

I Cor. 13:1-7; Prov. 1:7-19; Love Rejoices I. What Love does not Rejoice In II. What Love Rejoices In
Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, what do you rejoice in? When we consider our world, there are many things that they celebrate. But think of the lives- or the actions that our world celebrates. Are these actions worthy of praise? Well, today we continue our study on I Cor. 13 by looking at the things in which love rejoices. Not only is love necessary- not only is true love both patient and kind. True love also delights in something. Love does not only do something – it rejoices in something. Today we see that Jesus Christ teaches us to rejoice in the truth. True love delights in the things that good, noble and praiseworthy!

I. What Love does not Rejoice In

Today we are going to start with the negative- true love does not rejoice in wrongdoing. To rejoice in wrongdoing is to be glad- to seek pleasure in that which is unrighteous. To delight in actions and teaching that violate God's law and justice. The workers of iniquity cause these to be joyful. Now we can see this when we look at Psalm 1 and Proverbs 1. In Psalm 1 there is a man who is not righteous. This unrighteous man is one who walks in the counsel of the wicked, stands in the way of sinners, and sits in the seat of scoffers. He is like chaff that the wind carries away! Instead of delighting in the Law of the Lord- this man delights in the teaching of the rebellious. Or as we read in Prov 1- sinners who entice into wickedness- these lie in wait for blood- seeking to plunder the innocent- their feet run towards evil. We could say that those who despise wisdom are those who take pleasure in unrighteousness. The fact is, wrongdoers both delight in doing evil and they rejoice to see others rush into sin as well. As Isaiah 5 says- woe to those who call evil good. People live the life of sin because sin gives them pleasure- they serve their idols because they get joy from their desire- not knowing that they are enslaved to it. Or as Rom. 1:32 says, these unrighteous not only practice such wicked things, but also give their approval to those who practice them as well. Christian love does not take delight in evil- or lawlessness. Rather we are grieved by it. It is a common known fact in the world of journalism, if it bleeds it leads. The more

gruesome, outlandish and vile the crime, the larger the headline it receives. As Prov. 2:14 says- the perverted man rejoices in doing evil and delights in the perverseness of evil. But this preoccupation with sin- even a secret delight in unrighteousness can even be seen in the church. The warning is clear, true love does not celebrate the sins of others. It is a sad truth- that church leaders can and do fall into sin. When we read about Bill Hybels of Willow Creek- and the sexual accusations against him- how do we respond? Do we rejoice when the mighty have fallen! Does it give us a secret pleasure to see others caught up into sin and scandal? Do you sense the smug feeling of superiority when wicked deeds are exposed? The fact is, we must never laugh at the sins of the world or the sins within the church. Or have a hidden delight in what God calls sin. The church in Corinth had its own problems- sexual sins that were outlandish- and they boasted in that fact! In I Cor. 5- a man had his father's wife- and they were arrogant in that fact! They delighted in evil- see how welcoming and sexually free we are! They were a part of the sexual revolution of that day- but they were simply rejoicing in unrighteousness! But even if you lift your nose at the sins of others- are you not delighting to see how much better you are than they? Delighting in their sin- because it makes you look so much better! As Prov. 24 says- do not rejoice when your enemy falls, do not be glad when he stumbles, lest God see it and be dismayed. Well, the celebration of sin leads to pride- and plants the seed in your heart that tempts you to do the very same thing! If you think you stand, beware lest you fall! As Jesus said in Luke 13:27, depart from me, all you workers of iniquity. We could say that true love properly hates something, true love hates iniquity and takes no pleasure in wickedness and rebellion- hating even the garment stained with sin. Christian love does not delight in lawlessness- wherever it is seen! Could we sin so that grace abounds? Would we savor stories about the sins of others? Surely not- sin is repulsive to God and it is repulsive to us! Christian love confronts evil! It is true love that compels us to rebuke those who are living in sin- even to tell a brother his fault as Mt. 18 says. Love does not rejoice in deeds that violate God's law- rather true love rejoices in the truth.

II. What Love Rejoices In

In continuing v. 6 there is a slight variation- love does not delight in unrighteousness- rather it does delight with the truth. It takes pleasure with what is right and good. The word true is the well-known word- Alethia- veracity or truthfulness. That which is right and accords with reality. Truth in contrasted by what is wrong- what ever is stupid, foolish, mad or confused. This truth can come in its objective form- what is real, factual and certain. But it is also truth in religion- what corresponds to God's law. We call this form of truth righteousness. The upright duty of man. This truth is revealed to us in God's word- as II Cor. 6 says- God's word is the word of truth. So to delight in the truth is to align yourself with what is godly and upright- and to take pleasure in what God has said in His word! To delight in God's Law as Psalm 119 says- and to call good what God says is good! But we would be remiss if we did not include Thee Truth! To love the truth is to love the one who said- I am the truth. In John 14 Jesus reveals that He is the truth- and that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. As Pilate asked- what is truth- the Christian says- I know Him who is the truth- and I love Him with all my heart! So to rejoice in the truth is the delight in God, His word and ways. To take pleasure in doing what is good- and to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength! As II John 1:4 says, I rejoiced greatly that I found my children walking in the truth. Truth is more than an acknowledgement of what is right- but it is to also live in a way that God says is upright! To be filled with Christian love is to love all that which is right and good. Those who know the truth- who have received the truth- will love that which is truthful. What is this truth that we hold dear- that we delight in? Listen to I Tim. 1:15- this is a truthful- trust worthy saying deserving full acceptance- Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. The truth of Jesus Christ can be summarized by the word- gospel. The good news that sins are repugnant to God- and that these can be forgiven in Jesus Christ! How can a Christian help but love this blessed truth! Rejoicing in the truth means not only that we have no pleasure in sin- but also that we do in fact take pleasure in doing and saying what is right! Think of what this means in the home. In the context of the family, what brings us

the most joy? What does our family delight in? Do we serve because it is our duty- or because it is our delight! Are we joyful in the holy work God has set before us? How about as a church? Instead of delighting in the secret sins of others- you know- the secret gossip that is sweet to our lips. We rather enjoy- delighting to see others walk in the truth! To hear of the conversion of others- to see people repent of their sins! To see godly growth. To delight in Baptism, the Lord's Supper and professions of faith! To celebrate God's work in our lives! Jesus said in John 4 that He is looking for true worshippers- those who will worship the Father in Spirit and in truth. So seeing others rightly worship God should fill us with joy! When we read these mission reports- or hear from our church planters- we are filled with thanksgiving- because the truth is being made known! We never grow tired of the gospel's good news- rejoicing to tell others that their sins can also be forgiven! Even in the world- we delight to see the truth! When false doctrines are exposed- when people are liberated from the captivity and slavery to idols. When addictions are broken and the way of righteous made know! As Jesus said in John 8- you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free! Christian love rejoices in righteousness- and rejoices with the righteous! It gives us great joy to see the truth overcome the lie- the light expose what is dark- and righteousness flourish where unrighteousness once dwelled. In this way- we rejoice with the truth.

To conclude, delighting in righteousness is what Christian love takes pleasure in. We have no greater joy than the joy we have in our God and His Word! Those who have been forgiven much- love much. Those who know the gospel, will delight to share that gospel. Those who know the truth- will delight in it and will rejoice to share it! This is a joyful love- one that rejoices in the Lord always! Jesus has no greater joy than to see His children walking in the truth- delighting in the truth! Those who know this truth will seek justice and love mercy. Praise God for the gift of true love!