

Recap

1. **Narrow Gate** (Lk 13) – Only a few saved. High calling. Cost of discipleship. Not cheap grace. Conversion is radical. Many religious folks aren't converted. **Conversion is radical.**
2. **Mark of True Conversion** (2 Cor 4) – Everybody blinded by Satan. God speaks an authoritative "Let there be light" and our hearts suddenly can see Jesus as the brightness of God's glory. What unconverted folks cannot do is be thrilled by the beauty, worth, and glory of God seen in Jesus crucified. And it's God's work in our hearts for us – not our work for God. He gets all the glory, we get all the joy. **Saved folks treasure Jesus.**
3. **New Hearts** (Jer 31, Ezek 36) – The problem with the old covenant was disobedient humans. In the new Covenant God will cause his people to fear him and obey him and keep his covenant by putting his Spirit in them and changing their desires and wills from the inside out. God gets all the glory – not me - in my obedience to him because it's **grace that enables** me to will and act in a manner pleasing to him. **Saved folks have supernatural power to love and obey God.**
4. **The Bread of Life** (John 6) – Feasting on Jesus' flesh as putting all our trust in his saving work of dying in our place for our sins. Worshiping God as most fully revealed in humble human form. Also here are Jesus saying, "No one can come to me unless the Father draws him," and "all that the Father gives me will come to me...and I will not lose any of them but will raise them up on the last day." **Jesus is the true food that gives eternal life.** But we can't come and eat unless the Father draws us – we're too sinful to want to come otherwise. He gets all the glory – we get all the joy.
5. **Assurance of Salvation** (Gal 3, Heb 10) – My love, faith, and fruit will be incomplete, imperfect, or difficult to accurately assess. My weary soul must hope not in my endeavors, but rather in Christ's perfect righteousness. I am constantly unworthy in myself, yet if I remain connected to Jesus, constantly forgiven, accepted, loved, and at peace with God. Unworthy and Loved.

- A certain vision of God's grace -> People as wicked and lost and unable to change it. God as the prime mover in initiating and drawing some to believe and to love and serve him and delight in him.
- Nothing about me caused God to send Jesus to die for me. Nothing. It's free. Nothing about me inclined God to cause me to be born again. Nothing. The only condition of my being justified is faith. And that's a gift too.
- The Gospel should make us feel small and powerless and intimidated that it's utterly OUT of our manipulation! It's FREE. If I can choose to believe, it's because God has so moved upon me as to cause me to have that freedom and to incline my heart to that, because by nature I will HATE the submission of my will to the will of another, especially to the will of one who is HOLY. A believer is utterly a product of a series of ongoing supernatural moving and stirrings of God's Spirit.
- We believe in a certain vision of God's grace. One that smashes human pride and boasting and presumption and gives all the credit, all the glory for everything totally to God.
- **Ephesians 2:9** Mark the "so that" – purpose – intentionality on God's part
- **1 Corinthians 1:26-31** – again – "in order that"
- Salvation is *designed* to smash human boasting

Two Messages of the Cross

1. That's how unworthy I am.
2. That's how much I'm loved.

And it's free.

Unworthy and Loved. Boasting is about the eager hunger in our souls for meaning and significance – worth. We long to have our worth affirmed and established through our accomplishments, through our attributes – intelligence, character, physical beauty, our virtue, our social contributions. Or we long to have our worth affirmed by the acknowledgement of other people. But all this human boasting – which every human does in some fashion apart from God's grace – all of this is slavery.

Keep the Worthiness Treadmill Running. In this model if something attacks my worth – they attack my hope of being loved and valued. I have to keep the worthiness, the beauty, the work ethic, the social contributions, the intelligence – I have to keep the treadmill running at a good clip to keep the worthiness up so that I will be loved.

But in the Gospel God smashes all of that human boasting. He says that I actually deserve that horror – that terror – that cross! So I'm utterly humbled, emptied, and on my knees before God.

And the other truth, I'm loved. Perfectly loved. As though I were perfect. Loved by a perfect Dad. A God without flaw loves me without fail. And not attached to the condition that I keep up my worthiness – no. He produces fruit in me after accepting me and loving me completely.

A Bitter Pill at First. The smashing of human pride and boasting is going to look like death on the front end. But it's the only way into the freedom of the other truth – that's how much I'm loved. So our challenge is to stay here, feeling both truths. I'm unworthy. I'm loved. Otherwise it's not free. It's slavery.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

²³ This is what the LORD says:

"Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom
or the strong man boast of his strength
or the rich man boast of his riches,

²⁴ but let him who boasts boast about this:

that he understands and knows me,
that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness,
justice and righteousness on earth,
for in these I delight,"
declares the LORD.