

Text: I Corinthians 13:6 (Pew Bible, pg.1137)

Title: “Loving Truth”

INTRODUCTION

Let's open our Bibles to I Corinthians 13. We come to v.6 in our study I've entitled "The Power of Love." As you're turning I want to thank you for the prayer support for our mission teams in the UK and in Gallup NM. Nan and I had a great time with the choir. They'll be returning tomorrow. During the week in the UK we were able to reconnect with some important times in history when God moved in an extraordinary way in great revival ... revival that transformed the lives of believers, churches, communities and nations. We retraced the steps of great revival figures like George Whitefield, as well as John and Charles Wesley. Their preaching was used by God to spark a great revival that swept all across England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland during the middle to late 1700s. That spread across to America where the Holy Spirit was moving in a mighty way through the preaching of Jonathan Edwards and others. We connected with the great Welsh Revival of 1904-1905 where God used mighty men like Evan Roberts to ignite revival that rocked the nation of Wales and spread in missionary zeal around the world.

God moved on the heart of Evan Roberts when he was in a worship service where he heard a pastor pray a prayer that included the words "Bend us." Those words stuck in his heart. He had been earnestly seeking God for a fresh touch of the Spirit in his life, but something was missing. Evan Roberts came to a prayer meeting at the church and he felt as though there was a flood inside of him that was about to break loose. Finally, in great desperation he prayed, "Lord, break me, break me, break us!" And God set the life of Evan Roberts on fire ... a fire that would spread to the young people in his church and ultimately all around the town of Lougher, Wales, then across the entire nation.

We have set aside a nine-week period starting on September 11 for us to urgently pray and seek the face of need for God to bend us. We're calling it "Greater Things." I feel so strongly that we need to give ourselves wholeheartedly to this, that we are changing our Sunday schedule so we can seek the Lord together in one worship service for that nine week period starting September 11. Begin now to pray for God to "bend us."

1 Corinthians 13:6 - Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

MEMORY REVIEW:

1 Corinthians 13:4 - Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

1 Corinthians 13:5 - It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

1 Corinthians 13:6 - Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

The essence of our relationship with the Lord is all about whom and how we love. And I Corinthians 13:4-8 shows us how to love God and how to love others.

ILLUSTRATION – Our newspaper every Saturday features something called “Cheers and Jeers.” I don’t always read it, but occasionally I like to read the “cheers” to see if something some of you may have done has been recognized and appreciated by someone else. And I often find that to be the case. To be honest, I typically skip over the “jeers” because it’s usually somebody who just looking for something to gripe about. Some of the cheers are heart-felt expressions of gratitude for helpfulness. Some of the jeers are pretty silly, and really petty.

Examples from Cheers and Jeers in yesterday’s paper:

Well, the Bible says there are things that rightfully should be cheered, and some things that rightfully should be jeered.

1 Corinthians 13:6 - Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

Paul said something similar to the church at Rome:

Romans 12:9 - Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

Those are very strong words. “Hate” means to abhor something or to be disgusted with something. “Cling” means to hold fast to something. So we shouldn’t just choose against evil; we should hate it. And we just choose for good and truth; we should cling to it and hold fast to it.

Think of this verse as the two-sides of the coin of love.

Authentic love is demonstrated negatively and positively in two powerful ways. Love is demonstrated by...

1. JEERING EVIL (v.6a)

1 Corinthians 13:6 - Love does not delight in evil...

Romans 12:9 – “Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil...”

Evil = unrighteousness. “Evil” is the opposite of “right living.”

Rejoicing in evil is an attack against God. When we delight in evil we are delighting in something that offends our heavenly Father. If we truly love God we will love what He loves and hate what He hates.

1 John 2:15 - Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

If you get up in the morning and start your day with God in His Word, from the moment you get up from your quiet time you are going to find one distraction and one temptation after another seeking to lure you away from the truth. The world will shout these things so loudly ... whether from the opinions of others, or the news you watch, or stuff you read on the internet ... that it will seem that everyone is thinking that way, and that you are in the wrong.

So there's a battle between the love of the world (and the evil that is in it) and the love of the Father.

Love doesn't find any satisfaction in evil or sin, whether it's our own or someone else's. Let me just apply this in three different ways. Love doesn't delight in ...

- **Evil done by myself**

Do we not rejoice in evil when we spend our money and time on anything that dishonors God? It could be in the entertainment we choose, or in the close friends we choose, or in the books we read, or the jokes we tell.

If I truly love God how can I delight in something that disgusts God? Well, you ask, how do I know what disgusts God? You spend enough time with God, you'll know what He likes and dislikes.

ILLUSTRATION – This works with husbands and wives. I've been married to Nan for nearly 35 years. And over that span of time I've learned what she likes and doesn't like. And I try to honor that. Sometimes I mess up, but hopefully those times are few and far between. The same thing is true with God. The more time you spend with Him in His Word and in prayer, the more you will know what pleases Him.

Love doesn't rejoice in evil done by myself, or...

- **Evil done by others**

Now remember that I Corinthians 13 is set in the middle of Paul's instruction to a church body as to how they are to behave as the church.

EXAMPLE: There was a horrific thing happening in the church in Corinth. Turn back a few pages to I Corinthians 5.

1 Corinthians 5:1 - It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that does not occur even among pagans: A man has his father's wife.

So there was sexual immorality going on among church members that should have been disgusting to the church. But it wasn't.

1 Corinthians 5:2 - And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have been filled with grief and have put out of your fellowship the man who did this?

Here is church discipline in action.

1 Corinthians 5:6 - Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough?

To truly love a person is to hate their sin. If you love an unsaved person you will hate their sin because it has condemned them to perish. If you love a fellow believer, you hate their sin because it is disobedience and an evidence of a broken relationship with their God.

But, you know, tolerance has become the ultimate value in our culture today. If you stand against evil, you'll often be called intolerant, which is the cardinal sin of our culture today.

QUOTE: Apologist, author, and speaker Josh McDowell wrote an article for *Focus on the Family* magazine. This is what he said:

Tolerance says, "You must approve of what I do." Love responds, "I must do something harder: I will love you, even when your behavior offends me."

Tolerance says, "You must agree with me." Love responds, "I must do something harder: I will tell you the truth, because I am convinced 'the truth will set you free.'"

Tolerance says, "You must allow me to have my way." Love responds, "I must do something harder: I will plead with you to follow the right way, because I believe you are worth the risk."

Tolerance seeks to be inoffensive; love takes risks. Tolerance glorifies division; love seeks unity. Tolerance costs nothing; love costs everything.

So love doesn't delight in evil done by myself, done by others, or...

- **Evil done to others.**

We often secretly rejoice over the misfortune that comes to an enemy, or someone we're jealous of.

ILLUSTRATION – Just by way of illustration, this is what happens as we are watching or playing sports. For those of you who are golfers, tell me you don't delight a little bit when the person you're playing against hits a ball in the water or misses a short putt. You may say, "Sorry about that," but inside you are saying "Yes!!!" Or you're watching a Rangers game and an opposing player strikes out, it brings us pleasure, doesn't it. And that's part of the fun of sports. It's also what makes us enjoy some movies or TV shows when the bad character gets what's coming to him. Yes!!

That's all in fun, but it isn't right when we secretly rejoice over evil that comes to people who are our enemies.

Note: One of the ways that we rejoice in evil is through gossip. It's a sin that many believers take lightly, but it does not display love and therefore it is a sin against God. Gossip is rejoicing over the

shortcomings and sin of others. It carelessly reveals their weaknesses and sins. It doesn't help them, rather it hurts them. Even if gossip is true it is still sinful gossip.

ILLUSTRATION – Some of you have been around long enough to remember the old TV show *Hee Haw*. There was a segment in that series some women sang a song that said: “We’re not ones to go ‘round spreadin’ rumors. Really we’re just not the gossiping kind. No you’ll never hear one of us repeating gossip. So you better be sure and listen close the first time.”

Someone has observed that, “Nothing is accomplished and everything is hurt by a loose tongue.”

So love is demonstrated in jeering evil. It doesn't rejoice in evil. But love is also demonstrated by ...

2. CHEERING TRUTH (v.6b)

So what was stated negatively in the first part of v.6 is now stated positively in the last part of v.6.

1 Corinthians 13:6 - Love ... rejoices with the truth.

Romans 12:9 - Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.

The word “rejoice” means to be absolutely thrilled and to excitedly cheer someone on. The way to fortify yourself to not rejoice in evil is to be consumed in life with rejoicing and delighting in truth.

Now there are two kinds of truth:

- **Factual truth** - Love is characterized by truth and by integrity. And that's certainly part of the meaning of this phrase. We are to delight in truth-telling in all of our relationships. Nothing destroys relationships like deception and dishonesty. But this means more than just factual truth.
- **Scriptural truth** – Truth is God's revealed Word.

Jesus prayed for His followers...

John 17:17 - Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

We must believe the right things in order to delight in truth. When we rejoice with the truth we can never be comfortable with compromising the truth of God's Word.

Now let me just pause here a moment and point out that there is such a thing as “evil” and there is such a thing as “truth” that exists outside of myself. There is something out there called “truth” and there is something out there that is the opposite of truth called “evil.” It is not truth because I believe it is; it is truth because God established it. Evil is not evil because I think it is; it is evil because God determines what is evil.

Truth is that which is the will of God. And God has made His truth known through His Son, Jesus Christ, and His Scripture, the Bible.

You see, if there were no God or Christ, then truth is subjective. Anyone can make up their own “truth.” And then everyone would simply do what was right in their own eyes. But God does exist, and He is the ultimate source of truth. Truth is His will revealed in Christ and in the Scriptures.

So truth and evil never change, because God never changes. So then we must choose to align ourselves with the truth of God’s will and His Word. That’s what it means to rejoice with the truth.

Love rejoices when you see God’s truth lived out in the lives of the people around you. You know there are a lot of things we cheer about in the lives of our mates and our children. We cheer them on when they make good grades ... when they get an award at work ... when they accomplish a physical goal ... when they score a goal in their soccer game.

I wonder ... do we rejoice, do we cheer them on when we see in them the things that please the heart of God.

3 John 4 - I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

Do you give thanks to God, not just that your loved ones are healthy and have good jobs and enjoy life, but also that they are living in the center of God’s will?

Romans 16:19 - Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.

Sure we should be delighted over any success that comes to our loved ones and friends, but let’s save our loudest cheers for the times that they honor God in worship and obedience.

CONCLUSION

One of the biggest choices you and I make every day is what we delight in and what we rejoice in. Love for God means we rejoice in everything that makes Him rejoice. Love for others means we rejoice when we see God’s truth lived out in them.

Start the day with truth. Get alone with God’s truth in His Word. Let that be the beginning of your day, setting your mind on truth before the world starts pounding you with distractions and temptations.

Spend the day in truth. Learn to be a student of truth. Rejoice when you see it and hear it. As you do, the truth will set you free.