

note. Paul asks us to think back to the day when God called us. Prize winners? Are any of you Rhodes Scholars? Are you by His grace and we first began trusting Jesus. He asks us to think back to the day when God called us. So are you advisors to the President? Are any of you professors at Oxford or Harvard or Yale? By human standards, not many of us are wise. Maybe none of us. Keep thinking about who you were when God called you and saved us. Remember who you were when God called you, and look at what's next on Paul's list, "Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and things that are despised—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: 'Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.'"

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country? Any princes or princesses in here? Well, maybe somebody in here, your father was the President of the States? No? Well, how many of you had a parent who was the Governor of Tennessee? A Senator? Anything? Our royalty is Mrs. Hibbett... She was the mayor of Mt. J

Now, this truth is so huge... this truth about God's glory is so central to all reality... that I want to make sure we look at it very closely and think very carefully about it. And I want to start by raising a question that some of you may have. We've just said that God is working for His own glory. God chooses in such a way that all boasting will be in Him, and He will get all glory for Himself. And the question I want to ask is, "Is it okay for God to do that? Is it right for God to work for His own glory?"

And the reason I ask that question is because we've known people who seek glory for themselves... people who are proud and arrogant and boastful and self-centered... and we know that's not a good thing. It's not right for us to seek our own glory, so is it right for God to seek His own glory?

Now, I'll go ahead and tell you up front the answer is Yes. It is right for God to seek His own glory. But I don't want us to stop with just the answer. I want us to work to really see why it is right for God to seek His own glory. And I want us to see it from several different angles. The first angle is the angle of justice.

steal the car, then justice would be for the judge to say guilty. So justice is when the right judgment is declared. And with that in mind, I want you to imagine that everything in all reality is placed before you. Every person, every value, every treasure, every desire, and you have to decide what is the most important thing in all reality. What matters most? The Bible clearly teaches us that God's glory matters most. God's glory is the most important. Everything else exists for God's glory. So God's glory is the ultimate, most important thing in the universe. So in order for justice to be done, you have to make the right judgment and your verdict has to match reality, and reality is that God's glory is most important. So justice demands that God's glory is most important. Well, guess what? Even though you and I are

The only other alternative is that God would treat His you choose isn't as valuable as God's glory. And wis
glory as less valuable than it really is. But if He does that, that's recognize the value of God's glory and make a good c
the wrong verdict, and then He's not just, and then He's not God. And God's glory as most valuable.

So if you think about God's justice, you see that it is just Well, guess what? Even though you and I are
and right for God to treat His glory as most important, because wise... even though we don't always make good decis
His glory really is most important. God does, because God is perfectly wise. God always

Let's think about this truth from another angle. Let's to completely perfect insight. And God always makes th
the angle of wisdom. Wisdom means that you have the insigh best decisions. And therefore, when God thinks about
and discernment to make good decisions. For example, imagin glory, in His wisdom, God sees that His glory is most
that you have a distant relative who is very wealthy and he pass And God makes the right decision: He chooses to trea
away. And in his will, he leaves you his 1931 Bugatti Royale as if it's most valuable, because it really is!

Kellner Coupe. Now, you may not know what that is. I didn't, The only other alternative is that you would ha
either. So let me tell you. That's the most expensive car in the look at His glory and then look at something else that
world. In 1987, it sold for \$8.7 million. And your wealthy valuable and then foolishly decide to treat that other tl
relative wills you this car. Now, imagine a car dealer hears about our more valuable than His glory. But if God does t
it, and he makes you an offer. He says, "I will give you \$10 for God is not wise, and if God is not wise, then God is n
the car." If you say yes, and you sell that \$8.7 million car for So if you think about God's wisdom, you see t
\$10, is that wise? No! That's foolish. That's stupid. Wisdom absolutely right for God to treat His glory as most val

For example, Christy and I love Sydney. And because we love her, we feed her, we clothe her, we change her diapers. Now, His glory is what's best for you, and He loves you by imagine if we said, "You know, sometimes she gets cranky when we try to feed her, so we're just going to stop feeding her. Sometimes she squirms when we're putting her clothes on, so look at His glory and know that it is best for you, and we're going to stop clothing her. Sometimes she cries when we change her diaper, so we're going to stop changing it." Would that be loving? No. Because we're not doing what's best for her. And by the way, notice that there may be times when we're doing what's best for her and she doesn't like it... but we do what's best for her anyway, because we love her. And I don't have to tell you that this will play itself out more and more over the next few years as we have to discipline her and correct her, because we know that it's best for her to learn obedience, and we love her so much that we're going to give her what's best.

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Now, let's take this truth about love, and let's think about God. Does God love you? Absolutely. God loves you. God is love. And that means that God wants to do what is best for you. Now, let's take this truth about love, and let's think about God. Does God love you? Absolutely. God loves you. God is love. And that means that God wants to do what is best for you.

your team the best chance to win. He's not just thinking about anything to boast about. And if God chose them, it's himself. He's thinking about what's best for you, and what's best deserved it... it's not because they had anything for the whole team. And it just so happens that him taking the God... it's only because God is gracious, and therefore shot is what's best for the team. all the glory. But my question is, how does that keep

Listen, when God says, "I'm going to do things so that and the strong and the influential and the noble from you have to boast in me instead of boasting in yourself," He's not, can't they still say, "I'm wise. I'm strong. I'm being selfish. He's doing what's best for you. It is best for you. I'm noble. I'm going to boast about that"? Yes, they to boast in God and glory in God. That is the very essence of that. But do you see what God's response will be? To heaven. And being so consumed with your own glory that you "I'm wise. I'm strong. I'm influential. I'm noble." To miss God's glory is the very essence of hell. So when God says, "So what? That doesn't mean anything to me. I His own glory, He's doing what's best for you. It just so happens of that. I don't need your wisdom. I don't need you that God's glory, and not your own glory, is what's best for you strength. I don't need your influence. I don't need you

So all of that to answer the question, "Is it right for God? Look at who I use. I use foolish, weak, despised common work for His own glory?" And the answer is: Absolutely! It is accomplish all my purposes, because I am God." just, and it is wise, and it is loving for God to work for His own So by choosing the foolish and the weak and the glory, because His glory really is most important, His glory really shows the wise and the strong and the noble that is most valuable, and His glory really is best for us. have anything to boast about, because their wisdom and

And now, with that great truth in mind, let's go back to and nobility don't carry any weight before God. God

weak and the despised can't boast, because it's clear that they and the noble to recognize how much they need God ; didn't deserve for God to choose them. They didn't have God and to depend on God, because they're much more anything to offer God. God offered His grace to them. And the proud of themselves and to think that they're good the wise and the strong and the noble can't boast, because it's And no one can come to God in that way. So God do clear that God doesn't need them. Their wisdom and strength the wise and the influential and the noble who come to and nobility don't matter. The very thing they might take pride in is actually worthless, so they don't have anything to boast about, either. No one can boast before God.

And in just a minute, we're going to close with some ways that this text applies to our lives. But before we do, a possible misunderstanding that I want to make sure we avoid can imagine someone reading these verses and then saying, "God only chooses foolish, weak, despised people, and He rejects all the wise, strong, noble people." No, that's not true. Look verse 26 closely. Paul says, "*Brothers, think of what you were when God called you. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.*" Paul, Lydia... God accepts them in His grace. Their standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But we see this all the time in the New Testament. The proud tax collectors, the sinners... they come to Jesus and Him because they're desperate and broken and needy. But the Pharisees, the religious leaders, the rulers... they reject Jesus, because they're too proud a righteous to bow before Him and admit they need Him. Look at the few Pharisees and religious leaders and wealthy people do come in humble faith... Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Paul, Lydia... God accepts them in His grace. Their standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But we stop trusting in it and start trusting in God.

this text applies to our lives. The first application is that it doesn't keep you from God if you boast in them instead of bo
not matter what the world thinks about you. Do you see that? God.

doesn't matter if the world thinks you're wise or foolish. It So it is crucial for all of us to hear what I'm ge
doesn't matter if the world thinks you're strong or weak. It to say: Whatever you're tempted to take pride in, God
doesn't matter if the world loves you or despises you... because we need it. You're not that good. You're not that smart.
the world's standards don't mean anything to God. The only that pretty. You're not that successful. You're not th
thing that matters in your life is whether God has called you by leader. God doesn't need it from you. So there's no r
His grace and you are humbly trusting Him. boast in it. Boast in Him.

And Church, I pray that you see how much freedom and The third application is this: God calls us to th
joy there is in this truth. So many of you spend so much time are bigger than we are, so it will be clear that He did i
worried about what everybody thinks: Do they like me? Do they follow God in your life... as we follow God in this ch
approve of me? Do they agree with me? Are they impressed are always going to be too weak and too foolish for th
with me? Do they think I'm smart? Do they think I'm good? God calls us to do. That's exactly how God works: G
Do they think I'm successful? It doesn't matter! None of that calls us to things that are impossible for us to do on o
carries any weight with God, so stop worrying about it! Let the because He doesn't want us to do them on our own. I
world think you're a fool. Let the world think you're weak. It wisdom and our strength and our plans are enough to
doesn't matter what the world thinks about you. The only thing when we're not doing what God called us to do... beca
that matters is for you to humbly trust God's grace. And there calls us to things that only He can do, so that we will c

And that brings us to our last application. There may be some of you here today who feel like you don't have anything to offer God... that you're a nobody who will never be good enough. Good. That means you're exactly who God is looking for. You're exactly who God wants to use. God's grace is for you today. And God will get great glory in your life if you will humbly trust Him to use you in a way that only He can. Listen, God doesn't need people who want to show how much they can do for God. God wants people who know how much they need God to do for them. Let me say that again for you, because it captures our whole text. God doesn't need people who want to show how much they can do for God. God wants people who know how much they need God to do for them. So don't come boasting in yourself. Don't come trusting in your credentials. Here's the invitation this morning: Come broken and empty and desperate and needy and humble, and boast in the grace of the great God who will use even you.