

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Stunning Love

PART

7

TITLE

Love Delights In What Is Right

SCRIPTURE

1 Corinthians 13:7



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Good morning church. I wasn't on. That's a great way to start, break the ice. I am Bryan and one of the pastors on staff here and it is my joy to be able to gather with you guys this morning and open up God's word. And if you are, I know it's already been mentioned, but if you're a guest with us or if you're joining us by live stream we want to say a special word or welcome to you. We really are honored that you would be with us today on Father's Day. Andy has already said hello to the fathers. I want to say again today we celebrate you and we honor you.

And but we know in doing that the reality anytime we celebrate a day like today or even Mother's Day last month with the reality is that not everyone in the room feels the same. It doesn't always stir up warm fillings in our heart when we talk about these things. We know the reality is that some of you, even today, you're grieving at the thought of Father's Day because you've lost a father and you feel a sense of loss. And we want you to know that we know that.

We also know that for some of you, when we speak of fathers with affection you don't feel that way because you've, you've not had good experiences. And we want you to know that we understand that. And we also understand that some of you in this room, it brings a weight of grief over your hearts because you long to be a father and that has not transpired. And so, anytime we elevate something we know that there are those that it doesn't ring the same four.

But here is the reality for those of us who are in this room, and if you're a father, you know this, the tremendous responsibility that is placed on our shoulders is to reflect the goodness of a loving God who perfectly embodies what a father should be regardless of your experience. There is one who is perfect. And so, as we celebrate dads I also want to challenge you men in the room who happen to be fathers that we would even consider today as we open up the Word of God and continue in First Corinthians 13 that we would consider the challenge that we should lead out in demonstrating this kind of love.

As father's, if you're a father in the room then I implore you to lead out in embodying the kind of love that Paul calls us to in First Corinthians 13. So, we're going to look today at only a single verse, verse six in this passage, but I want to read from verse one through seven and get us there. And if you don't have a Bible, if you look in the seat in front of you to your right or left there ought to be one there. And if you have no Bible at home consider that our gift to you. We want you to have the word. You're going to hear over and over again today that we believe in what is written in it.

And so, with that we're going to turn now to first Corinthians chapter 13 and this is what Paul writes, "If I speak in the tongue of men and angels but I have not love I'm a noisy gong or a clanging symbol. And if I have prophetic powers and I understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but have not love I'm nothing. If I give away all that I have and if I deliver up my body to be burned but I have not love I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind. Love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way. It's not irritable or resentful.

It does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things endures all things. Love never ends.”

And so, let’s pray and then we’ll unpack verse six. Father, would you cause this passage of scripture to be true of us? God the reality is that it isn’t apart from you. And so, as we look at what your word tells us, may it resonate in our hearts, and may we affirm the truthfulness in it, and may we look to you the truth, the one who can shed light on all of this and in whom you grant us the ability to even live out what you call us to in these scriptures. And so God, even now would you cause our hearts to be inclined toward you and would you cause our ears to hear what you want us to hear and what we need to hear? We trust you in that and we lift up the name of Jesus Christ. And we pray these things in his name. Amen.

Well so, what are the things in life that bring you joy? What are the things that get you excited? Everybody has them. Our lives are full of things that we embrace and find our hearts turning toward in affection. For some of you it is basketball. It’s the sound of the net as it pops when the ball goes through. And if truth be told there’s likely some new Raptors fans even this morning in this room. You find affection when you talk about it. I guarantee you my son looked up when I said basketball. He won’t look up at anything else that I say this morning but he looked up when I said basketball. Some of those things stir affection in us.

But for some of us it might be the beach. We long for the feel of the sand in our toes and we long to watch the sun set on the waters, and fill the breeze in our face, and taste the salty air. In fact, looking at this picture, I lost half of you right now. You’ve already gone there. You live for it. You invest all of your time and your energy into one week of the year that you can spend there or you race there every weekend.

For some people their affection, the thing that brings them delight is that. And for some of us it might be a college football stadium filled with 100,000 of our closest friends. Now, I figured I’m safe showing a picture of Neyland stadium for a couple of reasons. One, it won’t put any of the blue and the red people in this room in opposition to me. And quite frankly, we’ve not had a lot to celebrate for the last decade even though I love that place. And so, the reality is though that our affections go out. We long for the excitement of gathering with people to lift our attention and there’s joy and delight when we talk about it.

And for some people it may be your family. You just cannot wait. Joy wells up in your heart when you think of your family and you can’t wait to talk about them. If you’re a grandparent in the room used to be you would pull out a wallet, the photos would fall out, now you pull out your iPhone and you scroll through the pictures. But your delight is in those things. The reality for all of us is that there are all kinds of things that pull our affection. There are all kinds of things that we find delight and joy in. And I think that this is at the heartbeat of what Paul is talking about in verse six. Now he says it in a way that I want to see if I can get us to where you see why I think that this matters.

Paul says in verse six, “Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing but love rejoices with the truth.” This idea of rejoicing is an idea of delight, of satisfaction, of praise, and of worship. And I think what Paul is actually telling us is this, we will delight in what we treasure. We’ll delight in what we treasure, what we adore, what we cherish, what we esteem, what we love. We’ll celebrate it. It will well up in joy in our hearts, and we’ll speak of it, and we’ll share it with other people. And I think this is at the heartbeat even of what Jesus says in Matthew six verse 21 when he says, “Where your heart is or where your treasure is there your heart will be also.” You see in the scripture when we talk about our love, our delight, the thing that we give our affection toward, it always talks about the heart.

And so, what Paul says then in this passage of scripture in a negative statement, in a positive statement I think are two things but both of them highlight that we ultimately we delight in whatever we treasure. And the first thing that I believe is true about that is that a heart lacking love delights in sin. A heart lacking love delights in sin. Paul says it in a negative way. “Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing.” So if we are rejoicing at wrongdoing then we’re delighting in sin. If love is present then delight in sin will not be present.

Now, I want to speak generally for just a minute about our culture in relation to this and in doing so I’m fully aware that I am about to step on some toes. Okay? And I know that I’m going to step on toes because all week long I’ve been stumbling all over mine. All right. So know that is I highlight the things that I believe our culture that we embrace in some really harmful ways that I’ve wrestled through these before I’ve ever said them to you. Now, there’s a short list of ways that I believe that as a people that we embrace a rejoicing of evil. And this is not an exhaustive list but I think it captures the heartbeat of the reality of where we’re at.

First of all, I believe that we rejoice in evil when we delight in our own sin, when we delight in our own sin. When we parade it around, when we seek after it, when we actually spend time intentionally planning how we will seek sin out. And then likewise, I think, we also rejoice and evil when we delight in the sin of others. When we celebrate sin when we see it. Our entertainment culture has embraced this idea in a remarkable way.

In fact, do you know what the single highest grossing entertainment product of all time is? One single product, all right. The highest grossing single product entertainment product of all time. It’s not a ballgame, or a team, or any of those things, it’s a video game. Guess what the video game is? Grand Theft Auto Five all right. The highest grossing single product of all time in our culture and entertainment is Grand Theft Auto Five. The whole premise behind the game is that you would steal cars, break the law, that you would rob people and then buy and sell real estate. Now, I know I’m reducing the game down to three really simple things but that’s the reality. And we have embraced it as a game that we play without any thought in our heart of the reality. That’s a celebration in a sense that it’s a celebration of sin.

But is if that weren't enough, the pornography industry in our culture makes more money annually than the Major League Baseball, NFL, and NBA combined. Annually there's more money spent on pornography than there is on the three greatest major sports that we participate in in our culture.

We're fools if we think that our sin, our secret sin does not affect us. Paul says, "Love does not delight in sin. It doesn't seek it out. It doesn't elevate it." But we delight in our own sin if we rejoice in evil. We delight in the sin of others. Jesus says, well, actually John says of Jesus in John chapter three, "The light Jesus has come into the world, but the world, the people, loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." So we delight in our own sin. We delight in the sin of others.

We delight in other's failures. We rejoice in evil when we delight in other's failures, when we we rejoice over the failure of our enemies. You know, we do this culturally. We draw political lines and we camp in one party or the other and we revel when the others party fail. And it grieves God's heart that we would celebrate the failure of others. And sometimes we celebrate the sinfulness of others because it makes us feel more righteous. And yet when we delight in the failure of others who are our enemies and when we delight in the sinfulness of others when it's found out because it makes us feel more righteous our gloating over the consequences that come from other sin betrays our own memory loss that we were objects of God's wrath before Christ saving work rescued us from it.

So when we delight in other's failures we forget that that is or was us. Not only that, but we call sin good and good sin. You know Isaiah five this is the core of what Isaiah says. "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, that confuse the two that we elevate sin as something that's good and and things that are good that we downplay them." And from a cultural perspective, in a sense it is what we've done when we've embraced abortion. We celebrate legislation that authorizes the termination of innocent lives primarily over personal preference and then publicly celebrates it.

We call sin good and good sin. And then, we make excuses for sin to explain its sinfulness away or ignore that it ever really happened at all. Now, if you've got kids, you see this at play all the time. You walk into a room, somebody's crying, somebody's not. All right. You already know something's gone awry. And so, in a parent way you say, "Okay, what's going on?" And so, the one who is crying usually, there's been some physical altercation. All right? And so, you turn to the other child and say, "Did you hit your sister?" And, the response is rarely ... Now, if this is your household, wow, come see me afterwards and I'd love to talk with you and see how you do this. But the response is rarely, "You know what, I was wrong. I should not have done that." Their response is automatically an excuse for why they've done what they've done right? "Well, they did this and so I hit them. I'm justifying my sinful action because of something that they've done."

And we explain away our sinfulness and we laugh, or we may not laugh at it. It happens with children but we do it ourselves in our own adult lives. And for a culture and from a cultural perspective it's exactly what we've done with racial prejudice. We, act like something does not exist and downplay the realities of it and explain it away as if it is not a problem. And when we do that, whether we understand the depth of it or not what we are doing is we're celebrating evil. Did you know that there are people who will say globally in this vein, the Holocaust never happened or explain it away as if portions of history have tried to make the atrocities that occurred worse than they really were. We make excuses for sin and we explain it's sinfulness away. And in all of these ways, this is a demonstration of a heart that lacks love and delights in sin. And God stands in opposition to this.

The psalmist writes in Psalm five. "You are not a God who delights in wickedness. Evil may not dwell with you, cannot be in your presence." And so, if our delight is in sin then by default it means God's presence is far from us. And this should grieve us and it grieved Paul. So Paul says, "Love does not rejoice in wrongdoing and evil but it rejoices in the truth." Which is the second part of the way that I believe we delight in what we treasure and what Paul shows us is a heart led by love delights with the truth. A heart led by love delights with the truth."

Now, that begs a question. What is truth now? Now, philosophically truth is correspondence, now track with me for a minute, correspondence between an object and our knowledge of it. In layman's terms truth means what we say about something reflects exactly what that something is. Now, that's what philosophy would say truth is. But the reality for us in our culture is that this is a really difficult topic because truth has become relative. Our culture, what we're taught, is that truth is not absolute and that it simply can't be made known. Now in my house, I don't know what your kids pastime is but for a stretch of my children's lives their favorite thing to do was make slime. And I don't know. It's the nastiest stuff ever made and when you pick it up it will not stay in your hand because it races toward the edges and it drips between your fingers. And it and it takes the shape of whatever is holding it. And so, it's constantly moving.

Well, there is an author and a theologian named David Wells who says similarly of this concept, "In today's culture truth is as shapeless as a wad of bubblegum and just as elastic." But it really reminds me of slime. And so, for the culture it embraces an idea of truth that is not absolute. Yet the Bible presents truth as something remarkably different. The Bible presents truth is something absolute. Not only is it absolute, but it actually can be known. Ultimately in the scriptures the truth is not a set of ideals or even proclamations but the truth is in fact a person. The biblical writers, they don't have any confusion about what truth is. They write in confidence about the truth.

And so, what is the truth that the Bible embraces? That's what we have to ask ourselves. If Paul says, "Love rejoices with the truth", and what is the truth that the Bible is embracing? Well, ultimately it's the knowledge of God as he has revealed it to us and of all of the reality. And again as he has revealed that reality to us. The Bible's writers believed that the truth has been given to us in a form that we can understand and know.

It's God's story of creation. We talk about it here in terms of the Gospel. The story of a good, perfect, holy God who in love spoke all things into existence and who made humanity in his image perfect without blemish. But the truth doesn't just talk about the beauty of creation, the truth also talks about our rebellion against that is as people that were made in his image. We stiff armed the truth of God and living by his word, and we brought condemnation on us. And so, it doesn't just talk about the beauty of creation and the brokenness of the world that comes from our rebellion against God, but it talks about the condemnation that comes because of that.

And if the story stopped there we'd all be in a ton of trouble but it doesn't. Thanks be to God that the truth also contains God's remedy for our brokenness. He speaks it and then not only that he gives it to us by wrapping the very flesh that he created around himself and entering into time and space as Jesus the son who did what we can't do because we're broken. He lived a perfect life, the life we could not live. And then, went to a cross to die the death that we deserve because of our brokenness. And then, he went into the grave and then he came out of the grave showing that he actually had the power to remedy our brokenness. And this is the whole truth of the creation, and of the Gospel, and of the scripture. And the scripture teaches us not only that we can know that but we can know that it's real. And he's done it through the person of Jesus Christ.

In fact, Paul says in Ephesians one, "In him, in Jesus, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in him you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory." The Bible says that Jesus was full of truth in John one 15. But not only that, the Bible says, "Jesus is the truth." In John 16 Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the father except through me." And what sin wants us to do is to be sure of this one thing that we can't be sure of Jesus. Sin will lead us to delight in darkness and cause us to be unsure of the truth of Jesus.

So what does it mean to delight in truth? If we walk through a list of ways that we rejoice with sin or we rejoice in evil what does walking in truth and delighting in truth look like? Well, ultimately I think it is worship of the one true creator God as he has revealed himself in the scriptures. You know, Psalm 19 has got a remarkable litany of things that center around the word of God. And I want to read it to you because all of these things are rooted in this reality of what God says in his word. "The law, the word of God, is perfect reviving the soul. The testimony of the Lord, his word, is sure making wise the simple. The precepts, his word, the precepts of the Lord are right rejoicing the heart. The commands of the Lord are pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever. The rules of the Lord are true and righteous all together. More to be desired than gold, even fine gold, sweeter than honey and the dripping of a honeycomb. More over by them the truths of God's word your servant is warned and in keeping them there's great reward. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing and acceptable to you oh Lord my rock and my redeemer."

To worship the one true God as he has revealed himself in the scripture is to delight with the truth. Another way that we delight with the truth. We love the things that God loves. So how do we know what God loves? His word tells us. So, we love the things that God loves but we also hate the things that God hates. Well, what does God hate? Well, in simple terms it's sin. But the Bible is full of illustrations of things that stand in opposition to the holiness of God. And if we delight with the truth then we, our hearts will grieve over those things and we'll hate the things that God hates.

I think another way that we delight with the truth is that we humbly admit our failures. We are imperfect and when we delight with the truth we're honest about our imperfection. But we don't live there, we also gratefully accept his salvation. We delight with the truth when we know the depths of our own depravity and we know the depths of his great love and rescue. So we gratefully accept his salvation. We joyfully submit to his authority. And how do we do that? We obey his word. We obey his word. How do we know what his word is? Well, he's given it to us in the scriptures, something that we can know, and follow, and believe.

And then we compassionately proclaim his truth. So we delight with the truth when we compassionately proclaim his truth. Now I put a disclaimer there of compassionately proclaim the truth because I believe that one of the things that we fail at as a body of people who confess Jesus as our lord and Savior is that we hold the truth up in front of a world that is broken and we use it to condemn them. And let me tell you something, we don't have to do that. Our sinfulness condemns us. We don't have to condemn people verbally for condemnation to fall on them. What we have to do is elevate the answer to that broken and compassionately proclaimed Jesus. Because that was ...

If you're in this room and you confess Jesus as your Lord and Savior that was you. And so, we compassionately proclaim his truth. But here's the reality, right? Paul says that a heart that lacks love rejoices in sin and a heart that's led by love rejoices in truth. But the hard pill to swallow for all of us is that we have a problem. The Bible, that truth, tells us we were enemies of God. All have sinned, all fall of his perfection, all are in need of righteous salvation outside of ourselves. Which leads to the only hope that we have and that is that only Jesus can rescue and restore our affections. If we delight in what we treasure and the reality of our sinfulness is that we treasure the things that are in opposition to the Lord. Then only Jesus can rescue us from it.

You know we're like a child who needs a heart transplant. No one in their right mind would look at a child who has a diseased heart that's ultimately leading to physical death and tell them to do their own surgery. Why would we think the same about our own sinfulness? We need a master surgeon. We need a skilled physician who understands us better than we understand ourselves and who can do what we cannot do which is replace the heart that is diseased, that actually delights in the things that are in opposition to God and give us a heart that is in line with his righteousness and only Jesus can do this. And this is what Ezekiel said in Ezekiel 11 he says, "Of God and to the people I, God, will give them one heart and a new spirit and I will put that within them. I will remove their heart of stone from the flesh and give them a heart of flesh that they may walk in my statutes, and keep my rules and obey them. And they shall be my people and I will be their God."

God says through Ezekiel, “Look the people will not follow me unless I give them a new heart. Because their natural tendency is toward the things that Paul says, the absence of love races toward, delighting and rejoicing in sin.” And only Jesus can rescue our affections. And Oh, what a great rescuer he is. And so, what do we do with this? If Paul says, “Look, I’m going to shine a light.” He did it to the Corinthians. He spent chapters telling them, “This is all of the things that are going wrong that I hear of, all of the ways in which you’ve stepped outside of the very thing that you’ve been taught.” And he comes to this chapter on love and he says, “Now let me show you what it ought to look like.” And he says the same thing to us. How do we embrace that and how do we ultimately race toward truth and find our delight in it?

And, and so these are the few things that I want to leave with you this morning. First of all, I think if we want to embrace a life that lights in truth we need to confess and repent of our delight in sin. For some of you this morning, you’ve never confessed Jesus as your lord and Savior. You’ve wrestled with the truth of the scripture, you’ve given in to the thought that reality of truth can’t be known. And you question whether what the Bible claims is true even though over and over again in the scripture God is, not only is he proclaiming it but he’s showing it and he’s proving it through the life of Jesus and the things that Christ did and the confirmation of it from others in their mouths.

And today what you need most is to simply confess and repent of your delight in sin and turn toward Jesus. And for some in this room who are believers we need to confess that sometimes our heart’s delight is in the things that are not of God and we need to repent of that. But let’s also grieve over sin, not celebrate it. Let’s be a people who don’t overlook the sin of our world in a way that doesn’t show the grief that God’s heart feels and the things that are in opposition to him. Instead of celebrating sin let’s grieve over it, let’s be broken by it, and let’s long for the one who can correct it.

The next thing is let’s trust God to reorient our affections. We need someone to give us a new heart. Well, let’s trust that God is capable and not only that he will but that when he does that he then puts within us the power to live according to the word that he’s given us. Let’s trust God to reorient our affections. And then when he does, let’s fight sin with the truth, the sin in our own hearts. Let’s be a people of the word who fight sin in our own hearts and in the world with the truth of the Word of God. Let’s cling to it and believe that it’s true.

It’s an interesting thing about this passage, this particular verse in the Greek. What Paul says, it gets lost sometimes in the translation. Paul says, “Love does not rejoice in singularly, does not rejoice in wrongdoing or evil.” In other words, that’s an individual thing. Love doesn’t rejoice in evil. But what he says on the other side of that passage is love rejoices together with the truth. So how do we do this? We do this when we come into this place and we collectively turn our attention and our voices toward the truths that we just took four songs to proclaim. And we lift our voices in one accord with the truth and we open the word and we believe that it’s true even when it highlights our own brokenness. And we embrace that, and we confess it, and we delight in the reality that our brokenness is at the end but that there is a savior who corrected it.

And we with a collective voice we raise our voices in praise to the God who made us and the God who saves us. Let's be a people who delight in that truth. Let's be a people who proclaim that truth and believe it with all of our heart and not only believe it but know it because we've experienced it and lift it up before a world as a picture of what God's grace looks like in the face of a world that is literally falling apart in brokenness and racing toward its death. May We be a people who love like God loved and have a heart like God has and rejoice in the truth that he has proclaimed that he's made known to us and that he's gifted us in the person of Jesus Christ. And let's pray.

Father, would you by your grace make that true of us? We are not that way. God, your own word tells us that we were far from that, that we were your enemies, that we reveled in darkness and we acted in the dark because we knew even in our own hearts that the brokenness that we love stood in opposition to who you were. And yet, in your grace you rescue us from it. You give us a way, not only a way out, but a way to be changed, to be returned to what you had made humanity in the beginning, aa reflection of your image. And may you give us hearts that believe that and trust it. And even now God as we turn our attention toward lifting our voices again may we together rejoice with our voices in the truth. May We call him who has done all of these magnificent things worthy because he is. And may that even incline our hearts to give out of gratitude for it all that we have, any thing good that we have, has come from your hand. So, may we declare it with both our words and our actions. As we walk from this place may we live it out and may we look like the picture of love that Paul paints for us in First Corinthians because that is a picture of Jesus Christ. And we pray these things in his powerful name. Amen.



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