



Links Players

Humility - Righteous Bragging

Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth... (Jeremiah 9:23-24, ESV)

Everybody recognizes a braggart. You know, the guy who cannot help himself in ensuring everyone within listening distance knows what he accomplished on the course. At the heart of pride is the insatiable thirst to have others make much of you!

A proviso is in order. If you have a friendship pact that stipulates reporting back to one another when something spectacular happens on the course, that's not bragging. I would be disappointed if I discovered that a close friend had a record number of birdies and didn't tell me. I want to "rejoice with those who rejoice."

We could continue with the short list of caveats in our definition of bragging, but assuming you "know it when you see it," let's listen carefully to what Jeremiah is communicating.

Notice in today's text that "boasting" is not inherently wrong—I am using bragging and boasting as synonyms. What makes bragging appropriate or inappropriate is the intended referent— is the one boasting in self or someone else?

C. S. Lewis initially wrestled with God's command to praise him; then the lights came on. He writes, "I had not noticed that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: "Isn't she lovely? Wasn't it glorious? Don't you think that magnificent?" The Psalmists, in telling everyone to praise God, are doing what all men do when they speak of what they care about."

Recently, a close friend in his early seventies shot 67 at The Honors Course. Trust me, when I found out about it, I heralded the "good news" to friends and foes alike. A few weeks back, I played with an eighty-one-year-old gentleman who shot 74 on a challenging track; it should have been 70! Within twenty-four hours, I was blabbing about it all over town!

Boasting in another's achievement is laudable. Learning to boast that you "understand and know God," even if a little, indicates that you are refocusing your life around and praising what is ultimately praiseworthy- the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

When a man or woman tastes the goodness of God, there is an irresistible urge to boast about God our Savior and invite others to "praise" him. If you were to stumble upon a diamond of immeasurable worth, you could not contain the joy nor suppress the news, at least not for long.

Trust me, I'm calling my friends if and when I shoot my age. I expect the same from them. But above all else, I want to spend the rest of my days bragging about "Christ and him crucified." After all, Paul reminds us that "... the surpassing value of knowing Christ" infinitely excels all else!

Prayer: Father! Show us how to brag to others about Jesus and the Cross!

READING: Jeremiah 9:23-24; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Ephesians 2:1-9.

1. Pick someone in your Links Fellowship to boast about. Tell a story about a friend's accomplishments on or off the course.

2. After reading the suggested texts, discuss the differences between appropriate and inappropriate boasting.

3. Application: Over the next month, mentally monitor how many times you are tempted to make the moment about yourself rather than others or Christ.
