



See service sheet online at www.knbc.org

Welcome

Opening Scripture

Opening Hymn: MP 620 Sweet is the work, my God, my king

Reading: Psalm 85

1st Advent candle

Prayer: Adoration and Praise

Communion prep Hos 14, Joel 2

Communion

Hymn MP 1086 Here I am to worship

Main reading: Luke 18:9-14, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Sermon: Love does not boast

Hymn: 465 Meekness and Majesty

Closing Prayer and Benediction

Close -----

Listen to today's sermon by clicking on the link at www.knbc.org.

The audio file is [20_12_06.mp3](#)

Welcome and pray

- A church group was in the country on a weekend away. There they were standing by a lake. A number of canoes were lined up at the water's edge. Gathered in a circle an instructor prepares them for some time on the lake. As he talked on some of those in the circle around started to shuffle round. When the time came to take to the canoes there was a barely restrained dash, the good canoes were quickly taken – You?? only the poor ones left. The result? Some were left despondent.

It is easy to feel knocked down by something like that. You feel flat and a little sick of heart. So too when someone says something dispiriting. Boasting is like that it knocks you down, - it leaves you deflated.

- It is like receiving an email where the person is clearly trying to trap you and trick you. When someone tries to get one over on you - it hurts.

In our series on love “**Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.**” we today arrive at the phrase **love does not boast**. x2.

I struggle with all of them - including boasting - How about you? is boasting your Achilles heel?

So what's the plan, where we are going? There are three sections:

Boasting - What it is, What it does, What I should do x2

So what is boasting?

Just in case you have never come across this before - the Oxford dictionary says: boasting is to talk with excessive pride and self-satisfaction about one's achievements, possessions, or abilities. Other words / synonyms are: brag, crow, swagger, swank, gloat, show off, blow one's own trumpet, sing one's own praises, congratulate oneself, pat oneself on the back, exaggerate, overstate, preen oneself, give oneself airs, talk big, lay it on thick, shoot one's mouth off...

Do you get the point? Know what I mean here?

Firstly, boasting is not a hidden sin like **envy** mentioned before, or **pride** that follows, boasting is an obvious sin. It is a sin of the mouth, of the tongue, and therefore it is a sin that affect other people.

Is there a connection between those mentioned either side? Yes. Pride finds expression in boasting. And as envy seeks after what others have - boasting wants us to believe that we have it – and you should want it - in a sense they

work in opposite ways because the more I boast the more it provokes envy in others, and the more you boast - the more I am tempted to envy.

✦ **Boasting is putting myself in front of others, it is like queue jumping, getting myself ahead.**

When Jesus was at the Pharisees we read: **“he noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table, he said: “When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honour, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this man your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honoured in the presence of all your fellow guests. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”** Lu 14:7-11

To speak boastfully is to assert myself over the one I am speaking with - whether an individual - or a group. **You may as well be standing on a box...**

I am putting myself above, taking the high ground so I can look down – and they, they can then look up at me.

Boasting comes easily. Thoughts easily spring back to me. We all want to be the hero in the story. Ask how they are - so they then ask you - and you are off. How easy it is for me to talk of me, my favorite subject, and many do incessantly. Who can I find who will listen?

- **There is one neighbor across the road who needs no prompting. Everything is about him there’s no concern whatsoever for the listener, You have all heard two people talking - both are talking about themselves and neither is listening. Both are not giving but taking.**

- **It is as if you are both holding a lever and are trying to tug it your way, a sort of attention/glory tug of war.**

While someone is talking are thinking about your own experience? We think many times more quickly than the other speaks. What they say triggers thoughts to my experiences and I start off: “I remember when I...” which I have just have to relay to them! – Is it helpful to them? Rarely. Does it make me feel good? Yes. And most of the time I have become so used to it - I don’t know I am doing it.

Some are not good listeners at all - but prefer to do the talking.

- **No it is a bit like telling a friend you want to show him all your holiday snaps, it is a good friend indeed who will show interest to the bitter end!**

Boasting it a developed art. We can become experts in it.

It is most affective when done in a way that makes me look humble, so I am credited twice for my achievements and my supposed character.

- **A colleague leaves work “I am off” he says, to which I jokingly reply “you’ve done a good job”. It sounds like a compliment but it’s just elevating myself. I am not his boss.**

The subtly is that I should say to others “well done”. To edify them.

Boasting may well use flattery – to solicit flattery.

Someone in the house has just put up a curtain and looks round “What do you think”, in other words ‘compliment me’. Or you might say after a doing a job “That was terrible wasn’t it”, what are you looking for? The reply comes “Oh no you did very well” thank you – just what I wanted to hear.

Yes there are many forms of boasting – you could raise a topic say ‘phone contracts’ so that the other person asks you about what you have and off you go about your phone... after all you are only answering their questions!

A mother speaks about how well her son did at school. Or a man says his boss asked him to come on a trip but the timing’s awkward. Having trouble with that? Let me show you (then you will see how good I am at it!)

Do you often use “I” learn the lesson The rich fool boasted “I, I, I, (Luke 12)

Self-elevation is very subtle. *It can all sound so innocuous* but all this is weak self-centeredness. It is an immature way of relating to others. It is an unloving way of relating to others.

Where does it come from?

Out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The pride of heart leads to the boasting of the tongue.

If pride is being ‘puffed’ up / inflated – then the puff blows from the mouth.

James says it **the tongue makes great boasts** James 3:5.

And the tongue needs a bridle to restrain it, **a series on how to construct a bridle for the tongue.**

Pride deludes the proud man or woman. It puts them in an unreal world prompted by the devil. He likes you to think you can control the things you

cannot control. Isaiah chides them by saying: **You boast, "We have entered into a covenant with death, with the grave we have made an agreement. When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us, for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood our hiding-place."** Isa 28:15

The devil prompts people to have a distorted view of themselves, that old lie to Adam and Eve "you can be someone / are someone - without God".

Simon the sorcerer : **boasted that he was someone great**, Acts

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,..." Jer 9:23

Why/ because it didn't come from me. The only thing that comes from me is my sin.

It is what the world does all the time

The world love to boast as does 'the worldling', the worldly man or woman. Politicians boast, charities boasts. Trumpet blowing is considered normal.

- Charities tell you how much they give, donors talk of how much they donate and even put it online.
- ✚ The media encourage it, if you have it - flaunt it.
- An online phrase has been coined: "Virtue signaling." This is someone letting others know how good and wholesome they are in order to garner attention and/or make them look better. Meet them in person and they turn out to be highly narcissistic.
- ✚ Lord Bacon told Sir Edward Coke when he was boasting, "The less you speak of your greatness, the more shall I think of it."

Boasting - What it does

Boasting attempts at self-elevation, making you known I am above you - not below you.

Because it elevates me it casts the blame to others. The AV translates **boasting 'Vaunts'** someone 'vaunts' himself implies scorning others.

- ✚ One first century Greek historian Arrianus said that the word here implies blaming others, - i.e. It is restless in making others restless!

One translation speaks of it as someone who causes a 'tumult'. It's speech that provokes a tumult, it raises emotions and stirs the heart in a wrong way.

It produces hypocrisy.

Boasting not only focuses on ungodly things but often but little things. Hypocrites make much ado about small things that they may be more easy in their consciences while living in great sins. For example, pointing out how they quickly paid someone back a little loan that they then feel themselves good in not paying back the large debt they owe.

- If I can paraphrase the Puritan Thomas Manton and chaplain to Oliver Cromwell: "In church they pay the tithe of mint to a fraction, but rob God of his glory by their self-righteousness. Punctilious to the utmost, they dress up but rob Christ of his crown. They honour him with their church language but give God the shells, and steal the kernels for their own pride and self-will.

He encourages us to pray: *O Lord, whatever I may be, let me not be a hypocrite. Let me not rob you of your glory, may I be the least among your true children, rather than the chief among pretenders.*

Boasting separates people,

People either shun and keep their distance for they can take no more, or else it causes others to sin. Paul has to say to the church in Corinth: **Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?** 1Co 5:6.

Boasting takes people's eyes off the Lord onto people and things, Jude says: **These men are grumblers and fault-finders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.** Jude 1:16
Two thirds of the references to boasting in the NT are in Paul's letters to the church in Corinth. Often he has to remind them that it is better to boast about weaknesses.

Unity in the church requires humility / grace, not fractious boasting or envy

Above all boasting opposes God

The one behind boasting is the devil who loves to boast. In speaking of the devil's vassal John says in Revelation: **Give her as much torture and grief as the glory and luxury she gave herself. In her heart she boasts, 'I sit as queen; I am not a widow, and I will never mourn.'** Re 18:7

The psalmist spoke of **those who trust in their wealth and boast of their great riches?** Ps 49:6

✚ God has ordained that the boaster and proud quickly come to ruin.

Remember Haman? Haman **boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honoured him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials.** Es 5:11 He had had huge gallows made to kill his enemy but instead he was hung on them.

✚ Boasting and pride push God out.

Then there's *Doeg the Edomite* who slaughtered / massacred eighty priests in one go. David says "Why do you **boast of evil, you mighty man? Why do you boast all day long, you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God?**" Ps 52:1

✚ How God hates boasting and the boastful and it quick to bring it back on themselves

- A Manchester paper reported on 13 June 2005. "A counterfeit money band were today convicted for their crimes. Undercover police were lead to them because they couldn't contain their pride and consequent boasting – it lead to their downfall and arrest.

This is common among criminals who can't stop boasting about what they have done. Posting online and bragging of their evil deeds.

Lastly - what should I do?

Boasting—What then should I do to avoid it? There is good and bad boasting

We must avoid bad boasting,

Jesus who had everything - never boasted. Look to Christ. Look at his life, look at his humility, look at his words, was there any boasting? No. Even when people feed him a line or tried to put him on stage there was not an ounce of pride or boasting. Led like a lamb to the slaughter he did not open his mouth, he reviled not.

An Egyptian church leader was being interviewed by a man brimming over with compliments, this pastor when his abilities and achievements were paraded (the camera was in close) did not flinch or blink. Glory to God. Christ walked humbly to death on a cross? Why a cross? It is the way the bad people were killed, the worst criminals went that way.

That is how much he loved his father, that is how much he loves the sinner who deserves nothing. My forgiveness is something he paid for at great cost

✚ Do I really understand what he went through for me? Do you?

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If you do there will be no boasting. None at all, None whatsoever.

The way you show you understand grace is you **Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others BETTER than yourselves.** Php 2:3 That is the way of the cross.

What is the opposite of boasting? May I suggest meekness, meekness. Meekness places me firmly behind/below someone else. That requires great strength - great grace - from Him.

In God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise your name for ever.

Ps 44:8 **My soul will boast in the LORD; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.** Ps 34:2

So yes there is good boasting - Boasting in what the Lord has done. **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 about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.** 2Co 12:9

Will you boast about your infirmities, your weaknesses? **so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God."** Joh 3:21

Pray

The Pharisee when he went up to pray, prayed about himself and boasted he wasn't like these others sinners. God didn't listen. The one who would not look up but said "have mercy on me a sinner" he went away right with God.

Prayer helps hinder boasting because **Prayer is the paupers trade.**

Don't just say a prayer, but enter in to the presence of God. It is there in that inner place I am changed and I come out seeing differently.

John Newton framed it well: *Saviour, if of Zion's city, I through grace a member am, Let the world deride or pity, I will glory in Thy name: Fading is the worldling's pleasure, All his boasted pomp and show! Solid joys and lasting treasure, None but Zion's children know.*

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, 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. Jer 9:23,4

Lord, Divine Master, uproot in me the root of pride and boasting, and tear away these follies which twine about my soul. Aid me to walk humbly with you my God. Amen.

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