

MY GREATEST GLORY

GALATIANS 6:14 • TV120A

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By
HENRY T. MAHAN

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Galatians 6:14

“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.”

I would like for you to open your Bible today to the book of **Galatians**. I’m going to speak to you from **Galatians the 6 chapter, the 14th verse** and the title of this message is: **“MY GREATEST GLORY.”**

Paul said in **Galatians 6:14**: *“But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world, God forbid.”*

Now that’s a phrase that Paul often uses and when he uses it he does it to especially emphasize a particular strong point, *“God forbid.”* In fact, Paul is the only New Testament writer, I believe, who uses that phrase, *“God forbid.”*

And here in our text he says: *“God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* He’s emphasizing especially, a very important point. Let’s go back and look at a few passages where Paul uses this phrase, *“God forbid.”*

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First of all: He uses it in **Romans Chapter 3:3-4**; this is what it says in **Roman 3:3-4**: “*Shall the unbelief of Israel make the faith of God without effect, God forbid?*”

Now, Israel was a nation filled with rebellion and unbelief. You know that; you’ve watched Israel from Egypt all the way to Canaan and it is said of them, finally after 40 years of murmuring and rebellion and unbelief, it is finally said “*they could not enter in, (that is into the Promise Land), because of unbelief.*”

What Paul is asking is this; does the unbelief of Israel, does the rebellion of Israel, make the purpose of God, the faith of God, the program of God without effect? Does that mean that God is going to fail in what He set out to do? God forbid that we should even think such a thing.

Then again in **Romans chapter 3:5-6**, he says: Is God unrighteous to judge sinners? If the Lord God judges our sins and causes us to account for our transgressions, is He unrighteous, is He unjust? Paul replies to that: “*God forbid*” that you should even think such a thing.

David said, “*When the Lord judges me, he’s just and when the Lord condemns me, he’s righteous.*” Every believer knows that. We don’t deserve to be saved. God is not obligated to show mercy to any man. God rather in His righteousness and justice is obligated to deal with us according to our sins because “*the wages of sin is death.*”

So, Paul is asking this, is God unrighteous to judge sinners? Is God unrighteous and unjust to condemn rebels, God forbid?”

Now, watch this is **Romans 3**. Again, in the same chapter of Romans he uses this phrase three times in one chapter. In **Romans 3:31** he says: “*Do we make void the law through faith?*”

If we say that a man is not saved by keeping the law, if we say that a man is not saved by good deeds and good works, if we say that a man is not saved by his own obedience but by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, does that mean that we just scrap the law, that the law is no longer in effect?

If you are preaching salvation by grace through faith, does that discourage holiness? Does that discourage honesty? Does that discourage obedience? Does that do away with God’s Commandments, Paul asked?

“*God forbid; we establish the law (by faith).*” By faith we honor the law. By faith we look to Him who came into the world to honor the law, the Lord Jesus Christ. God didn’t save us without the law to live like outlaws. God didn’t save us by grace to live in disgrace. He said: “*We established the law.*”

I hear people say: “Well, if you preach salvation by faith alone, people will just go out and live any way. That’s the very thing these heathens are asking right here. That’s the very thing that these rebels are asking right here; they are saying: “Well, you preach salvation by faith; does that make void the law? Does that repeal the law? Does that scrap the law of God?” The apostle said: “God forbid that you should even think such a thing.”

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Now, watch this in **Romans 6:1**: “*Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*” What’s he talking about here? God forbid that you should think such a thing or even ask such a question; “*Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?*”

Now, a diamond, if you go to a jewelry store to buy a diamond they will display it; they will put it on display and they will put that diamond on a dark black or a dark green or a dark blue velvet cloth, because a diamond sparkles and shines and looks more brilliant against a black background.

Even so, the grace, mercy and love of God are glorified more when God saves sinners: “*where sin doth abound; grace doth much more abound.*” God gets great glory from saving great sinners.

The glory of God is seen in the salvation of Saul of Tarsus, the blasphemer and the persecutor. God’s great glory is seen in the salvation of the thief on the cross, the outcast. God’s great glory is seen in the salvation of great sinners.

Somebody says: “Ok then; if God’s grace is glorified in my sins, then I will just keep on sinning.” Shall we continue to sin that grace may be glorified? Shall we continue to sin that grace may be glorified and grace may be honored, “*God forbid?*”

You see, and in that same thing, here we have our text: “*Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound, God forbid? Shall we make void the law through faith?*” Paul says: “*God forbid.*” Is God’s purpose frustrated because some people don’t believe, God forbid?

And now in our text, Paul uses the phrase again in **Galatians 6:14**, he says: “*God forbid.*” The same horrible thought that I should glory in anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, everybody is going to glory in something; that’s right, you are and I am and everybody else is going to glory in something or someone. What is it to glory? What are we talking about, glorying in something?

Well, we are talking about either worshipping that object or person. We are talking about boasting in it. We are talking about to make it the chief object of your delight. That’s what it is, to rejoice in it. That’s what we mean by glorying.

Some people glory in their beauty. Some people glory in their nationality. Some people glory in their education. Some people glory in their gifts. Some people glory in their strength. There are people glorying in a lot of things.

But, Paul says: “*God forbid.*” In the same things that he pushed aside, these other things, these other foolish questions, he said: “it’s utter, absolute foolishness, to think that I could glory in, rejoice in, worship, find delight in, in anything but the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

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We could say, could he have gloried in something else? My friend, listen to me. We are talking about the apostle Paul. We are talking about Paul who was known from Rome down to Judea.

We are talking about Paul who was known by rulers and jail keepers. We are talking about the man who was known in hell, the apostle Paul, that's right, that's right?

One time the sons of Sceva were going to cast the demons out of a fellow. When they spoke to the demons, do you know what they said to the sons of Sceva? They said: "*Paul, we know and Jesus Christ we know, but who are you?*" And they jumped on him and beat him up and they fled just escaping with their lives.

The demons from hell said, "We know this fellow Paul" could he have gloried in something else? Well, he could have gloried in his heritage. The apostle Paul was high-born religiously. He said: "*I'm a Hebrew of Hebrews.*" He could trace his lineage right back to Abraham without any difficulty at all. He was Saul of Tarsus.

Well, he could have gloried in his morality, some folks do. The apostle Paul says: "*Concerning the law I was blameless.*" But, that was before the Holy Spirit opened his eyes to his sin.

That was before the Spirit of God ever revealed Christ to him. That was before he ever came to a true knowledge of the law. He thought he was all right. He thought he was blameless. He had a moral life.

Well, he could have gloried in his education. The apostle Paul was educated in one of the top schools of his day. He sat at the feet of Gamaliel; he was a great and unusual scholar.

In fact, one of the rulers before whom he preached accused him of losing his mind from studying too much. There are not a whole lot of us who would lose our mind that way, from studying too much?

But Paul could have gloried in his education. He could have gloried in his apostleship, the high office. There are a lot of folks who glory in that; they glory in the fact that they are a Doctor or a Preacher, or a Rabbi or a Bishop, or an Elder or something of that nature.

They've got a high office in the church and they glory in it, somebody said: "gone to their head; they are proud of themselves."

Paul was an apostle, an apostle of Christ, chosen by the Lord, taught the Gospel by the Son of God. He had seen the Lord Jesus Christ and yet he said: "*I am nothing.*"

Spurgeon once preached a sermon on "A nothing talks about another nothing;" he was going to talk about the Apostle Paul. He said: "*I am not one wit behind the chief apostle but I am nothing.*"

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He could have gloried in his revelations. One time he went to the third heaven and he saw things that weren't lawful for a man to utter. He could have gloried in his gifts. He says: *"I speak with tongues more than all of you folks."*

He could speak in languages more than anybody in his day, any believer. Paul could have gloried in his sufferings. I find a lot of people doing that. They go around telling about how they went to jail for Jesus or how they suffered for the Lord. Paul didn't glory in that. He suffered, I suppose, more than any man other than Christ our Lord.

Finally, he gave his life as a martyr for Jesus Christ but he never gloried in his sufferings. With one sweep of his hand, he pushed everything aside. He said: *"I count it all but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him."*

God forbid if he pushes aside his apostleship, gifts, education, revelations, sufferings, all of his heritage and morality, *"God forbid that I should glory save in anything except the cross of Jesus Christ."*

Now, two questions:

First of all: What is the cross in which Paul gloried, what is the cross?

Now, you listen carefully to me; you don't leave me. Brother Muse used to say: "Don't bat an eye or move a hand." What is the cross in which Paul gloried?

Well, you know without my telling you, that the apostle Paul set no store in a material cross. That wasn't what he was talking about, whether it's on a steeple on top of a church or whether it's on the front of the pulpit, or whether somebody is wearing it around her neck, or whether it is in somebody's pocket so they can feel the cross and feel religious or a sign that some baseball player makes before he stands up to bat in the ballpark.

These things are nothing but superstitions. There is as much superstition in crosses as there is in witchcraft. There's as much superstition in crosses as broken mirrors, salt spilled, horseshoes or a rabbit's foot.

I wish religion today would totally abandon the use of material crosses in any shape, form, or fashion and start preaching the true cross of the Lord Jesus Christ: *"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

He wasn't talking about a wooden cross. I passed a church coming up here to the television station. They've got three crosses up on the side of the hill. That looks real religious to a mind who knows nothing about the grace of God. That looks real religious to a person who knows nothing about the true cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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What was Paul talking about? He was talking about, in a word, the great atonement for sinners which Christ accomplished on Calvary. That's the cross he was talking about. The cross, he talks about preaching the cross; *"the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness."*

He's not talking about preaching a piece of gold or silver around your neck. He's not preaching about something that dangles from the end of your Bible or something that you wear on your lapel or something that you have on top of your church.

He's talking about the atonement for sinners. He's talking about the suffering, satisfaction and substitution of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what he is glorying in. The apostle Paul wasn't glorying in a cross any more than he would glory in a hangman's noose.

A cross is where criminals die. Would you glory in an electric chair? Would you glory in a gas chamber? Would you glory in a hangman's noose? Well, why would you glory in a block of wood on which a man was nailed by Roman soldiers?

We are not glorying in the wood; we are glorying in what the person who died there accomplished. We are glorying in Him; Christ is our glory. That's what Paul is talking about: *"God forbid that I should glory save in the cross, (in the atonement, in the suffering and satisfaction and substitutionary work) of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

"He was wounded for my transgressions. He was bruised for my iniquities. The chastisement of my peace was laid on him and by his stripes I'm healed." That's what I'm glorying in, His love for me, His grace that took Him to the tree, His blood that was shed there for my sins, His death as it purchased my redemption. I glory in that blessed atonement!

**"Jesus paid it all
All the debt I owe
Sin left a crimson stain
He washed it white as snow."**

What is the cross that Paul's glorying in? God forbid that I should glory in anything in this world or anyone except the cross, that is the atonement, the substitutionary work, the satisfaction, the sin-offering which Christ my Lord accomplished by His death on Calvary.

Paul means this, he means that glorious Gospel which springs out of the cross, which comes from Calvary's Hill, the preaching of the cross. Paul didn't go around preaching a cross; he preached the one who died on the cross, Christ who died on the cross.

That was the place where Christ suffered. The preaching of the cross is this: it's the preaching of God incarnate. If Christ had not come into the world in human flesh He wouldn't have had a body to die on the cross. You've got to preach God incarnate if you preach the cross.

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When our Lord Jesus Christ came into this world through the virgin's womb and lay in Bethlehem's manger, He laid there under the very shadow of that tree. He was here on a mission.

He came for a purpose; He came to die. He came on an appointed hour, in an appointed death, for an appointed people. He accomplished that on Calvary's cross. So, we preach the cross. We preach God incarnate.

Second: We preach the grace of God for the guilty: *"for God so loved the world; he gave his only begotten son."*

God gave His Son. God sent His Son into the world. *"In the fullness of the time God sent his Son (the Lord Jesus Christ) made of a woman, made under the law."* It was on purpose. His death was no accident. Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered on that tree on purpose.

If you will go back to the Old Testament my friend, you will read, not only was the tribe from which Christ would come prophesied of, (the tribe of Judah), but the family Jesse, through the lineage of David, it was prophesied how he would be born, lay in a manger, a virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son.

It was prophesied how He would die and His beard would be plucked out. They cast lots for His garment, how He would be buried in a rich man's tomb and how He would rise again. It's all in the Old Testament.

The very words of Christ spoke on Calvary's cross are in **Psalm 22**. The Scripture tells about His betrayal of 30 pieces of silver and the purchase of the potter's field in which they buried Judas' body. It's all right there in the Word of God.

So, when we preach the cross we are preaching God incarnate, we are preaching the grace of God, the eternal grace of God for the guilty. God planned it, God purposed it.

Actually, *"Christ was the lamb slain before the foundation of the world."* His death was foreordained and appointed by God the Father: *"It pleased the Lord to bruise him."*

So, when we preach the cross, we preach the purpose of God, the grace of God and the mercy of God. We preach an effectual ransom.

When Paul looked back to the cross he didn't look upon the death of Christ as a down payment or an installment payment for you and me to finish the rest of the payments that are due. He looked on it as a completed work.

Yes, our Lord Jesus Christ said from the cross: *"It's finished;* (the work is done, redemption is complete). *I have found a ransom."* It's a full ransom, it's a sufficient ransom, it's an effectual ransom, and it's a complete ransom.

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And that led Paul to say in **Romans 8**, four questions to be exact, he said: *“If God be for me who can be against me? Who can lay anything to the charge of God’s elect, it’s God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? Christ has died, yea rather, is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who can separate me from the love of Christ?”*

I tell you, when we preach the cross, we preach not only God incarnate and the grace of God for the guilty and mercy for the miserable but we preach an effectual ransom. We preach a redemption that redeems.

We preach a salvation that saves. We preach an atonement that atones. Now that’s right! Christ didn’t try to do anything on that cross; He did what He set out to do.

Third: Then, when we preach the cross we preach a certain salvation for all who believe!

He sent His disciples out to preach the Gospel to every creature and He said: *“you preach the gospel and everybody who believes it and is baptized shall be saved and everybody who doesn’t believe it will be damned.”* Now, that’s how clear-cut it is; believe it and be saved, reject it and be damned.

Over in **John 3:36** it says: *“He that believeth in the Son hath life. He that believeth not the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him.”* In **1 John 5:12** it says: *“He that hath the Son of God hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”* It’s just that clear cut.

When the old Titanic set sail (from wherever it left) headed to the United States, there were a lot of different classes of people on board. There were white people, black people, rich people, poor people, old people and young people.

There were educated people and uneducated people. There were short people and tall people, fat people and skinny people. When the list was posted after it went down, there were two classes, those who were dead and those who were alive, those who were saved and those who were lost, that’s all.

And my friend; that’s what it all boils down to, it is all in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ, not to the superstitions of religion, not to the traditions of religion, not even to the theology of religion, it’s Christ, a person!

Notice the second question now: What was there about the cross that caused Paul to glory?

He said: *“God forbid.”* He was shocked that anybody would think that he would glory, that he would boast in, that he would rejoice in or find delight in anything once he had been to Calvary, but the cross.

Now, he named all of his traditions, heritage, customs, pedigrees, and all of these things and then he says: *“I count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in him.”*

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Now, what is there about the cross that deserves such a claim and such glory, this Gospel, this person the Lord Jesus Christ? Well, I will give you three things:

First of all: There's glory in the cross because of the fact of it!

Do you realize what I am saying? Most people don't pay much attention to preachers. One reason is most preachers are not saying anything. They wait on the music. They endure the preaching to get to the music.

But, you know, heathen religionists have invented many strange and unusual things to impress men with their religion. They've got great buildings, giant statues and unusual things. But did you know there's nothing in the universe as unusual and great, glorious and mysterious as God almighty coming to the earth in human flesh and dying on a cross?

Now, you stop and think about that a minute. You know, Paul wrote that, he said: "*Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in human flesh.*" That's astounding!

The angels are up there trying to look into it. The prophets of old diligently enquire and searched into it. It's amazing and astounding, God almighty, very God of very God, and yet man, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, manifested in the flesh.

"Let this mind be in you which is also in Christ Jesus who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet made himself of no reputation and took upon himself the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Think about it; think about it, the fact of it! Paul said: "*I glory.*" You can glory in seven or eight wonders of the world, whatever they are, but none of them are as great a wonder as God becoming a man and dying for sinners. The fact of it, and the glory demands our boasting only in the cross.

Secondly: And then the glory is glorious because of the simplicity of it!

That's right; the greatest mystery in the universe is simple. Now, you can say what you will and do what you will but I am saying over and over again and I am emphasizing it over and over again, salvation is in Christ.

It's not in the complicated ceremonies of religion. It's not in the vows and promises and dedications and rededications and walking up and down aisles; it's in Christ. That's right! "*In him dwelleth the fullness of the Godhead bodily and you are complete in him. Christ in you the hope of glory. I travail until Christ be formed in you.*"

Anything that you do, give, offer, or attempt to do, to gain favor with God is wasted effort. Salvation is in Christ, only in Christ.

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God vested everything in His Son. His Son worked out a perfect righteousness by obeying the law on behalf of believers and He accomplished a perfect ransom and redemption by dying for our sins on Calvary's cross.

Thirdly: There's glory in the fact of it, there's glory in the simplicity of it, and there's glory in the suitability of it.

It's suitable for the greatest sinner. I can look out there today and address the wickedest woman who ever lived or the vilest and sinful man who ever walked and I can say to you; look to Christ and live. He delights to show mercy. He's plenteous in mercy. *"He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him."*

But, you've got to look to Christ; don't look to me. Don't write letters to me and ask me my advice; I'm pointing you to Christ. You do business with the Son of God; don't you let anybody get between you and Christ.

I can't save you, myself, or anybody else but Christ can if you can look to Him. It's suitable for the chief of sinners. It's suitable for any sinner: *"Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely."* Everyone that thirsteth come to the Christ of the cross."

It's suitable for the poorest sinner. He says: *"Come buy wine, milk, without price, without money."* Don't bring anything. Don't try to buy your way to God. A man is throwing you a curve to insinuate that you can buy your way into the kingdom of God.

God doesn't need your riches, He owns the cattle on a thousand hills and the gold and silver that hasn't been mined. It's not suitable for anything. Look to Christ and be made whole!