord would be pleased to humble the heart of his hearers where he's pleased to grant faith and repentance.

Now here in my particular text, as we saw in verse 29, we see Paul presenting this truth in a negative way. He says simply that no flesh should glory in his presence. That is the premise, the truth and the foundation of all that we are going to look at that is presented here in this negative way. No flesh should glory in the presence of God. I think we all know within ourselves what this glorying involves, however, if you look up the word in the dictionary, it means "to talk about deeds or abilities either ours or those of others." It's to boast in a manner showing much pride and satisfaction and that's easy to do. In religion, people stand up in the guise of a testimony and they say, "I'd like to share a testimony with you tonight," but down deep in the heart is the motive, "I want people to see what I've done." This is glorying of which Paul now points his finger and says, "No flesh should glory in the presence of the Lord." What he's doing is actually quoting the prophet Jeremiah taken from the Old Testament Scriptures in Jeremiah chapter 9:23 and 24. Here we read, "Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD." Here Jeremiah was sent with the same message that we find the Apostle Paul declaring to the Corinthians. Jeremiah is delivering his to the children of Israel and he says, "Now thus saith the Lord." It's not Jeremiah that speaks but the Lord. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom. Neither let the mighty men glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches." So it's stated in the same way negatively but with emphasis, that he that glories let him glory in the Lord.

Now when you look down through this particular list in this verse, you find that there are none of us who have not boasted at one time or another either in our wisdom or our might or our riches. These are things in which we as human beings love to glory but the Lord says not to glory in those but rather glory in the fact that as he says, "I am the Lord which exercises lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth," and then he says, "In these I delight saith the Lord." That's what Paul said to the Corinthians as he declared unto them that there was no room for boasting. In another portion, the Apostle Paul said, "I am what I am by the grace of God." Now the danger is that we're always ready to say a good word about ourselves. Are we not always ready to put someone else down but to raise ourselves up? I've lived long enough to make note of the fact that the fellow who blows his own horn the loudest is someone who's in a fog. If you find a man that loves to toot his own horn then you have one walking in a fog and that is why Paul says very clearly, "That no flesh should glory in God's presence."

But also here in my text in 1 Corinthians 1: 31 we see the apostle Paul turning this into a positive statement and, of course, this is the inspired word of God, the Spirit directing each and every word and phrase that we find here. But here it's stated in a positive sense when he says, "As it is written, He that blorieth let him glory in the Lord." There is a glorying and there is a boasting and rejoicing of one's abilities of which God's people are heard speaking but what is that glory? What is that boasting? What is that praise? It's the boasting of another's ability and work not our own. "He that glorieth," Paul declares, "Let him glory in the Lord," in other words, in what the Lord himself has done.

In Psalm chapter 34:1 through 3, we find David declaring this. He says, "I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together." So you can see there what it means to glory in the Lord. Have you ever sat where you've got two people sitting together and imagine one of them proud of themselves but the other proud of Christ in his work? The one proud person is not happy unless you're building them up. Well, here you have a proud religious man and you're boasting the Lord brings him no satisfaction. You aren't speaking of him nor are you building him up but instead you're glorying in the Lord and therefore he's not glad. In fact he gets angry. There are many that way. "Let's talk a little bit about my doing," is what you hear people say but David says, "The humble will sit and listen to what others have to say about the Lord's work and glory in him. The humble," he says, "shall hear thereof and be glad." That is the way I desire that my preaching and conversation be to the honor and glory of the Lord alone. I want to rejoice with those who rejoice in the Lord and I want to boast with those who boast in the Lord. I want to be glad when I hear my God being praised and uplifted even as David says there is Psalm 34:3, "O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together."

I believe more and more that we as God's people need to take a close look at our theology, our teaching, instruction, our worship, our singing, our conversations among ourselves. We must ask ourselves: are we a mirror of what David is declaring here in Psalm 34:1? Let all boasting be put aside. Let all glorying in our abilities so-called be put in the dust that the only theme of our mouth be, "Let him that glorieth glory in the Lord." If anyone has a word to speak, speak on behalf of the Lord. Let him glory in the Lord. Let him praise the Lord. Let him boast of the Lord. Sadly, so often this is not the case and I myself have to consider my own sin before the Lord because in the multitude of words there's transgression as we read in the book of Ecclesiastes and the Lord has to shut our mouth and cause us to ponder our words that what we speak be only to his glory alone. So many are like the flea who crossed the bridge on the elephant's back. After crossing to the other side, the flea said to the elephant, "Boy, didn't we shake that bridge when we crossed." That is so often the way it is with men. They talk about their experiences and the blessing of God in a way that they had something to contribute. One old writer put it, "Be not afraid of saying too much about the praises of God. You cannot say too much of the praises of God." All the danger is of saying too little and there is the danger, not saying enough.

So today for this time together, I'd like us to consider those areas in which God's people glorify and honor the Lord but also contrast that with those of our religious generation who most often boast of themselves and I want us to look at the Scriptures prayerfully because this is God's word and as we look at them, may the Lord be merciful in dealing kindly with our own hearts and cause us to see that there is no room for boasting.

Now there's two parts to this particular message as we come back here to 1 Corinthians chapter 1, having seen the foundation of this taken from the Old Testament Scriptures, the New and the Old together form the Bible, God's word. But the first matter that we see

here in 1 Corinthians 1:26 down to verse 29 particularly is that there is no room for boasting in our electing or our calling to salvation. Salvation is founded upon God's electing grace and that from eternity and those that he has so chosen, he calls. So this is where it begins if there is not a revelation of God here in the heart, then everything else that we pretend to know is false. Salvation does not begin with the sinner, it begins with God and I don't know any other area where we need to sound this truth more clearly to our generation. We must be clear on this particular point. How is it that a man comes to God? The reason I say this is that there is so much boasting in this particular area about man's deeds and man's abilities in coming to God. I would draw your attention to what Paul states here in my text concerning this calling to God: in this there is no room for boasting. There is no contribution on the part of the sinner to that calling in salvation. If the Lord has called us to salvation, it's not based on any foreseen good or merit within us. God forbid. Paul reminds the Corinthians of this in verse 26 of my text where he says, "For ye see your calling, brethren." He's speaking to them as the Lord's people, as believers, as brothers in the Lord. But look at it. He says, "Look around you. You see your calling, brethren, so consider your own calling but look at those around you. If any are the Lord's you're calling, it's not because of any wisdom in yourself. Not many wise according to the flesh. Not many mighty. Not many noble are called."

Look also at verse 27, "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise. He's chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty and the base things of the world and the things that are despised and the things that are not, to bring to nothing the things which are." Notice, God has chosen. I see in this particular verse many adjectives. If you look at them very closely, you'll see the cause for any boasting in ourselves is to cease. If the Lord ever teaches us this truth, it'll shut our mouths from even beginning to talk about our ability. Our ability whether to believe or ability to repent, the ability to choose God, the ability to love God. These are all areas in which men like to boast but, dear friend, we lay it in the dust. There's no room for boasting here. Look at these words that are used here down through this particular portion: God has chosen the foolish things, that's where it starts. If you want a description of who we are before God, you can find it right here: we're foolish.

When I was in high school, we used to have a lot of moron jokes. I can still remember my dad telling me not to tell moron jokes because they cut people down. The word "moron" comes from the word translated "foolish," that's the word used here, it's a Greek word and it means "stupid." But that is the Greek word that describes sinners before a holy God as we are by nature. He says God has chosen the stupid things of this world, that's who he's chosen and if you're chosen, that's what you were: stupid, foolish, unable to discern the things of God. So certainly there's no room for boasting there. But he goes on further and says God has chosen the weak things. Not only stupid but now weak. The word defined means without strength. There's your inability. Without strength, impotent would be another word. There is another way of looking at it: feeble, sickly unable even to get up off your bed, so sick even delirious. That is what we are and that is who God has chosen. If God were to require you simply to reach up and turn the door handle of salvation as you hear some preachers say, that the handle is on your side, you would be too weak to do so. You could not. You would not. Certainly there's no room for boasting there.

But then Paul goes on in verse 28 and he says God has chosen the base things. We hear a lot of talk today about the bottom line, that means you can't get any lower. You've come now to the bottom line. Base things; those things which are of low birth. That is what it really means, things of low birth. Being born in Adam you can't get any lower than that. When he fell we all fell in him and that's the inheritance, that's the heritage that all of us have. We're born in sin. David said, "In the mother's womb he was conceived in iniquity and came forth speaking lies." So certainly no room for boasting there.

Then as if you can't get even get lower than the bottom line, Paul gets into the negatives and he speaks here of things that are despised. It's not only just rotten, now it's completely spoiled and there's a stench. When you reach into the refrigerator and you pull out a snack and you sniff it not being sure and you hand it to your spouse and they confirm, "Yes, I believe it is spoiled." Then there is occasion when you have been away perhaps on a trip and you come home and the refrigerator has been off. The electricity got shut off somehow and when you open the door, you get blasted out of the house. The terrible, nauseating smell which is despicable that's actually the word that's used here for "despised." So in every area, no room for boasting.

Then there are the things that says that are not. That is where God began; that's what he began to work with. Our call to salvation was not based on any foreseen good or merit within us just as in the creation of the world. God did not first have some material that he began to work with to create the world, it was from nought, from nothing. God began with nothing and from that he said, "Let there be light," and then there was light. It was according to his word that things came into existence and so it is with regard to salvation. Paul is saying, "You see your call in salvation. It's all of God's choosing. It's all of God's decree. It's all of God's affirming, declaring," and that's what Paul is saying here. It's all of his working, his doing, his deed, his abilities, his power and so we read there in verse 31, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord. If a person cannot glory in the Lord in the very foundation of his salvation or his calling to salvation, then that profession at best is suspect. That man or woman has never met the Lord. It's not something you find out about years later. This is the very basis of salvation. Paul is not reminding them of something which they did. He's reminding them of something which God did. In the very essence of the gospel, he is declared in this. Our calling to salvation was all of God's choosing and I put the emphasis on the word "all" because you can't get around it in the Scriptures. Notice this phrase in verse 27, "God hath chosen." Twice it states that and then again in verse 28, "God has chosen." If you're like me, I like to underscore repetition in Scripture and certainly this is one that needs to be underscored: the choosing of God. The very nature of this word indicates that our salvation is of God and God alone. The word literally means to choose something out for oneself and it's put in a tense that speaks of a definitive act in time past. In other words, a purposeful choosing. Something in time past that God himself determined to do. Well, we know and read in the Scriptures it was even before time and it's also put in a sense in which if you understand the original language it means to choose for oneself. He did not choose for our benefit. A lot of people like to think that way. No, but he chose for himself and by himself and therefore Paul uses it over and over again: God has chosen for himself. God has done it.

But it also means to choose out. That means God viewed all of the human race as fallen but in his mercy and grace chose out of that fallen race, the foolish ones, those that are weak, the base, the despised. He chose them out. A deliberate choosing. It wasn't some general reaching in the hat and pulling out some names. It was a looking over of fallen humanity from eternity and recognizing that they deserved nothing but his condemnation but in love he chose them out. Do you see that? It was a selective choosing. That means he chose some and left others. Here we find some being upset when they hear that but this is God. That's clear throughout this passage. "Not many wise according to the flesh. Not many mighty. Not many noble are called." In other words, not chosen. But God has chosen, there's the positive. He has chosen and it has been a selective choosing and a personal choosing and certainly therefore no room for boasting there.

The Scriptures tell us that the names of every one of those that God has chosen are written in the Lamb's book of life. Just as my parents named me Kenneth Allen Wimer. Thank God. You see, this is God working before I ever knew him, when I was yet foolish, weak, base, despised and in my sin. God had already made his choice. If you want something to humble you, that we will humble you. It stops our mouth. I look back and I see a lot of things in life that God used to bring me to himself. My parents and their teaching of the word to me day after day pointing me to the word of God. The word was given prominence even though today as I look back, I read the Scriptures in ignorance. But if you ask me how it is that I do today stand before you as a child of God? I have to say it goes beyond the means, it's to the predestinating love of God. He chose me out. There's nothing I can boast of. I thank God for my parents. I thank God for bringing me up in the reading of the Scriptures and yet I have to say it's not anything in me or them, but it's in God himself and it's in his doing, his ability, his mercy, his choosing. The more I read the Scriptures, the more I see this truth shining as a light which gets brighter and brighter and brighter as the Lord is pleased to teach any one of us. It becomes clear. Scripture is full of it. The theme and foundation, the rock of Scripture is that God has chosen of people and has been pleased to redeem them. You see, the choosing wasn't just arbitrary. It's a choosing unto salvation and he chose them in Christ and it was for such that the Lord Jesus Christ came into this world and paid their price. We see that in the Ephesians 1:4, "According as he hath chosen us in him," when? "Before the foundation of the world," but verse 5 says, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." Verse 7, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." So there's more to look at in this particular portion, that God's choosing was because there was the Savior there even before the foundation of the world and God purposed to give a people to his Son to be their Savior that in time he should come and pay their debt and that the Lord Jesus Christ did. You see all the glory belongs unto God through his Son the Lord Jesus Christ alone.