

Read

1 Corinthians 1:26–31
Jeremiah 9:23, 24

Consider

How many people do you know who trace their ancestry back to Canada's youngest province, Newfoundland and Labrador? My dad grew up in Newfoundland and moved to Ontario following the conclusion of World War II. Like all the Newfoundlanders I know my dad loved a good story. One of his favourites concerned an incident that happened to me when I was in grade two. For some reason I was moved from a seat near the back of a row to one at the front of the class. I told my parents about this during supper that evening. My dad asked why the teacher had moved me. My reply... "I guess I was the good-er." Obviously it was not for proficiency in English that I was rewarded.

Most of us love to boast. At a distance of some sixty-plus years I have no idea why my seat in that class was moved to the front. Speculating now I wonder if it was because the teacher wanted to keep a closer eye on me, but explaining it to my parents I managed to come up with a boast, "I was the good-er."

Paul knew all about the lure of boasting. Check out 2 Corinthians 11:22ff. If there was boasting to be done, Paul could boast. But he had also come to realize that when Christians boast of their accomplishments they put the focus on themselves and not on God. The apostle also knew the counsel of God from the mouth of the prophet: *but let those who boast boast in this, that they understand and know me, that I am the Lord* (Jeremiah 9:24^a).

This coming Sunday we are going to take a look at what it is that God has done for us, with the focus on 1 Corinthians 1:30—*He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption*. Those are the gracious gifts of God to us through Jesus. Hopefully we will discover together that these are spiritual possessions worthy of our boasting. I hope you'll be watching.

The Rev. Dr. Bill Norman

Pray

Here is a traditional Celtic prayer to offer to God:

"Thanks be to you, O God, for the gifts you give me...for your eye watching over me, for your comforting arm around me: for each gift thanks be to you. The best gift is yourself to me." Through Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

D i v i n g D e e p e r

In the 21st century what is it that attracts seekers to the church? How can we help those outside the church understand that it is God's power and wisdom that save us, not our own abilities or goodness?

Is it still true that God is choosing the foolish, the weak, the low and the despised to build the Kingdom? Give some reasons and examples to support your answer. How do you react to this reality?

Are you able to boast in the Lord? How do you explain what God has done for you? What does it mean to you that *He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus*?

How can we live closer **WITH** God in our lives?

How are we being **TRANSFORMED** to be more like Christ?

How is the Holy Spirit empowering us to imitate Christ in what we **DO** this week?