

**Galatians**  
**In Light of the Cross**  
**Galatians 6:14**  
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Next week, Lord willing, we will continue our study; in fact, begin a study of the issue of what true biblical worship really is. It's been a joy to study, and to read about that, and I look forward to that study, but today I want us to step away from that study and look at an issue that's been on my mind and heart the last few weeks. Over the last couple of months, the Lord has reminded me in a variety of ways and through a variety of circumstances of a crucial truth. It's this: that the center of our faith, that the center of our lives is to be the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. It's easy as believers to think that the cross is something that's good for the beginning of our Christian life and experience, but then as we grow in grace, as we grow in Christ, we sort of leave that behind as if that were one of the elementary things of the Christian faith. But in reality, the cross of Jesus Christ is to be the center of our lives as Christians.

Now, when I say that, I understand how radical that sounds. In fact, I'm not sure you even understand how radical it is. To the first century world, such a statement would have been utterly revolting. You see, crucifixion in the first century was not the normal method of execution. It was saved for slaves, for rebels, and for terrorists – the dregs of the criminal justice system were crucified; Romans could not be crucified. It was considered so despicable and so degrading that the Roman writer Cicero said that an honorable Roman should never even mention the word "cross." In the common speech of the first century, Romans didn't – they referred to the cross as the tree of shame. When someone was condemned to death by crucifixion, the judge did not say, "Let him be crucified" – typically, the judge would say something like this: "Hang him on the unlucky tree." In spite of hundreds of thousands of crucifixions in the first century, the longest and fullest accounts that we possess of them are in the gospels of the scripture. This was the attitude of the first century toward the cross. It was a culture in which the word "cross" was worse than an expletive – you simply never said it in polite society.

Even Christians understood this – Christians did not, in the first century, adopt the cross as the symbol of their faith. They didn't make jewelry out of it, they didn't put it on their clothing, they didn't stitch it to the front of their Bibles – to have done so would be like today wearing jewelry shaped like a hangman's noose, or putting an electric chair on the front of your Bible. Now, just calmly and quietly notice the person sitting next to you. If you see a hangman's noose or an electric chair, don't make any sudden moves, but you may want to quietly find another place to sit. The truth is, the cross did not become a symbol for the Christian faith for more than a hundred years after the death of Jesus Christ. That was the cultural climate of the first century. That cultural climate is what makes a brief biographical statement Paul makes in Galatians 6 absolutely shocking.

Turn with me to Galatians 6. Paul wrote this book, Galatians, to the churches in the region of Galatia, roughly equivalent to modern Turkey. There, in those churches, the gospel of Christ was under attack by what Paul calls another gospel. This other gospel came from a group that we call the Judaizers. Now, many people don't understand who these people were; let me give you a very brief description. The Judaizers were devout Jews who also believed that Jesus was the Messiah. All of that is good, and so far, so good, but here's the catch. The Judaizers also believed that before someone could be saved, before he could become a real Christian, he must do two things. One, he must be circumcised if he was male – he must gain the outward sign of entrance into the covenant God made with Abraham. And secondly, he must agree to keep the law of Moses, and if he would agree to those two things, then he could become a genuine Christian in Jesus Christ, a genuine follower of Christ.

To Paul, however, that was not simply a small peccadillo, that was not a minor variation of the gospel – to Paul, that was adding works to justification by faith alone; it was another gospel. And so he writes this letter to defend the gospel, to defend the truth that we are declared righteous before God through faith alone, based on the work of Christ alone. That's the context in which he makes a profound personal declaration in Galatians 6:14; look at it with me. "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." That's shocking, it's absolutely mind-

boggling in the cultural context of the first century, for Paul to say those words. Let's look at what he means.

Now, when Paul refers to the cross, he's not talking about a piece of wood, he's not even talking about the historical fact of Jesus' crucifixion. In the New Testament, the word "cross" is used primarily in two ways. It is used to refer to the actual instrument of execution on which criminals died; that is, that piece of wood, *or* it is used of the significance of the cross of Christ, or the death of Christ – it is the message of the cross. It's this second meaning that Paul has in mind here. Paul wants us to know that the message about the cross and all that it accomplished changed him forever. Now, maybe you were raised in the church, or perhaps if not raised in the church, maybe you've been in the church a long time. And perhaps you know a lot about the cross and what happened there. But what Paul wants us to know, that if your life has remained essentially unchanged by the message of the cross, then you don't really have a clue about the message of the cross, about the real glory of the cross. Because Paul wants us to know that the glory of the cross is not the inherent beauty of its message – the glory of the cross is the power of its message to literally revolutionize a life. Wherever the glory of the cross is truly seen, wherever the message of the cross is truly believed, wherever the power of the cross is truly known, there will always be three radical, far-reaching, life-changing responses. I want us to look at those responses together this morning.

The first response to the cross is to trust in the work of Christ alone. Trust in the work of Christ alone. Notice verse 14 begins, "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now in the Greek text, the word order points to a very stark contrast – literally, it reads this way: "But, to me." "But, to me," Paul says – you see, he's contrasting with another group; he's contrasting with the Judaizers that he's just mentioned in verses 12 and 13. Notice verse 13: "For those who are circumcised do not even keep the law themselves" – again, he's referring to that group of Judaizers we described just a few moments ago – "but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh." You see, the Judaizers boasted in their flesh, and they wanted to boast in the churches in Galatia as well. In other words, these people boasted in their own accomplishments, in their own merits, in their own righteousness – they boasted in their rigorous keeping of the law, in their fastidious adherence to the rite of

circumcision. They took pride in who they were and in what they had done – Paul says, "May it never be that *I* should boast, except in the cross."

Now, Paul didn't always think like this – the truth is, there was a time when Paul valued the cross even less than the Judaizers did. John Calvin says that Philippians 3 is Paul's own commentary on this verse, and I think he's exactly right. Turn with me to Philippians 3 – we studied this at length a number of years ago, this beautiful and profound passage about justification. But in Philippians 3, Paul says that before he knew Christ, his entire value system was horribly convoluted. There were some things that he considered to be spiritual assets when it came to a right standing before God, and those assets that he thought he had were all about him, and what he had done, and who he was. Notice Paul's confidence, where it was – Philippians 3:5 – his confidence was in religious ritual, "circumcised the eighth day." His confidence was in his ethnic background, "of the nation of Israel," in his spiritual heritage – he was "of the tribe of Benjamin," one of the two tribes that stayed true to God, one of the two of the twelve that stayed true to the Lord. He had a great spiritual heritage, and he was proud of it. He was also proud of his traditional Hebrew lifestyle – notice he says, I was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews" – that is, I lived in a lifestyle that was uninfluenced by the Greek culture around me. He was proud, found confidence in his religious association – he was connected to the Pharisees. "As to the Law, a Pharisee" – I was one of the separated ones, he said, one of the ones that loved the law. He found spiritual zeal to be an asset as well – notice verse 6, "as to zeal, a persecutor of the church." No one was more zealous for his faith than Paul was, and he took great confidence and pride in that. But notice verse 6, he says, "as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless." This is what Paul has been building to – his confidence ultimately was in his own inherent righteousness. Now, understand what Paul is saying here in Philippians 3, he's saying there was a time when all of my confidence was in those things. But Paul's sense of spiritual values at the time was terribly distorted.

You know, we live in a time when values are very distorted, aren't they? Sometimes even in a humorous way – the Internet age has given birth to some strange children. But perhaps the strangest of them is eBay, which is nothing more than a garage sale on some serious steroids. Last month, perhaps you read about one of the more bizarre auctions on eBay – the 25-year-old

troubled pop star Britney Spears has been slowly self-destructing over the last few months. After leaving rehab, after one day, she shaved her head at a shop in a moment of madness in Tarzana in the greater Los Angeles area of California. Almost immediately after she shaved her head, several auctions were posted on eBay. Several people claimed that after she had done this thing, they had grabbed what hair they could off of the floor of the salon – that is sick, isn't it, I mean? Sellers in Australia, in the U.K., in Germany, all claimed to have genuine cuttings of Britney Spears' hair. The shop where this incident took place, Esther's Haircutting Studio, has been besieged by the press, and not surprisingly, the owners of the salon also claimed to have the genuine hair. They reported in the newspaper that they planned to sell this hair for as much as they can, perhaps as much – are you ready for this – as a million dollars. I'd love to meet the person that spends a million dollars for Britney Spears' hair. As P.T. Barnum said, "there's a sucker born every day." But as I thought about that, my question was, what exactly do you do with it if you do win the auction? Are you going to put it in a display case on your mantle? I mean, what do you do with a lock of this hair? We live in a world where ideas of values and worth are terribly distorted.

But as distorted as most people's values are, about the stuff around us, including the value of Britney Spears' hair, their perspective about what matters to God is even grossly more distorted. The same was true for the Apostle Paul before he came to faith in Christ. All those things in Philippians 3, he saw as assets when it came to pleasing God, and to gaining a right standing before God. But something happened – Paul had a radical change in his thinking. He describes it for us in Philippians 3, notice verse 7: Those were all my assets, he says, that's where my confidence was,

But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from keeping the Law, but the righteousness which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith.

You see, in a moment of time, all those things that he used to consider as assets suddenly became spiritual liabilities. On that day in the early 30's A.D., the resurrected Christ confronted a proud, self-righteous Pharisee with Himself, and in a blaze of glory, he removed Saul's spiritual blindness, and he forever shattered any reliance in his own merit or in his own efforts.

Now turn back to Galatians 6. *That* is what Paul means when he says, listen, the Judaizers may boast in their efforts and in their merit and their righteousness, "but may it never be" – that's the strongest way to say that without cursing in the Greek language. He says, "may it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." You see, in its context, this is really a statement about where Paul put his trust and where he put his reliance. Paul says, unlike the Judaizers, I will never boast in who I am or in what I've done. In fact, I renounce everything that has anything to do with me – I renounce the person that I was, the person that I am; I don't want anything to do with me. That's exactly what Christ meant when He said, if anyone would be My disciple, he must deny himself. Our Christian lives begin with a complete renunciation of ourselves, and our own achievements, and for the true Christian, that attitude must continue. Paul puts it in the negative here – notice verse 14, "may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross" – but in essence, he's saying the positive. We can paraphrase it like this: I will always boast in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ alone, that's what he's saying.

Now, what does it mean to boast? The Greek word for boast contains two elements: it means to be confident in something, and therefore because you are confident in that thing, to rejoice in, or boast in that thing. It's good or bad, depending on what the object of the confidence and boasting is. So to boast in the cross is to have your complete confidence in the work of Christ there, and therefore to rejoice in it, to boast in it. Paul's saying, true Christians give all the credit for all that they are and all that they have to Jesus Christ, and to what He accomplished for them in his finished work. True Christians boast in Christ, and in Him crucified – they are Christ-intoxicated and cross-centered. Paul is saying, I trust in the cross, I trust in the work of Christ alone for my salvation, and that's what I boast about.

Now, brothers and sisters, we're in a Bible church – many of us were raised in the church. We are not tempted, for the most part – we aren't so naïve as to think that our good works alone will save us. There's probably nobody here this morning that thinks like that. But if in your mind, anything you are, or anything you have done, contributes to the smallest degree to your acceptance before God, then Paul wants you to know that you have embraced a different gospel and you are on your way to an eternal hell. The human heart is deceptive – Spurgeon said, such is the depravity of the human heart that if we can't earn our entire way to heaven, then we're happy to have a small part in the last mile. Is one single thread of your hope in something you have done? A prayer you prayed, an aisle you walked, your baptism – is it in anything about yourself? If a single thread of your hope of heaven is based on something you have done, even if it's something God has commanded you to do – remember, He commanded circumcision of the Jews, but their hope was there, and it can't be. If your hope is based on absolutely anything but Christ, and His perfect life, and His sacrificial death, then you are not in Jesus Christ. The proper response to the glory of the cross is to trust in the work of Christ alone.

The second response to the cross, when we really grasp it in its beauty and in its majesty and in its greatness – the second response is to live for the kingdom of Christ alone. Live for the kingdom of Christ alone. Notice verse 14 adds this about the cross, through the cross, the world has been crucified to me. Through the cross, "the world has been crucified to me." This is what theologians call a divine passive – the understood subject of it is God Himself. We could phrase it this way: God, the Holy Spirit, through the message about the cross, had produced a catastrophic change in Paul's soul. The Holy Spirit crucified the world to me.

Now, what does that mean? Well, let's look first at the word "world," which is crucial to understanding this expression. "World," here in its context, is not referring to people; rather, it refers to the mindset and values that characterize fallen mankind. Let me say that again: it refers to the mindset and values that characterize fallen mankind. In other words, the world is all of those earthly pleasures and treasures, honors and values that tend to draw the soul away from Christ. It's the sphere in which the flesh lives and moves – as the great commentator on the book of Galatians describes it, John Eadie, the term represents wealth and power, pleasure, indulgence, all that draws humanity after it, those things which so many seem to crave as their only portion,

and in which they seem to find their supreme delight. The apostle John defines it in 1 John 2:16 as the craving of the heart – he calls it "the craving of the flesh"; that is, the craving to satisfy the appetites of the body, and "the craving of the eyes"; that is, the craving to possess and own and have, and "the boastful pride of life"; that is, boasting in who you are and what you have accomplished. As far as Paul was concerned, all of that died – it was crucified; Paul no longer lived for what everybody else lived for. You hear that list from 1 John 2, and you look around you and you know that the people in your life who are not in Christ live to satisfy those things. Paul said, when I encountered the cross, all of that, by the Holy Spirit, was crucified to me. He didn't live for what everybody else lived for, and for you and me, the only right response to the glory of the message of the cross is to stop living for ourselves, to stop living for what drives the world around us, for success and money and position and fame and pleasure, for personal peace, for personal prosperity, for personal pleasure – instead, we are to die to all of that and live for the kingdom of Christ.

Notice what Paul says just a few pages before, in 2 Corinthians 5:14 – he says, "for the love of Christ controls us." Now, this is not his love for Christ, this is Christ's love for him. So Paul is saying, our knowledge, our understanding of Christ's love for us compels us, it controls us, it drives us, it moves us – "having concluded that one died for all, therefore all died"; that is, all those who are in Christ died. And he died for us all – why? In order that they who live – this is you, this is me – they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

The question is, who do you live for? That's the issue, who do you live for? There was a man in this church whose name I won't mention because this will go out on the Internet and CD, and in order to protect him, I won't share his name, but those of you who have been a part of our church any time certainly know him. There was a man in this church who had been a medical doctor, with a very successful medical practice – he left all that and all the perks that go with it to come to the Dallas area so he could go to seminary. While he was in seminary, he attended this church, and then after he completed seminary, he moved his family to China, where in that region today, he serves faithfully as an evangelist, as a doctor. He travels to remote villages caring for the bodies and souls of the poor – now, there's a man who lives for the kingdom of



Christ. Don't misunderstand, Christ may not ask you to go to China – he doesn't ask us all to move away from our families and away from our areas. But here's what Christ does ask of us – that wherever we live, we live to advance the kingdom of Christ, and not our own.

Let me ask you, do you live to pursue what every unbeliever around you lives for? Does your time show that, ultimately, your values are about that – are your values exactly the same? Most people live, in our world, here in America, for a comfortable life – they want a nice comfortable home, a late model car, and 1.5 children. They want a few expensive toys and their evenings and weekends to use them. They want to retire at 63 and enjoy some travel. Now, there's nothing wrong with any of those things – the question is, is that what you live for? Is that what motivates you, is that where your heart is? If so, what a wasted life. Instead, we must come to the place where we commit ourselves, whatever our occupation, whatever skill God has given us, whatever we do for a living, wherever our time has to be spent – that's not what our lives are really about. Our lives are really about the kingdom of Christ, really about caring for other believers and serving in the church and reaching out to the lost. Why do you live? What do you live for?

I remember that when I was in junior high, I began to have this growing desire to be an attorney. I decided in junior high that what I really wanted was to be an attorney, and I had all the wrong reasons – you know, all the typical reasons. I wanted to be respected, I wanted to be well thought of, I wanted to be wealthy and not have to worry about that, I wanted to have a comfortable life – that's what I wanted. So when I came to Christ as a senior in high school, I knew that those were not really worthwhile goals for a believer. But as a young and immature believer, I didn't change my goals – instead I just sort of whitewashed them with phrases like, well now I know God wants me to be an attorney, and I began to pursue that. I went off to a Christian college and began to pursue pre-law – I was in that field of study for three years. But the second semester of my junior year, God interrupted my life. I passed out, I was sick and didn't know it, I had a raging infection, they put me in the hospital, and I was there for two weeks in extreme isolation. What they thought I had was so contagious and so detestable that the nurses wanted to just shove my food under the door, you know. When they came in the room, they were robed from head to toe, not an inch of flesh showing – as it turned out, that isn't what I

had, but the Lord had another plan in mind. He got me in extreme isolation with nothing but time, and over that two-week period, I read the scriptures. I read them again – I remember one particular day, I read the gospels. I'd never really done that as a Christian, been saved just a little under four years, and I just read them through, almost at one sitting, the entire story of the record of the life of Christ. And when I finished that, I understood that I must live not for myself, but for the kingdom of Christ. And for me, once I understood that my life was not to be about me, but about the kingdom – for me, I already knew what that meant, because there had been a growing desire in my heart and a growing emphasis through the influence of others, that it was to pursue ministry. And so in that hospital room, I still remember that afternoon, after completing the Gospel of John, getting down on my knees and saying to Jesus Christ, whatever it is You want me to do with my life, I'll do it – I want to serve your kingdom, and not my own. Let me just ask you this morning, have you ever come to that place, have you ever honestly expressed that to Jesus Christ? It may be that Christ wants you to continue doing what you're doing, but with a whole different mindset, and a whole different outlook and attitude. But have you ever come to the place where you're willing to say, Lord, I want to live for the kingdom – I want to give myself to the church and to the evangelizing of the lost – I want to serve my family, but for another reason, not so we can have a good time, but I want to be Your instrument in their lives. Paul says that the right response to the message of the cross is to let the cross put to death your desire for what drives everyone else and live for the kingdom of Christ. How should we respond to the cross? Trust in the work of Christ alone, live for the kingdom of Christ alone.

The final response that we are to have for the cross is to aim for the glory of Christ alone. Aim for the glory of Christ alone. You see, before the Damascus road, the people around Saul were thoroughly impressed with this young man from Tarsus. He was a young man with a bright future, he had drive, he had initiative, he had the best education money could buy, he had a brilliant mind, he'd already risen to the top – and with a little time, this young man could easily become one of the most influential men in the nation. But a short trip to Damascus changed all that forever. Listen to how Paul describes it in Galatians 6:14: "But may it never be that I would boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me" – and, listen to this, "and I have been crucified to the world." Now, I used to think that last phrase was just another way of saying the same thing as the previous phrase, but that's not true –

in fact, what Paul says in this last phrase is this: because of the message of the cross, as far as the world is concerned, I have been crucified and died. You see, Paul had become an object of contempt – as the great commentator Leon Morris says, as far as the world was concerned, Paul was dead. In Philippians 3, Paul puts it like this: for Christ, "I have suffered the loss of all things." Paul wasn't making that up – that's an amazing statement; Paul actually lost everything, his whole life radically changed! Think about what he lost that day – he lost his status, he lost his lifestyle, his home, his friends, his family – he would have been ostracized by even his family. He lost his associations – all of his friends were Pharisees. He lost his property and his possessions, he lost his inheritance – he would have been disowned by the family. He lost his reputation – for Paul, everything changed when he came to Christ, he lost it all.

You know, it's interesting – that's a wonderful picture of salvation, isn't it? Because that's exactly what it costs to be a Christian. Salvation is free, but it costs you everything. In Luke 14:26, Jesus said, "if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple." Jesus said, your love for me must be so compelling that your love for everyone else looks like hatred. Luke 14:33: "so then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." God may not ask you to actually suffer the loss of everything, like he did Paul, but He does ask us all to be willing. Paul says, I lost everything that used to matter to me, but I don't have any regrets – in fact, I lost everything I used to treasure, but all that I used to treasure, I now consider – remember what he says in Philippians 3 – to be rubbish. Rubbish! That's really not a good word to translate the Greek word with – the Greek word for rubbish is *skúvalon*. It's a strong Greek word – in secular Greek, the least offensive use of that word was to refer to the table scraps thrown out for the dogs. But it's most commonly translated as waste, dung, manure, or even human excrement. In polite Greek, there was no more pejorative term that Paul could have used. All that I used to treasure, he said, it's now worthless to me, and even worse than worthless, it's filthy, it's foul, it's disgusting, it's repulsive. Why? Because only one thing mattered to Paul now – to gain Christ, and to know Him, and the fellowship of his sufferings.

Now, again, when Paul says the world has died to me, the contrast is with the Judaizers, because the world was all too alive to them. Look back in Galatians 6 – their motives were clear. Verse

12: they "desire to make a good showing in the flesh." Verse 13: they want to "boast in your flesh." You see, the Judaizers wanted to be admired, they wanted to be accepted by those that mattered in their world, by their Jewish friends and leaders – they were more concerned with their reputation with their peers than with the glory of Christ. Contrast their craving for recognition and acceptance with Paul's own comments about himself and the apostles. Look back in 1 Corinthians 4 – do you remember what Paul said about himself? Verse 9: "I think God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death, we have become a spectacle to the world." "We are fools," verse 10, "we are weak," "we are without honor" – verse 11, we are "hungry and thirsty," "poorly clothed," "roughly treated," "homeless." Verse 12 – we're "reviled," we're "persecuted." Verse 13 – we're "slandered." And then he says, "we have become as the scum of the world, the dregs of all things, even until now." You see, unlike the Judaizers, Paul didn't live to be admired by the world, and he wasn't.

But there's another motive that drove the Judaizers, not only back in Galatians 6, where they were desiring to make a good show, but verse 12 says, they tried to "compel you to be circumcised, so that" – for this purpose – "they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ." You see, by stressing circumcision, the Judaizers were aligning themselves with Judaism, a religion that had been officially sanctioned by Rome. And in doing that, they thought they could avoid persecution. So the Judaizers were more concerned with their reputation than being true to Christ, but Paul says, as far as the world is concerned, I died. Now don't misunderstand, Paul wasn't complaining – he lived for the glory of Christ, so it didn't matter to him what people thought about him. What mattered to him is what they thought of Christ. Philippians 1:20 – he says, it's "my earnest expectation and hope" that "Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death." That's what mattered to Paul, not his glory, Christ's glory. He says, I want Christ to be shown to be and declared by others to be great – that's why I live, he said, that's my eager expectation and hope.

Now, folks, in the end, in life, you and I have to make a decision. Like Paul, we have to decide who is going to really matter in our lives. Let me ask you this question: Whose opinion of you is really going to matter to you? Is it going to be your peers, is it going to be the unbelievers you work with and rub shoulders with, is it going to be your unbelieving family and friends, the

community in which you live, or even your extended family who don't understand your love for Christ? Who's going to matter? Paul says the cross demands that you stop caring what the world around you thinks about you – when you truly embrace the cross, you've got to understand that as far as the world is concerned, you are dead, you don't matter. You don't even show up on their radar screen, unless it's for a few snide comments and a few religious jokes – and that's okay, because like Paul, we don't live for our own glory, we live instead for the glory of Jesus Christ. Listen, folks, we live in a culture where it's going to be increasingly unpopular to be biblical Christians. You'd better prepare yourself now, of whose opinion of you is really going to matter, or you will cave in when the pressure comes. We live for the glory of Christ.

The greatest source of power in the solar system in which our planet resides is the sun. The sun, as you know, is a star, it's a huge ball with a diameter across its middle of 865,000 miles – that's 109 times greater than the diameter of the earth on which we live. The sun is made of 75 percent hydrogen, over 20 percent helium, and the other 5 percent of the sun's constituent parts are made up of some 70 other elements. At its core, scientists estimate that it is approximately 27,000,000 degrees Fahrenheit, at its surface it's a cool 10,000 degrees. Its heat and its light are the products of a constant nuclear reaction at its core. As you learned in grade school, it averages some 93,000,000 miles from the earth in distance. Sunlight leaving the surface of the sun traveling at a speed of 186,000 miles a second takes approximately 8 minutes and 20 seconds to reach Southlake, where we sit this morning. The sun literally dominates our solar system – in fact, scientists tell us that if you could bring the mass of our solar system together, the sun would comprise 99.8 percent of the mass of our solar system. When you think about how the sun dominates our lives, it is absolutely shocking that for more than 1,000 years, Ptolemy and his disciples taught that the earth is the center of the solar system, and that the sun revolves around us. Then a man by the name of Copernicus shows up, and he says you've got it all wrong, you've missed it. The earth isn't the center, the sun is the center – and it absolutely sparked a revolution.

What Paul wants to do in Galatians 6:14, and what my heart is this morning, is to spark, as it were, a Copernican revolution in your heart. You see, sadly, many Christians think that they are the galactic center of their own universe, that what really matters is them! What the cross teaches us is that each of us need our own individual, private Copernican revolution, a revolution

in which our entire lives come to recognize that we are not the center of the moral universe – Christ and his cross are – a revolution in which our entire lives come to revolve around Him, and Him crucified. It looks like this: when we experience that kind of Copernican revolution, we will live lives in which we trust in the work of Christ alone, in which we live for the kingdom of Christ alone, and in which we aim for the glory of Christ alone. May God spark such a revolution in our hearts and in our church. Let's pray together.

Father, we confess to you that we have too often thought of ourselves as galactic center – Father, I pray that you would lift our eyes to see the truth. Draw us out of our own confusion and self-absorbed myopic hedonistic lives, and Lord, help us instead to see Christ and his cross, and truly encountering the cross, teach us to live like you taught Paul to live. Father, forgive us – create such a revolution in our souls.

We pray this for the glory of Christ, and in His name – Amen.