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**Boasting**  
**Series: The Weeping Prophet**  
**April 3, 2022**  
**Rev. Andrew Hawkins, Ph.D.**  
**The Village Church**  
**Evening Service**

I. Text

A. **Jeremiah 9:23–24** (ESV) —

1. 23 Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches,
2. 24 but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me,
3. that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”

B. Wonderful verses – familiar, memorable

1. Calvin: This is a remarkable passage, and often found in the mouth of men, as other notable sentences, which are known as proverbial sayings: but yet few rightly consider how these words are connected with the previous context.

II. **Boasting and Worship**

A. All of life comes down to worship

1. Boasting is an expression of worship
  - a. Means of praise
2. Ex: athletics has become full of boasting
  - a. Ryken: Athletes are no longer content to score touchdowns, tackle quarterbacks, or make three-pointers. They want to strut, dance, taunt, jump into the crowd, and humiliate their opponents. Boxers and wrestlers seem to spend as much time jawing as they spend working out. Back in the early seventies, when Muhammad Ali told everyone he was “the greatest,” it was a novelty. Now everyone is doing it.
3. What we boast about reveals our fundamental religious convictions
  - a. We are worshipers
    - (1) Everyone – we all worship something or someone
    - (2) As we boast, we reveal the object of worship

III. **The Ethics of Boasting**

A. Contrary to common thought, boasting is not wrong per se

1. Bible – the object of boasting is critical

2. **1 Corinthians 1:31** (ESV) — 31 so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”
3. **1 Corinthians 3:21** (ESV) — 21 So let no one boast in men...
4. **2 Corinthians 12:9** (ESV) — 9 But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
5. **Hebrews 3:6** (ESV) — 6 but Christ is faithful over God’s house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.

#### IV. **The Idolatry of Boasting**

- A. Boasting of Judah and Jerusalem belies their fundamental religious convictions
  1. The very essence of the indictment of God
    - a. Idolatrous people
    - b. Regardless of their protestations to the contrary that they were worshipers of Yahweh, they are revealed by their boasting to be spiritual adulterers
- B. V 23 – list of three objects of boasting
  1. **Jeremiah 9:23** (ESV) — 23 Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches...
  2. Wisdom
  3. Might
  4. Riches
  5. All three qualified by “his”
- C. Might easily find boasting in all three to be legitimate acts of God’s worship
  1. All wise God
  2. Almighty God
  3. God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills – riches of God
- D. Condemnation is against man’s wisdom, might, riches

#### V. **Boasting Condemned**

- A. **His Wisdom**
  1. Collapse of Judah is an exhibition of human wisdom
    - a. Prior to Josiah
      - (1) Whether to associate with Assyria or Egypt
    - b. Ever since Josiah
      - (1) Whether to associate with Babylon or Egypt
    - c. Played both ends against the middle
      - (1) Never turned out well
    - d. Every case – boasted in their human wisdom
      - (1) Politicians and statesmen of their day tried to figure out which way the wind was blowing
      - (2) Negotiated for their own interests
    - e. Every case – did not consider God’s requirements
  2. Pretense of worship in the temple was an exhibition of human wisdom

3. **Jeremiah 7:4–11** (ESV) —
  - a. 4 Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.’
  - b. 5 “For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another,
  - c. 6 if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm,
  - d. 7 then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.
  - e. 8 “Behold, you trust in deceptive words to no avail.
  - f. 9 Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known,
  - g. 10 and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, ‘We are delivered!’—only to go on doing all these abominations?
  - h. 11 Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, I myself have seen it, declares the LORD.
4. So smart
  - a. Go to worship on Sabbath
  - b. Then go violate every command Sunday through Friday
  - c. Thought they had all their bases covered
5. Various ways to use religious exercises as presumption and so exhibit human wisdom
  - a. Ryken: Some put their trust in church attendance and say, “I go to church, I go to church, I go to church.” Some put their trust in religious experience and say, “I’m born again, I’m born again, I’m born again.” Some put their trust in a sacrament and say, “I’ve been baptized, baptized, baptized.” Some put their trust in church affiliation and say, “I belong to an evangelical church, evangelical church, evangelical church.” Other’s put their trust in religious duties and say, “I have daily devotions, daily devotions, daily devotions.” Still others put their trust in some theological principle separated from a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They say, “I believe in the doctrines of grace, doctrines of grace, doctrines of grace.”
  - b. Ryken: God’s people used God’s temple as a safe house. They went out on crime sprees and then went back and used the temple for their hideout. They were wolves in sheep’s clothing.
  - c. All seemed pretty slick to these people
    - (1) One of the chief reasons for their demise
6. **Jeremiah 7:4–7** (ESV) —
  - a. 4 Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.’

- b. 5 “For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another,
  - c. 6 if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm,
  - d. 7 then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever.
7. Ryken: They said to God, “the temple, the temple, the temple.” But God said to them, “if, if, if...” (7.5-7)
- a. Ryken: They were assuming that because they were God’s chosen people, living in God’s chosen city, worshiping in God’s chosen temple, no harm could ever come to them. But they were living in sin, which means they had never truly understood the marvel of God’s grace.
  - b. Anytime someone presumes upon the doctrines of grace as somehow granting a license to continue in sin, he or she is exercising human wisdom, the kind of which got the people of Jerusalem destroyed and exiled
    - (1) The kind of human wisdom which will get the so-called Christian sent to hell
  - c. You cannot separate justification and sanctification
  - d. **Romans 8:29–30** (ESV) — 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.
  - e. Those who are genuinely converted grow in their revulsion toward and hatred of sin – especially their own
    - (1) Genuinely mourn for sin
      - (a) First for their own
      - (b) Then for the sins of the culture
  - f. Those genuinely converted pursue sanctification – without which no one will see the Lord (Heb 12.14)
- B. God has a word for those who engage in presumptuous worship
- 1. **Jeremiah 7:12–15** (ESV) —
    - a. 12 Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first, and see what I did to it because of the evil of my people Israel.
    - b. 13 And now, because you have done all these things, declares the LORD, and when I spoke to you persistently you did not listen, and when I called you, you did not answer,
    - c. 14 therefore I will do to the house that is called by my name, and in which you trust, and to the place that I gave to you and to your fathers, as I did to Shiloh.

- d. 15 And I will cast you out of my sight, as I cast out all your kinsmen, all the offspring of Ephraim.
2. Shiloh
- a. Twice destroyed
    - (1) Philistines
    - (2) Assyrians when Northern kingdoms were overrun
  - b. Israel
    - (1) Destroyed by the Assyrians
    - (2) Where were the other 10 tribes?
3. Idolatrous worship was exhibition of human wisdom
- a. **Jeremiah 7:17–18** (ESV) —
    - (1) 17 Do you not see what they are doing in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?
    - (2) 18 The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven. And they pour out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke me to anger.
  - b. Ryken: They were hedging their bets. They were putting their trust in the Lord God of Israel, but at the same time they were trusting in Baal, the Queen of Heaven, and anyone else they could think of.
  - c. Interestingly – family values on display
  - d. Ryken: (re: Jer 7.17-18) It seemed to be a model of family harmony. It almost sounds like the Cleavers having a Labor Day cookout. The kids run around to gather kindling. Dad builds the fire just the way he always builds it. And Mom, of course, is doing the cooking. She mixes the batter and is about to get out some pans to bake her cakes. Later Jeremiah provides their secret recipe: Jer 44.19. These cakes would be imprinted with or shaped into the form of a woman. Every holiday weekend, the people of Jerusalem spent quality family time together.
  - e. **Jeremiah 44:19** (ESV) — 19 And the women said, “When we made offerings to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, was it without our husbands’ approval that we made cakes for her bearing her image and poured out drink offerings to her?”
  - f. Ryken: Families are made to worship together. They must worship. They cannot help but worship. A family may worship the living God. If not, they may worship their VCR (DVR), or television sitcoms, or Harley-Davidson motorcycles, or the Washington Redskins, or junk food, or music and art, or anger, or violence, or deception. A family may worship a thousand gods and goddesses, but it must worship.... If you do not worship Christ at home, then you must be pagans, because families are made to worship. If you are not worshipping the one true God in the name of Jesus Christ, then you must be worshipping some other gods and goddesses.

- g. Seems like a good thing – families doing things together
  - (1) Human wisdom on display
  - (2) Without Christ at the center of it all – idolatry
- 4. God's answer
  - a. They hurt themselves: **Jeremiah 7:19** (ESV) — 19 Is it I whom they provoke? declares the LORD. Is it not themselves, to their own shame?
  - b. Ryken: False gods are always harsh taskmasters. God is the only God who actually loves his people. Other gods may promise to save your soul, but they will tear your heart out in the process.
    - (1) Always use and abuse their followers
    - (2) Always destructive
  - c. God's wrath: **Jeremiah 7:20** (ESV) — 20 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, my anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place, upon man and beast, upon the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground; it will burn and not be quenched.”
  - d. Death: **Jeremiah 8:1–3** (ESV) —
    - (1) 1 “At that time, declares the LORD, the bones of the kings of Judah, the bones of its officials, the bones of the priests, the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be brought out of their tombs.
    - (2) 2 And they shall be spread before the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, which they have loved and served, which they have gone after, and which they have sought and worshiped. And they shall not be gathered or buried. They shall be as dung on the surface of the ground.
    - (3) 3 Death shall be preferred to life by all the remnant that remains of this evil family in all the places where I have driven them, declares the LORD of hosts.
  - e. R.K. Harrison: ... their sanctuary would become their cemetery.
- 5. False theology – exhibition of human wisdom
  - a. **Jeremiah 8:8–9** (ESV) —
    - (1) 8 “How can you say, ‘We are wise, and the law of the LORD is with us’? But behold, the lying pen of the scribes has made it into a lie.
    - (2) 9 The wise men shall be put to shame; they shall be dismayed and taken; behold, they have rejected the word of the LORD, so what wisdom is in them?
  - b. Chief sin of theological liberalism
    - (1) Failure to take the Word seriously, authoritatively
    - (2) Rather interpret it out of existence
- 6. Barna: Only one in five evangelicals reads the Bible every day.
  - a. Anonymous preacher: This book contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are

binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

- b. Ryken: If the church is not hearing that plain message, the problem is not with the Holy Bible; the problem is with unholy ministers.
7. The effect of such false teachers: **Jeremiah 8:11** (ESV) — 11 They have healed the wound of my people lightly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace.
8. God's answer: **Jeremiah 8:12** (ESV) — 12 Were they ashamed when they committed abomination? No, they were not at all ashamed; they did not know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among the fallen; when I punish them, they shall be overthrown, says the LORD.
9. Deceit in relationships – exhibition of human wisdom
  - a. **Jeremiah 9:3–6** (ESV) —
    - (1) 3 They bend their tongue like a bow; falsehood and not truth has grown strong in the land; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know me, declares the LORD.
    - (2) 4 Let everyone beware of his neighbor, and put no trust in any brother, for every brother is a deceiver, and every neighbor goes about as a slanderer.
    - (3) 5 Everyone deceives his neighbor, and no one speaks the truth; they have taught their tongue to speak lies; they weary themselves committing iniquity.
    - (4) 6 Heaping oppression upon oppression, and deceit upon deceit, they refuse to know me, declares the LORD.
  - b. **Jeremiah 9:8** (ESV) —
    - (1) 8 Their tongue is a deadly arrow; it speaks deceitfully; with his mouth each speaks peace to his neighbor, but in his heart he plans an ambush for him.
10. Obvious time of the year when we see this in operation – elections
  - a. But now – it's every day; inescapable
  - b. Problem – pervasive in our culture, even in families
  - c. Schaeffer: ... truth is worn down in the philosophy of our generation.
  - d. Guinness: Contemporary evangelicals are no longer people of truth.... A solid sense of truth is foundering in America at large. Vaporized by critical theories, obscured by clouds of euphemism and jargon, outpaced by humor and hype, overlooked for style and image, and eroded by advertising, truth in America is anything but marching on. With magnificent exceptions, evangelicals reflect this truth decay and reinforce it for their own variety of reasons for

discounting theology. Repelled by “seminary theology” that is specialized, professionalized, and dry, evangelicals are attracted by movements that have replaced theology with emphases that are relational, therapeutic, charismatic, and managerial (as in church growth). Whatever, their virtues, none of these emphases gives truth and theology the place they require in the life and thought of a true disciple.

- e. God’s answer: **Jeremiah 9:7** (ESV) —
  - (1) 7 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: “Behold, I will refine them and test them, for what else can I do, because of my people?”
  - (2) **Jeremiah 9:9** (ESV) — 9 Shall I not punish them for these things? declares the LORD, and shall I not avenge myself on a nation such as this?

11. NT

- a. **1 Corinthians 1:19–21** (ESV) —
  - (1) 19 For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.”
  - (2) 20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?
  - (3) 21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe.

C. **His might**

- 1. **Jeremiah 9:23** (ESV) — 23 Thus says the LORD: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches,
- 2. **Jeremiah 7:6** (ESV) — 6 if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place
  - a. Complete wrong use of power
  - b. Power used to oppress rather than support
- 3. Plenty of warning for the people of God
  - a. Ex: Hannah’s prayer of thanksgiving
  - b. **1 Samuel 2:3–4** (ESV) —
    - (1) 3 Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.
    - (2) 4 The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength.
  - c. **1 Samuel 2:9–10** (ESV) —
    - (1) 9 “He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail.



- (2) 10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

4. It would be a constant issue for the people of God over the ages – consider Zechariah’s word to the returning exiles

a. **Zechariah 4:1–6** (ESV) —

- (1) 1 And the angel who talked with me came again and woke me, like a man who is awakened out of his sleep.
- (2) 2 And he said to me, “What do you see?” I said, “I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold, with a bowl on the top of it, and seven lamps on it, with seven lips on each of the lamps that are on the top of it.
- (3) 3 And there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.”
- (4) 4 And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these, my lord?”
- (5) 5 Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, “Do you not know what these are?” I said, “No, my lord.”
- (6) 6 Then he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.

5. NT

a. **1 Corinthians 1:26–29** (ESV) —

- (1) 26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.
- (2) 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;
- (3) 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,
- (4) 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

D. **His riches**

1. **Jeremiah 8:10** (ESV) — 10 ... from the least to the greatest everyone is greedy for unjust gain...
2. Again – plenty of warning
  - a. **Proverbs 11:28** (ESV) — 28 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.
  - b. **Proverbs 22:1** (ESV) — 1 A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, and favor is better than silver or gold.
  - c. **Proverbs 28:20** (ESV) — 20 A faithful man will abound with blessings, but whoever hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.

3. **Jeremiah 17:11** (ESV) — 11 Like the partridge that gathers a brood that she did not hatch, so is he who gets riches but not by justice; in the midst of his days they will leave him, and at his end he will be a fool.
4. Continues to be problematic following the exile
  - a. **Micah 6:12** (ESV) — 12 Your rich men are full of violence; your inhabitants speak lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.
5. NT
  - a. **James 2:6–7** (ESV) —
    - (1) 6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court?
    - (2) 7 Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called?
  - b. **James 5:1–5** (ESV) —
    - (1) 1 Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you.
    - (2) 2 Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten.
    - (3) 3 Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure in the last days.
    - (4) 4 Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.
    - (5) 5 You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.
6. Close to home
  - a. Merely to live in this area of the country, we are all in the top 1% economically of all the people in the world

VI. **Proper Boasting** – 9.24

- A. **Jeremiah 9:24** (ESV) — 24 but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the LORD.”
- B. **Elements of Proper Boasting**
  1. Steadfast love
  2. Justice
  3. Righteousness
- C. **God’s Chief Concern** – display glory
  1. Moses – Show me Your glory
  2. **Exodus 34:6–7** (ESV) —

- a. 6 The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness,
  - b. 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and the fourth generation.”
- 3. Reprised in many places in Scripture
- 4. Steadfast love – merciful, gracious, slow to anger, forgiveness
- 5. Justice – will by no means leave guilty unpunished; visiting iniquity...
- 6. Righteousness – truth
- D. **Knowledge of God**
  - 1. God’s self-declaration has always been what God desires His children to know
  - 2. What Jerusalem and Judah failed to know
    - a. **Jeremiah 8:7** (ESV) — 7 Even the stork in the heavens knows her times, and the turtledove, swallow, and crane keep the time of their coming, but my people know not the rules of the LORD.
    - b. **Jeremiah 9:3** (ESV) — 3 ... for they proceed from evil to evil, and they do not know me, declares the LORD.
    - c. **Jeremiah 9:6** (ESV) — 6 Heaping oppression upon oppression, and deceit upon deceit, they refuse to know me, declares the LORD.
- E. Contemporary evangelical world does not know God either
  - 1. David Wells – **“weightlessness of God”**
    - a. Stark contrast with “glory” which means “weighty”
  - 2. David Wells (*God in the Wasteland*): It is one of the defining marks of Our Time that God is now weightless... he has become unimportant. He rests upon the world so inconsequentially as not to be noticeable.... Those who assure the pollsters of their belief in God’s existence may nonetheless consider him less interesting than television, his commands less authoritative than their appetites for affluence and influence, his judgment no more awe-inspiring than the evening news, and his truth less compelling than the advertisers’ sweet fog of flattery and lies. That is weightlessness.
  - 3. David Wells: The fundamental problem in the evangelical world is that God rests too inconsequentially upon the church. His truth is too distant, his grace is too ordinary, his judgment is too benign, his gospel is too easy, and his Christ is too common.
  - 4. Heard recently of an interaction between a believer and a woman for whom she was praying
    - a. Believer asked the woman, “Do you believe in God?”
    - b. The woman said, “Oh yes, I believe in God. I believe in God like I believe in Australia.”
- F. The very reason why Christ came – so we can know God

1. **John 1:14** (ESV) — 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
  2. **1 John 5:20** (ESV) — 20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.
  3. **Romans 3:21–26** (ESV) —
    - a. 21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—
    - b. 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:
    - c. 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
    - d. 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,
    - e. 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.
    - f. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
  4. Ryken: For in the righteousness of Christ, God’s loving-kindness and justice embrace.
- G. The very essence of eternal life
1. **John 17:3** (ESV) — 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
- H. Boasting in the knowledge of God is what God delights in
1. The chief business of the Christian
    - a. Evangelism?
    - b. Worship?
    - c. Prayer?
    - d. Discipleship?
  2. Knowing God is the chief business of the Christian
    - a. All of those things flow from an overflowing fountain within the life of the one who truly knows God
  3. Can you boast about that?