

Voices: Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord

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It's a beautiful, brand-new summer morning, and I'm in my office making final preparations for this weekend's services. This is nothing new. I can often be found here as Sunday approaches.

✘ Jason Dunton One of my worship pastor mentors once encouraged me to prepare for Sunday mornings exactly as a preacher does. Diligently weighing every word that is sung and said. Purposefully coordinating every element of the service to point to Jesus. Constantly cultivating a heart and mind that are primed for surrender to the Spirit's leading. This is a rhythm I have worked really hard to develop over the last eight years of full-time ministry, and this morning is no different.

So here I sit with my Bible open, the latest Housefires album on in the background and cinnamon dolce coffee in my favorite mug. (Don't judge me. It's delicious.) But something is different this morning. Something is off. I'm distracted. I'm unmotivated. My eyes wander up to my two degrees hanging on the wall from Dallas Baptist University (Go Patriots!), and I begin to think back to my two graduations.

Moving on

I think about the joy I experienced on both of those days as I celebrated with friends and family. The overwhelming pride at the great accomplishment of graduating from college and graduate school. The social, emotional and spiritual growth I experienced during those seasons. But those seasons are long over. In a few weeks, my cousin Bailey will be graduating from Texas A&M University, and I could not be more excited for

her. She has worked incredibly hard to claim this accomplishment and is nearing the finish line of this chapter of her life. She will move on. She will leave that season behind.

This is the essence of graduating: you move on. Bigger and better things await you. Onward and upward is not the only path, but it is the desired path forward.

“A prayer of true humility”

Many of my times with the Lord recently have been spent in the Old Testament, and lately I have been camped out in 1 Chronicles. At the end of the book, we encounter an old King David diligently making preparations for gathering all of the materials for the construction of God’s dwelling place on earth, the temple.

The actual construction of the temple would belong to his son, Solomon, but, nevertheless, David was tireless in his efforts to gather the materials and make the necessary provisions for building a house worthy of the presence of the Most High God. This was a massive undertaking and an incredibly daunting task.

David could have responded to the completion of this project in many different ways. He could have proudly beat his chest, boasting in his managerial skills, crediting his charismatic personality or his tireless work ethic, but that’s not the reaction we see from David. Instead, he stands up in the midst of the gathered assembly of Israel and once again models a prayer of true humility.

He offered this prayer in verses 14 through 16 of Chapter 29 when he said: “But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. For we are strangers before you and sojourners, as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow and there is no abiding. O Lord our

God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own.”

Moving on from the grace of God?

Upon reading this, I found myself overwhelmed with a single thought: We can never graduate from the grace of God. And David displays a beautiful posture for us that unashamedly shouts this truth.

Every achievement, every trophy on the mantle, every victory we ever enjoy was authored by him and meant to produce worship of him.

Who gives us our very breath, our intellect, our gifts and our personalities? Is it not the Lord?

Who gives inspiration through creation, strength to our bodies and dreams and zeal for greater things? Is it not the Lord?

Who initiates, accomplishes and sustains salvation and sanctification for the Christ-follower? Is it not the Lord?

We should move on to bigger and better things in life. We should reach higher, work harder and walk farther than we have ever been. We were never meant to stay where we are. That’s the beauty of growing up, maturing and spiritual sanctification. But we must fight, we must pray, we must struggle to never move on from the truth that God is the author and the perfecter (Hebrews 12:2) and that all the glory for everything we accomplish belongs to him.

“All his own”

Our church is currently experiencing something fairly uncommon in our modern American culture—growth. We are seeing people from all backgrounds giving their lives to the Lord. From children to senior adults, we are seeing an outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord and the liberty that

always accompanies it. It would be so easy to attribute this to great leadership, great music, great preaching or great facilities. What a tragedy that would be.

I pray that we never graduate from the grace of God. That our prayer would mirror that of David. That as we build, as we accomplish, as we succeed, we never move on from the truth that “all abundance comes from his hand and is all his own.”

Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.

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