

Rejoice in Truth, Not Evil

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 10 November 2019

Preacher: Jason Webb

- [0 : 00] I do invite you to take your Bibles and turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 13. 1 Corinthians chapter 13.
- 1 Corinthians chapter 13.
- 1 Corinthians chapter 13.
- 1 Corinthians chapter 13. 1 Corinthians chapter 13.
- 1 Corinthians chapter 13. 1 Corinthians chapter 13. Well, brothers and sisters, we want Grace Fellowship Church to be a place of love, a community of love, where we speak the truth in love.
- [2 : 29] Where if one part suffers, every part suffers with it. And if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. So we want to love the truth.
- We want to uphold the truth. We want to be a pillar and foundation for the truth. 1 Timothy 3. So we're holding up the truth and holding out the truth. But we want to do it in an atmosphere filled with love, real love for each other and love for that world that we are shining that truth into.
- We want to hold out the truth. But as Brian Borgman, a Reformed Baptist pastor out of Nevada, put it, we don't want to be men with sunken in chests.
- No, because we have no heart. We have these huge heads filled with knowledge, you know, these huge coriniums. But no heart.
- So we don't want to be Reformed Baptist bobbleheads. You've seen those where they're huge heads, small bodies, full of truth but devoid of heart. And so we want to be a place of love.
- [3 : 46] And I want to say that while we aren't perfect, we aren't perfect, not at all. We do have our problems.
- Love is not perfected among us. But by God's grace, and I do say this, by God's grace, there is love here. And for that we should say thank you. Amen?
- We thank the Lord for what he's done. Now, so you don't have to be perfect to fit in here. You don't have to be squeaky clean to fit in here. You don't have to have your act all together to fit in here.
- Because by God's grace, there is actual love at work amongst us, among us. And so because God loves us, God receives us, we're his children.
- We love and receive one another. Now, if you're not feeling that, if you say, well, I don't know if that's true. Or maybe no one knows how you're feeling.
- [4 : 48] You aren't feeling that love. If that's going on in your heart, I want to encourage you to talk to someone. Talk to Pastor John or myself. Talk to the pastors.
- Talk to us. Because it doesn't have to be that way. And it shouldn't be that way. We want every single person, every member, to know that love, that feeling of belonging.

So, I am making a personal appeal. Because I am becoming more and more convinced that, as Pastor John just said, there is hardly anything more important, if there is anything more important, than living in the love of 1 Corinthians 13.

In Paul's words, love is greater than knowledge. It's greater than gifts. It's greater than martyrdom. Love is what makes all of those things anything. Love makes all of those things what they are.

And so, we can talk about what love means, but that is only a step of actually doing it, of living that life, where real, biblical, heartfelt, spirit-produced love flows here.

[6 : 18] And so, I hope you can see something of the earnestness and the seriousness of what we're looking at, of what we're talking about this afternoon. This is one of the most important, if not the most important thing.

So, we've come to verse 6. And I hope it is with a sense of, this is important that we look at verse 6. Love does not delight or rejoice in evil.

Love does not rejoice in evil, but rather it rejoices with the truth. We're going to look at both halves of that verse. It's a pair put together.

It's almost like in the same form as a Hebrew proverb. There's this parallel and there's this contrast. So, you know how the proverbs go.

Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth. That's the same kind of parallel and contrast that is going on here in verse 6. Love does not rejoice in evil, but it does rejoice in truth, in the truth.

[7 : 29] And so, we want to look just at the first part of that here at the beginning. And I want to look at these and think about these two words. And the first word is rejoice, and the second word is evil. So, rejoice means to take pleasure in.

It means to take delight in, to enjoy, to relish. So, we're not talking about some abstract concept here.

We're not talking about some sort of clinical. We're talking about our affections, what we like, what we enjoy, what love takes pleasure in, what it relishes.

And so, we're talking about the inclinations of the heart, where we love, we enjoy, we delight in something. And it says here, love doesn't take pleasure, it doesn't take any delight, in evil.

So, we come to the word evil. And evil is anything that doesn't bring glory to God. Anything that doesn't appreciate and recognize the glory of God, it's falling short of the glory of God.

[8 : 35] It's not living up to the standard of God's glory and of His righteousness and His goodness and His greatness and His holiness. Evil is what we do when we don't appreciate.

who God is and what He's done for us in Jesus Christ. It's a belittling of God.

Satan is called the evil one. Because he's all about dishonoring God. He's all about bringing God down and lowering Him. In one sense, no one is more obsessed with God than Satan is, but he's obsessed in a way that he wants to bring Him down.

He wants to dishonor Him. And as the tempter, he wants other people in the same way to have small thoughts about God and then live out those small thoughts.

To live out lives where God is not rejoiced in or honored or glorified. Evil is His agenda. And what He likes is to see it done.

[9 : 41] And Paul is saying, love does not rejoice. It takes no pleasure in what is evil. So I want you to think about what was going on in Corinth.

Maybe it's been a while since you've read 1 Corinthians. But what's going on in Corinth? Sort of, we just put the book in reverse. We see that, well, men were, men, people were boasting about their gifts and belittling others.

So there was this church in Corinth and people had certain gifts. Some had more gifts than others. Some had more spectacular gifts than others. And what was going on was people were boasting about what God had given them to belittle others.

I have more knowledge than you do. I speak in tongues. I can prophesy. Sometimes God speaks through me. And what about you?

And so men were proud. And that's evil. When you are boasting over your brothers and sisters in Christ, when you're bragging about a gift that God gave you to hurt your brother or sister, that is evil.

[10 : 55] So people weren't waiting for each other when it came time for the Lord's Supper. Instead of living in consideration with one another, one person's getting drunk, another person is going without food. They're despising, he says, the church of God and humiliating those who had nothing.

That was the spirit of what was going on in Corinth. No consideration. And that's evil. And that's evil. And love doesn't take any delight in that kind of attitude.

The strong in the faith were causing the weaker in the faith to stumble and to fall. Again, no compassion. No empathy. No thoughtfulness.

No graciousness. No consideration. There were lawsuits among believers. Again, is that love? There was sexual immorality.

5.2 says, and you are proud. Rather, shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have been put out, put that man out of your fellowship who did this?

[12 : 05] That wasn't love. To see a man doing that and you overlooking it and you're proud of that. Love doesn't delight in thinking evil of other people.

It doesn't delight in evil. It doesn't delight in thinking evil of other people. We're going to get into this idea more, I think, the next time we come to this passage.

But love doesn't gravitate or find any kind of perverse or perverted, and it is perverted, pleasure when you see ill.

see bad, see evil in others. It would rather be wrong than to think wrong of someone else. So, I'd rather be proven wrong in my good estimation than think wrong of someone else.

So, Matthew Henry, and we just love him, love doesn't delight in thinking evil of anyone without clear proof. So, brothers and sisters, love thinks the best of others, not the worst.

[13 : 15] It gives the benefit of the doubt unless there is clear and incontrovertible truth proof to the otherwise. So, do you give the benefit of the doubt to others?

When they say something or when they're doing something, do you give the benefit of the doubt or rather, do you take some sort of delight in, oh, they're doing evil, I caught them at it. Do you analyze or try to pick apart everything someone is trying to say to find out what might be wrong instead of saying, how can I take this in such a way that that person comes out right and true?

Love doesn't delight in finding evil in other people. Love doesn't delight in finding evil when someone is caught in sin.

We can do that, can't we? when someone I can do that, when someone I really disagree with, or maybe someone who has wronged me, when it turns out, oh, look at what they've done.

Look at the skeletons that just fell out of their closet. It's hard not to delight in it. But, love doesn't do that.

[14 : 32] If I really love that person, their sin is my grief, not my delight. Love takes no delight in the sins of others, and that's why we do church discipline.

We have to. We certainly don't take any delight in it. I recently read an article from a former member of Congress, and he worked on the ethics committee in the house, and it really is a thankless job.

It's a job that no one wants, but people have to do it, and he was one that had to do it. And someone said to him when he first started sitting on this committee, on this ethics committee, we don't want anyone on the ethics committee who wants to be on the ethics committee.

Do you get that? Does that make sense to you? If you get some sort of perverse delight in finding out what is wrong with what other people are doing, if you love finding out evil, then you are exactly the wrong person for this job.

The same goes for church discipline. Church discipline is necessary, but it isn't, and it shouldn't be something that we delight in. Rather, our joy is that they would repent.

[15 : 47] Our joy is that when I go to that brother or I go to that sister, there is this repentance and this reconciliation where things are all taken care of.

We never want it to go any farther than it has to go. We don't delight in airing the sins of others to other people. Rather, we want to protect and guard their reputation.

Love doesn't delight in doing evil to anyone. Love doesn't delight in doing evil to anyone. Love is not vengeful.

It is not malicious. It rather delights in the exact opposite of doing good. You know how love feels?

It delights. Its pleasure is in doing good for others, of thinking up different ways of doing good. of, oh, there's a way that I can love my brother.

[16 : 46] There's a way that I can do good to my sister. That is what love enjoys. Plotting and planning good, not evil. Love finds joy in blessing.

Love finds delight in seeing that person prosper. And it takes pleasure in seeing all of God's blessing in Jesus Christ coming to that person and filling up that person.

good. That's its joy. Good, not evil. Now, that brings us to the second part of this verse. Love doesn't rejoice in evil, but it does rejoice with the truth.

It rejoices with the truth. In the Bible, truth and evil are frequently contrasted with one another.

Now, we normally think of the exact opposites as good and evil or righteousness and evil, but another frequent contrast in the Bible is the truth and evil.

[17 : 52] So, just go with me in your mind's eye. Romans 1.18, remember, they suppress the truth. They suppress the truth.

So, the truth is trying to pop up and get them and push it down. They press it down. They want to keep it down. So, there's this conflict between these wicked and the truth.

And so, how do they suppress the truth? Well, Paul doesn't say they suppress the truth with philosophy or bad theology or their personal opinion, although all those things could very well be true.

It says they suppress the truth in their wickedness, in their evil. Romans 2.8 says they do not obey the truth, but they obey unrighteousness.

So, you have these two commanding and competing voices. One is truth and one is unrighteousness. Romans 2.8 says these people, they don't obey the truth, they obey unrighteousness.

[18 : 58] 2 Thessalonians 2, it talks about those who are going to be deceived by the Antichrist, by the son of perdition, the man of sin. They don't, and this is what it says about them, they don't believe the truth, they don't love the truth, but they delight in wickedness.

They don't believe the truth, they don't obey the truth, they don't have any joy in what is true, rather they just take delight in wickedness, and so this man is for them.

Truth is not just propositional truth, it's not just truth statements, truth is the gospel, truth is the reality of who Jesus Christ is, what he's done, remember he is the way and the truth.

truth. So, when Jesus came, they were not just the Pharisees and the other people were not just rejecting propositional statements, they had the embodiment of the truth, and they despised and rejected him.

Truth is the glorious works and acts of God, God is called the God of truth. truth. He is the truth.

[20 : 19] The truth is what God is doing in the world through Jesus Christ. And love, this is what Paul is saying, real biblical love is connected to that truth.

It delights in that truth. Love is invested in that truth. It's all bought in on that truth. It's bound up in delights with that truth.

What God is doing. Paul is saying, love delights to see the gospel make progress in people's hearts. Love rejoices to see godliness grow.

Love delights to see the kingdom of God coming into the hearts of men more and more. So not only new people, but more more in a person's heart, in a person's life.

It loves to see godliness that accords with the truth, growing. Love loves to see the truth prevailing over unbelief.

[21 : 25] Love relishes to see the knowledge of the glory of the Lord filling the earth and filling up people's hearts and minds. Love delights to see people embracing the truth, living on the truth, loving the truth themselves.

Love delights in more holiness, more light, more reality. Love relishes to see idols and lies destroyed.

love. I know I'm looking at people who have someone in mind and they say, oh, I love them, and they are bound up in an idol. They're bowing before an idol.

Their minds are twisted with lies, and I love them, and I want them to see the truth. You love them, and that's how you feel. Love's pleasure is to see men believing and obeying the truth.

The more you love your brothers and sisters here, the more you love your children, the more you love your parents, the more you love your husband or your wife or your neighbor, the more you will delight in seeing godliness gaining ground in their hearts.

[22 : 43] Truth gaining ground in their hearts step by step, stronghold by stronghold. I want to see that knowledge of the truth grow.

Love delights to see men converted. It loves to see men and boys and women and girls repenting and bowing the knee before Jesus. That's love's pleasure.

To see, to have other people see the greatness and the glory and the majesty and the might and the goodness of the Lord. When that is swelling up in a person's heart, that is what love delights in.

That's its food, that's its portion. Now, why does love take delight in all of that?

Why does love take delight in people coming to see the greatness and the glory and the majesty of God and the goodness of God in Jesus Christ? Because that's their blessing, isn't it?

[23 : 49] That's their happiness. happiness. If they would but believe, they would be so much happier, they would be so much more blessed to come into Jesus Christ and to be forgiven, to be sorted out, to be cleansed.

That's what is so good for them. That's their joy, that's their blessing. Love delights in salvation, love delights in sanctification, because those things are good for other people.

They're good. And that's why we long for you if you do not know Jesus Christ. That's why we long for you to be saved, because we love you.

We love you. We want you to know the joy and the goodness of being in God's family, of knowing God as your Father and Jesus as your Savior.

We want you to know the goodness of being freed from sin and freed from the world and its clutches. freed from the evil one. We love you.

[24 : 54] And we want you to be forever happy, forever blessed. And that's why we're going to keep praying for you. And that's why we're going to keep pestering you and bothering you.

Not because we just want to annoy you, but because we want you to have the same joy and the same blessing that we have. Paul said, it's my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites, that's his people, that they would be saved.

He loved them. He longed for their salvation. And if you're lost here, that's how we feel about you.

That's how we feel about you. We don't delight in evil in your life because it's bad for you. This is bad for you. It's destructive. We'd rather die than to see you die in your sin.

And we would count nothing, our death is nothing for you to know Christ, for you to experience that joy. That's love. And we love you.

[26 : 07] We long to see you rejoicing in the truth yourself. So love doesn't rejoice in evil, but it rejoices with the truth. So brothers and sisters, what are you rejoicing in?

What's your pleasure? What's your delight? Well, I pray that God would make each one of us see that truth clearly today.

Let's pray. Lord, we come and we thank you for your word. We thank you for the clarity of it.

We thank you for how it cuts a straight line. And we want our lives to be conformed to the truth of your word, the truth as it is in Jesus Christ.

We want lives that match, that are in accord with the truth, lives of godliness, lives of love, lives where we have true joy and we rejoice in good things and we reject what is evil.

[27 : 10] It is my prayer. Father, be merciful to our church here. Give us a greater measure of the Holy Spirit, a greater measure of the understanding of the gospel that our hearts might truly, practically, concretely, overflow with love for each other and for the lost, that we would be like Joseph who was not self-centered, who was not self-absorbed, but he had a heart and he had a mind and he had eyes that were looking out for others and he loved them.

Thank you that the same Spirit that lived in him lives in us. And we pray that that same Spirit would do that work in us to make us more, more like Jesus, whose eyes were always open, whose eyes were always full of love.

We want to be like him. So Holy Spirit, come and do that transforming work, sanctifying work in our own hearts and our own lives, and then help us to overflow with love for each other here.

I pray this for Jesus' sake. He deserves a people that love him and love each other. Make us so. Amen. Amen. Amen.