

Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.²⁷ 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.²⁸ He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are,²⁹ so that no one may boast before him.³⁰ 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.³¹ Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.” (NIV84)

Theme: Brag about the Lord's accomplishments.

1. He chose you.
2. He saved you.

If you are going to watch the Super Bowl tonight I'm sure you'll see it plenty of times. Someone will make a big play—maybe they get a sack, an interception, or a 50-yard touchdown and they start to celebrate. They will call attention to themselves. They might do some sort of dance, maybe beat their chest, or give some sort of self-gloating interview after the game. They made a good play and they want everyone to take notice at just how great they are. They want everyone to know what they did.

Sadly it's not just professional athletes who like to boast and brag about themselves—we all do it each in our own little way. But today we see that since we are nothing and have done nothing, we should brag about the Lord's accomplishments. For he chose you and he saved you.

Boasting and bragging about yourself has become all too common in this day and age. We see it all the time. Some say it's part of the culture; and that it's no big deal. They expect and encourage you to show off when you do something spectacular. Young kids and high schoolers see their idols showing off, so they do the same. The puff out their chest and draw attention to themselves constantly. High Schoolers and athletes can be very brash, at times, in their gloating. We can be a little more subtle.

Facebook pages are often turned into a personal bragging page. Nothing negative is posted. But if something amazing happens to you or if you accomplish then you make sure people know about it. You often brag about how good you are, what you have accomplished, or how much you know. And if you don't brag about yourself then it's about those you love. Look at what my son, or husband, or brother can do. He's the best at this and that.

And why do you boast and brag so much? Because we have an inflated sense of self-worth. We think that we are better than we actually are. We like to think of ourselves as cool and popular, as athletic and strong, as smart and intelligent, as healthy and prosperous. You are a very gifted and successful person. Anyone would be lucky to know you. Or to be on your side.

But as impressed as you are with yourself, the world isn't all that impressed. As a whole the world looks at believers in general as second-class citizens. They see a people who are foolish, weak, and lowly. And so they despise Christians. Take, for example, the pagan philosopher Celsus, who lived in the second century. He said that Christians, “show that they want and are able to convince only the foolish, dishonorable and stupid, and only slaves, women, and little children.” More than 1500 years later The German Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said that the Christian faith is, “a favoring of the botched and degenerate, and a despising of the rich, scholarly, noble, healthy, and strong.” That is the way many look at Christians—as the lowest of the low. We are considered weak and stupid, gullible, second-rate. You believe in something so foolish and contrary to reason—so you must not be all that smart. You deny what others know as facts. And you live strange lives compared to everyone else. Not only is the world not impressed with you; neither is God. Instead of being impressed with you, he sees you how you really are—a poor, miserable sinner. He sees someone who sins constantly. He sees someone who can't save himself. There is really nothing that attracted God to you. It's wasn't because of who you are. It wasn't because of what you do. You are no better than everyone else. It doesn't matter what you think of yourself, you aren't special.

And yet, God chose you. Through Paul, the Holy Spirit refers to you—to all of us, as foolish, weak, lowly, despised, and the things that are not. You are foolish—not wise. But unable to understand many things. You are weak—not strong. But physically incapable of many things. You are lowly—not important. But you fall in line with all the other insignificant people in the world. You are despised—not adored by the masses. But hated by many people, whether they know you or not.

Do you see the point? Look at who you are. Not who you think you are, but who you truly are. You can't boast or brag about yourself before others. Let alone before the almighty, all-powerful, and all-knowing God. There is nothing good about you. There is nothing all that impressive. And yet, God chose you. You belong to him.

God chose you from before the beginning of the world. He chose you out of his grace. He didn't choose you based on who you would be, or what you would do. He chose you because he chose you. He chose you to shame those who think they have something to offer. As Paul says, **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 the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are** God chose you, the foolish, weak, lowly, and despised because that is what you were. He chose these so that all may know that they didn't contribute in anyway—but it was simply an act of God's grace. The people of the world think they are something special. They place themselves above others, and look down upon Christians as second-class citizens. And in a way, they are correct. But in another way, they couldn't be more wrong.

For God chose you. He chose you to be his own. He chose you and brought you to faith through the gospel. You heard his word, you were baptized and forgiven. Through faith in Jesus Christ, you are God's child. God put into effect what he planned in eternity—your salvation. He chose you. He didn't choose the intelligent, strong, powerful, or popular. He chose you.

You were foolish, weak, lowly, and despised by the world. You were nothing—but now you are a child of God! So you boast about what the Lord has done.

You boast in him, not only because he chose you. But also because he saved you. The two go hand-in-hand. He chose you to be saved. He accomplished this by living a perfect life that you were not able to. He kept all of God's commands perfectly. And when he was on the cross he gave you that perfect life. And he took away your sins. He suffered for what you had done wrong. He suffered through the pain and agony of hell in your place. And then he died. He didn't die because of his own sins—he was without sin. No, he died because he had the guilt of your sins upon his shoulders. But three days later he rose from the dead. Death could not hold him down. And it won't you either. For on the last day all will rise from the dead, and all believers will join him in heaven forever.

And so, through Christ, you are saved. God chose you and brought you to faith. And it is through faith that you receive all the blessings Christ won for you. Through faith, everything that Christ is, is now yours. As Paul wrote, **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.** You may not be wise by the world's standards. They may consider you stupid, ignorant, or gullible. But you are wise to God. **For the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom**, David said. True wisdom is not knowing certain facts. It's not understanding the way people think the world came to be or works. True wisdom is faith in Jesus Christ as your one and only Savior. So it is in Christ that you have wisdom from God. According to Paul, Christ is also your righteousness. That means is pure and innocent. Not once did Jesus sin. He is perfect in all he does. And this perfection is now ours. God chose us to be righteous before him. He gave us what we needed to have. So now we are in a right relationship with God. We are once again his children. Closely connected to this word, righteousness, is holiness. They both mean to be without sin. Not only did God give us his perfect life, he also took away our sins. He removed the guilt of all our sins as he took them upon himself on the cross. So he took away what we couldn't have and he gave us his what we needed to have. And so we are declared not guilty before the Lord. This word, holiness, is closely connected with the word, Saint. We are all saints—or holy ones, through faith in Jesus Christ.

And in Christ is redemption. That is, his act of buying us back. It is through the shedding of his blood that Christ bought us back. He paid the ransom price for our sins. His holy precious blood was the price he paid for our sins. And so he brought us back to God. We are reconciled back to him. We are now at-one once again with our Lord.

All this is yours through faith in Jesus. This faith is given to you by the Holy Spirit through the gospel. The gospel was shared with you because God chose you to be saved. He chose you out of his grace—not because of who you are or what you would do. In fact who you are is not that impressive. And what you would do doesn't turn any heads. You were foolish, weak, lowly, and despised. The world mocks and ridicules you. It weren't influential or born to wealthy and powerful parents. Yet God chose you to be saved. You don't get the credit. So you can't boast or brag about yourself. You didn't do anything. The Lord did it all. So you follow Paul's advice who quotes Jeremiah. **Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.** Because of everything the Lord has done for us—especially our salvation, we brag about what he has accomplished. We tell others about everything he has done for us.. For we want everyone to know and believe who Christ is and what he has done.

So let us not follow the example of the world who loves to boast and brag about themselves. For you are foolish, weak, and lowly. You are despised by the world—but not God. He chose you to be saved through faith in Jesus Christ. It is in him that you are wise through faith, righteous, and holy. In him we have redemption. So instead of bragging about yourself and what you have done, boast in the Lord. For in him you are righteous and holy and you will be forever. Amen.