



I Want to Know What Love Is

Part 9 – Love Does Not Delight in Evil but Rejoices with the Truth

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We're in Part 10 of *I Want to Know What Love Is*. Last week, we looked at *Love Keeps no Record of Wrongs*, as we go through 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7: what love is, what love is not. Today, we get both of those in Verse 6 of 1 Corinthians 13 and it simply says, ***Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.***

As we go through this series on love, it's like who are we talking about, who are we supposed to show love to? Jesus is clear.

Love one another. Jesus said "It's by this all men will know that you are my disciples." I think this is key because sometimes we think the church service is where it's all at and that is just not true. We believe the church is not a day of the week, it's not a building, it's not a service, it's not a sermon... and all God's people said... Amen. It's not a song. The church is a family; it's the family of God and the bride of Christ.

They tell us that people make their decision to come back to a church in the first ten minutes. I love that research because I don't get up here for 25 minutes, so it works for me. But Jesus said, "Actually you'll be known as my disciples by the way you **love one another.**" So, family of God, we're called to love each other.

We're also called to "**love your neighbor** as yourself." You're like, "Okay, I've got it. We love here in the church, we love our neighbors, and that's it." No, Jesus puts another category out there that just includes everybody so now it's everybody that this series is referring to. "**Love your enemies.**" It's the person who has hurt you, the person who has cheated you, the person who has wronged you, the person who has rejected you, the person who has abandoned you.

For the sake of this message today, we're looking at the motive. We're going deep into the heart – your heart and mine – with this message. So, to start with... Don't call out names. Keep it to yourself. But I want you to think about one person. I want you to think about the person in your life who has hurt you the most. I want you to think about the person who cheated on you, the person who wronged you.

I'm not just talking about a person who offended you on social media this week. I'm talking about someone who really hurt you. That's because today we're looking at that motive that gets inside of all of us, that heart check. Today is a gut check for me. It's a gut check for you. The person who hurt you, you have to ask yourself the question... Do you want to see them hurt? Do you want them to feel the same thing that you felt when they treated you like that?

Love does not rejoice in evil but rejoices with the truth. Our love for each other, our love for our neighbors, our love for our enemies, it hinges on all of this. In other words what we're saying is **the reputation of the church does not rest solely on programming of a Sunday morning gathering.** And Katie said... Amen. **But rather on the members' love for one another, neighbors, and enemies seven days a week.** In other words, it's how you treat the server when you leave here today. It's how you treat the people you're driving next to.

Some of you come into church and you're like, "My motives are pure, my motives are good." We'll let's see. How many of you have ever been driving up to Springfield on Highway 65 and somebody gets right on your bumper? Does anybody know the feeling you're feeling right now? I want to explain to you. The reason I'm on your bumper is because I'm using cruise control. If you use cruise control, would you raise your hand? Watch this, and don't judge these people. If you don't ever use cruise control, would you raise your hand? Look around at these foreigners and strangers among us. My dad has had cruise control in every car since 1975 and he's never touched the button once. So, his trip to Springfield ranges from 45 to 90 mph. I said, "Dad, there is an invention in your car that will regulate that whole thing."

But that's not the attitude. That "Get off my bumper!" That's not the attitude we're talking about today. Here's the attitude we're talking about today. That guy is on your bumper and you're thinking thoughts. Then he whips around you and just shoots past you. A mile or two up ahead... I don't even have to finish this; you know exactly where I'm going with it. He's been pulled over by the Missouri Highway Patrol. Who just yelled out "Yeah!" That's the attitude we're working on today right there. It's that, "Good! You had it coming. Serves you right." You're first thought isn't *I hope they go easy on him. I wish the best for him.*

That's exactly the attitude we're talking about today. Wanting someone to hurt because they hurt you. It happens in traffic all the time. Here's what the scripture says, the New Living Translation of 1 Corinthians 13: 6 says **It (love) does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out.** We're going to look at how that works in our relationships. The Messages Bible – Eugene Peterson, paraphrased it this way, **6 (love) Doesn't revel when others grovel, takes pleasure in the flowering of truth...** Max Lucado calls 1 Corinthians 6 the DNA Test for Love. It's a gut check for love. It really helps you and I to see. Am I loving others – my neighbor, my enemies – the family of God? Or what's going on inside of me?

If I can talk to the single young ladies for just a second. When he says, "I just want to be close to you. I want to show you my love. For us to have sex or be physical with each other, that's me showing you my love." You know that phony love detector you have going off? That's it right there because here's what Max Lucado says. *"If you find yourself prompting evil in others, heed the alarm. This is not love. And if others prompt evil in your, be alert."* Young lady, if you're being pressured to do something that you know is wrong, heed it. And if others prompt it in you, be alert, be diligent, be discerning.

We're dealing with the attitude today with those who've hurt us. Remember in the church... This is why Paul keeps bring this up and I hope you see how. 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7 is at the end of all that takes place in the preceding chapters. Earlier in the book, he says, "You're watching people sin and you're actually getting to the point that you are so callused that you're boasting about it."

Last week, we worked on the attitude that says, "I'm going to settle the score," as we looked at *Love Keeps no Record of Wrongs*. Today we're dealing with this attitude: "**They had it coming.**" "I'm glad they got it." I think this is the echo that goes on in our sin nature and in our heart. "**Now you see how it feels.**" But the scripture is going to teach us today this is not love.

To give a few more examples. If I didn't hit it with the driving or boyfriend/girlfriend, it's just **rejoicing in the downfall of another**. The church sometimes gets a reputation of not only do people fall in the church, but we like to kick and hurt our wounded. You've probably heard that if you've been in church for any period of time. "You're always kicking each other when you're down."

I'm seeing it right now. We have mega church pastors dropping like flies right now. For some of them, their ministries are blowing up after 20, 30, 35 years. Amy has told me time and time again, "Please, Ted, stay off of Twitter." I go to a very dark place when this happens. Do you know why? It's because I go online... Again, I don't agree with the theology, the practice, or the way a lot of these pastors did church, but I don't want to be one that rejoices now that they're hurting and their families are suffering. When I go online, I see pastor after pastor after pastor doing this right here: rejoicing in the downfall of another pastor. Love one another, love your neighbors, and if that's not the category that fits you, love your enemies. I see it all the time; people just going after people.

Delighting when your enemy gets in trouble. "Good! They've been cheating the IRS for too long. They got an edge on me in business. We pay our taxes. They don't pay their taxes." And you want them to be in trouble, you want them to get hurt.

Delighting when someone who accused is caught. "Can you believe that they were coming after me."

Rejoicing when a competitor who cheated you is cheated. "Good! Now they see how it feels."

Rejoicing when a former friend is kicked out of the circle. I can go all the way to junior high and high school for this one. Remember that feeling. I don't why it took place in junior high and high school so much. Remember that feeling you had when here's your group of friends... I had Bobby, Terry, and Tony Pignatello. We gathered around, maybe six or seven of us. Then one day they decided I was no longer in the circle. Remember? And you're like, "Oh, okay. That doesn't feel very good." And then maybe later on that day, they decide that Tony's not in the circle. "Well, Tony just did it to me, so good. I hope he experiences it." This happens a lot in the adolescent years. You get kicked out of a circle and it's painful. "I've been abandoned, I'm being rejected by my friends. I can't wait for them to feel the same thing. I can't wait for this to hit them."

I've wrestled with this motive this week. I asked the Lord, "I want to go deep on this. I want you to convict me of the last time this happened, and do I still have this. I don't want this towards others who are falling. The downfall of pastors or churches."

I went back to a time 12 years ago where a pastor deeply hurt me. It was bad. And I had the attitude of “Not only is it going to happen to you, I hope it happens quickly. I hope you feel it. I hope everything that you’re doing to me is done to you.”

I had it, I wanted it to happen and guess what? It did happen. I’ll never forget the day. I was getting my mail. This pastor wouldn’t talk to me for two years. He pulled up to my mailbox while I was getting the mail. I was on the phone with Amy. I go, “Uh oh, he’s stopping. If you don’t here from me in the next three to four minutes, something bad has happened; call 9-1-1.”

He rolled down his window and he said these powerful words, words I’ll never forget. I don’t know if they are words you’ve heard lately, but the words were simply, “I’m sorry.” I remember thinking, *Okay, I want to hear all the gritty details. I want to hear everything you’re getting.* When he pulled up, he shared it with me. We met for coffee later that week. We hadn’t talked for two years, but now we’re meeting. Can I just tell you? I didn’t have any joy in that. I remember profound sadness, almost like mourning, knowing what it was doing to the body of Christ in Branson, Missouri. I remember meeting with him and meeting with others and thinking, *I hope this can be reconciled. I hope there’s winning.* I’m friends with that pastor now. We’re reconciled. We text back and forth. He no longer lives here, but we were able to be reconciled.

Just when I thought, “Lord, I am growing in this,” Amy and I went to see this movie on Monday (Unplanned), and all of the feelings came back to me. It’s the same “they had it coming” it’s the same “I hope something bad happens.” Abby, the Clinical Director of Planned Parenthood, the main character in this movie, is not who I wished that on. It was her boss. If you haven’t seen this movie, I’m not telling you to go see it. Every family has to wrestle with it. It’s about abortion. It’s very graphic. I covered my eyes multiple times until Amy said I could watch it. I’m not telling you to take your family. We’re still wrestling with it whether to take our kids to it because of the horrors of abortion.

I found myself hating Abby’s boss. She was a face of evil. Now I make no qualms about the fact that I hope Planned Parenthood is shut down forever, never to be opened or funded again and never to perform one more abortion. I’m against Planned Parenthood 110%. Every ounce of my being is against it, but I found myself hating a person. She was anti-marriage and she was anti-motherhood. I just felt it all coming back.

And then, throughout this whole movie, there was a woman who was on the other side of the fence at the Planned Parenthood Clinic. She would meet Abby almost every day when Abby would pull up to work at Planned Parenthood. She would meet Abby every day. She’d meet Abby as she came out. And there was kindness and gentleness, true love displayed so well. I found myself in this tension in the movie going, *No, no, no. They had it coming. I hope they hurt for the millions of babies that have been killed.*

This is what we need to understand. You’ve heard this; it’s a common expression that’s been in the church for probably 30 years. **“Hurt people hurt people.”** You can put any word in there you want. **“Abandoned people abandon people.”** **“Rejected people reject people.”** But today what we’re talking about is not you doing it or me even doing it; it’s hurt people want others to hurt, even if I’m not the one

doing it. Abandoned people want others to be abandoned. Rejected people, like the friend circle, want other people to be rejected. “Good! Now you see how it feels.” But love does not rejoice or delight in evil but rejoices in the truth.

One other one I thought of this week was “**Insulted people want others to be insulted.**” Let’s go there. You know that on that vulgar social media post you shouldn’t insult a person who gives you an insult. But do you find great joy when you read someone else doing it on your behalf? It’s happened here. I had a pastor friend text me this week with an image of things that were being said about his church online.

He said, “Man, what do you think about this?”

I go, “I think if you're a good church, you shouldn’t have a 5.0 rating on Facebook.”

He goes, “Really?”

I go, “Oh, no, Jesus said you’ll be hated, so maybe at best a 4.7.” I don’t even know what the number would be. But I told him, “Don’t you dare go back at these people.”

When I was going through the difficult time 12 years ago, I had friends who gave me this great advice, “Shut your mouth.” Raise your hand if you have a friend who regularly tells you to shut your mouth. Well, you need better friends. Keep quiet. And keep your heart in check for these people that you're trying to reach. You’re trying to reach these people that are tagging you. When someone from your church insults them, watch out that you don’t have the attitude of “You said exactly what I wanted to say.” We don’t return an insult with an insult.

Peter talks about this in 1 Peter 3, **9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing...** Pray for, bless those who hate you, those who speak poorly of you. **...because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.** The idea behind the first *blessing* is speaking well of someone, speaking kindly of someone. The idea of the second one is good fortune that’s brought to you. That’s the Lord. The Lord covers you on that. The Lord takes care of you on that. And that’s why as you're waiting for that, as you know *I should be responding to this...*

I remember one of our elders came to me 12 years ago and said, “You know he’s talking about suing you.”

I’m like, “Good, because now I can get in front of a judge. You guys have told me to be quiet, but now I get to speak.”

They kept saying, “No, Ted, you’re not getting this.” But that was in me. Don’t respond to an insult with an insult or evil with evil.

10 For, “Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil...” Now Peter is going to be quoting Psalm 34. **“...and their lips from deceitful speech. 11 They must turn from evil and**

do good..." Follower of Jesus, this is what you are called to. You are called to not respond to people the way they treat you or me. This is one the church needs: **"...they must seek peace and pursue it."** I think sometimes we think reconciliation is just avoid the conflict or act like it's not happening. No, to seek peace, you have to go after it. For those of you who withdraw from confrontation, pursue it, go after it. **12 "For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." 13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good?**

Some of you are going, "A lot of people. I can give you a list of people that I try to do the right thing, do what is good, and they come at me and they keep coming at me." But even if you should suffer, even if you can produce that list of people who have hurt you, people who have torn you down, you've suffered for what is right and you are blessed.

You've heard this expression as well. I agree with it maybe 80%. "Forgiveness is giving up my right to hurt you for hurting me." I've always wrestled with this a little bit because I don't know if it's a right. If someone hurt you that automatically you have a right now.

Forgiveness is giving up my right to hurt you for hurting me. But that's not what we're talking about today. We're talking about watching it. This is the motive we're talking about today. "I may not be the one to hurt you for hurting me, but I hope someone hurts you like you've hurt me." "I hope you feel it." "I hope you experience it." Today, Paul is very clear. That is not love. It's not love for each other, love for our neighbors, love for our enemies.

"I didn't do it, but it felt good to watch." So, if I'm not supposed to have the heart of when the guy is pulled over to be celebrating and rejoicing... I think the heart we're going for today is the same heart that the Father has towards you and me. It's the heart of a parent. There are many parents in here who have watched their children struggle. They've watched their children struggle in their teen years and in the twenties. Mom and Dad had to watch it.

Ever since Sue Head said it, it's just been running through my head. I was at a parent meeting at School of the Ozarks and she was talking about how challenging the curriculum is, how difficult it was going to be. She stood up before the parents to prepare the parents, she said these two lines. "Your children will struggle. Let them." I was the only one in the room that applauded. Then I realized okay, I don't think this is really what the parents are wanting to hear right now.

I've added a third line to that. Your children are going to struggle. Let them. It will be hard to watch. I think that's the heart that we're supposed to have with 1 Corinthians 13: 6. Love does not rejoice in evil but delights itself and rejoices in the truth. It's a mom and dad who watch their adult child struggle, dealing with sin and evil in their lives and then having to deal with the consequences of that. It's the mom and dad watching their children deal with the struggle of those consequences, going, "I know this is right. I know this is good for them. But this is hard to watch." I don't think there is a parent in there that's going to watch a child deal with sin and struggle with the consequences of sin and be like "Good! They had it coming."

My mom would always tell my brother and me, "I love you, and a mom's love never fades." I still remember her telling us this. She said, "I will follow you to death row." I'm thinking I don't know what you're planning on us doing, but... You get the sentiment. You get what she was trying to say. "I love you. I care for you no matter what you do. Watching you go through some of this stuff is going to be very, very difficult and hard."

I thought about that this week. When you see those around you, the people who abandoned you, rejected you, cheated you, wronged you, here's the DNA Test for Love. Love goes beyond just kindness. Am I really a loving person? When you see someone who has cheated you, wronged you, hurt you, harmed you in any way, abandoned you, left you, quit your place of employment with no notice and they are now working somewhere else... Listen, here's the test for love. When you see that person struggle in the same way they made you struggle, you have the same immediate thought of *This is hard to watch. I hate that they have to go through this.*

I'm seeing parents right now, in this room, who have watched their children struggle with sin and the consequences of sin. They hung in there. That's what I think is the grit a parent needs with adult children... And all the parents said... Amen. They don't delight in that, they don't rejoice in that, but when the truth does surface or the child begins to embrace that truth, but still has to deal with the consequences of this, a mom and a dad come in... They don't say, "You had it coming; you deserve this. You put your dad and I through so much misery. I can't wait for you to feel..." Parents don't do that. Parents are like, "I'm here for you. I love you. I care for you. I'm going to walk through this with you."

Maybe the next time a leader falls, your attitude is not like, "Good! I didn't like how they taught or what they taught. I didn't like that they were flying around the country in private jets and raising money on Christian television." May that not be our heart or our attitude. May our attitude be "This is tough to watch."

Love does not retaliate for ill treatment or hurt feelings. This is kind of off of last week with the score card. We're not keeping score and then behaving based on the score, and if we're down in the count. Today, we're looking at the fact that love does not rejoice in evil. **Love does not rejoice when others suffer.** We come alongside those who are in sin and those who are dealing with evil and those who are dealing with the consequences of it and those who are dealing with the consequences of someone else's sin. We don't have the "Good for them. Glad they got pulled over, glad they're hurting." We have the "This is hard to watch. What can I do? How can I help? How can I pray?"