

"Love is not boastful" 1 Corinthians chapter 13 verse 5

Have you noticed how politicians and governments love to tell you at length and in extravagant terms about their amazing achievements. Not only have they succeeded, but they have excelled, making life better for us all. Anything that goes wrong is usually put down to the toxic legacy left to them by the last lot that were in power. As we look around at the state of our society, we can be forgiven for wondering where these incredible achievements are, and who it is who is enjoying a better life because of them.

We live in a world in which people need to be affirmed. Success is invariably seen in terms of achievement, and we erect statues to honour those who achieve the most (assuming that they haven't already erected statues to themselves, of course). When measured by human standards, the things people achieve can look pretty impressive. They accumulate power and wealth and even frequently actually do some things that benefit humanity.

But what happens when we place human achievement beside what God can do? It fades into miserable insignificance in the light of the almighty God who created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, who bears patiently with human failings and failures, who gives the life of his own son as an answer to the universal problem of human sin, who raises Jesus from the dead and who makes a way for people to be reconciled to relationship with him.

The bible book of Daniel tells of the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, who said of his kingdom; "Is this not Babylon the Great that I have built to be a royal residence by my vast power and for my majestic glory?" The outcome for him wasn't great, as you can find out if you look at Daniel chapter 4. God isn't impressed by human boasting, because it takes the credit for what God has done. Here is what God says about boasting; *"Let not a wise man boast of his wisdom, and let not the mighty man boast of his might, let not a rich man boast of his riches; but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things."*

In the end, the big problem of the human race is that of sin, which separates us from the relationship with God in which we are supposed to be living. That is why people boast about their own achievements and do not acknowledge God. Self righteous people would even boast about achieving their own place in God's favour, but the bible tells us *"you are saved by grace, through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift – not from works, so that no one can boast."* Only in this way can we mend our relationship with God, and nor can we boast that we maintain that relationship by our own merit. As Paul claimed *"It is by grace that I am what I am."*

Prayer.

Father, we are all too prone to boasting. We like to feel good about ourselves, and we don't like to think that we fail or fall short, so we even talk up our failures to make them look like success. Please work humble hearts in us, so that we will not attempt the futile exercise of exalting ourselves above you. Help us to trust that just as you brought us to faith in you, so you can bring the work you began to completion. In Jesus' name, amen.

*All these devotionals can be found on our website [inghamitechurch.org](http://inghamitechurch.org) on the 'Resources' page. Click on the link to go there.*