

Love Doesn't Rejoice In Unrighteousness

Joe Slater

Why would Paul write those words in 1 Corinthians 13:6? Rejoicing in unrighteousness -- what a horrible thought! Does anyone actually do that? I wish I could answer, "No, of course not!" But that wouldn't be true.

The Sanhedrin rejoiced when Judas agreed to betray Jesus (Mark 14:11). What could be more unrighteous?

Jesus told His disciples that when He was killed, they would weep and lament, but the world would rejoice (John 16:20). Is anything more unrighteous than murdering God's Son?

Paul warned the Philippians about enemies of the cross "*whose god is their belly and whose glory* (same word as rejoicing) *is in their shame*" (Philippians 3:19). Yes, they were rejoicing in unrighteousness!

Current American culture calls us all sorts of names if we refuse to rejoice in unrighteousness. Rather than being ashamed for murdering innocent, helpless babies, the pro-abortionists say, "Shout Your Abortion!" That is, be proud of it. When we speak the truth about abortion, we are vilified as "the Christian Taliban"!

Secular progressives insist we must congratulate and commend those in same sex "marriages" (so called). If you dare to affirm Biblical marriage, you are written off as unloving and intolerant.

The same crowd demands not just tolerance but approval of the "transgenderism" myth. When you decline to refer to William as "Wilma," you are maligned as a mean-spirited extremist and a bigot.

God is love (1 John 4:8), and God is righteous (Daniel 9:14). Since God is righteous, He cannot rejoice in unrighteousness, but that does not make Him unloving! Neither is it unloving when His people decline to rejoice in unrighteousness.

Let's Make A Deal

A man was desperately looking for a parking spot for a job interview that could mean the difference for his family's future. He drove all around and couldn't find one. That's when he started bargaining with God. "God, if you'll just help me get a parking spot, I'll faithfully take my family to church every Sunday. I'll teach, I'll donate 10% of all that I have to you."

Suddenly a spot opened right in front of the very building where his interview would take place. The man said, "Never mind, God. I found one."

How quickly do we use God and throw him away when we think we no longer need him. Yet he is faithful, giving us opportunities to return to Him time after time. We try to bargain with God when we don't want to do what he would have us do.

God knows our hearts. A seed of doubt brings forth bushels of consequences. We should constantly examine ourselves to see if we are on the path that God wants us to travel, or if we have strayed onto the devil's road.

God wants the best for us. God is faithful in what he says. Are we?

--Linda Gragg (Oceano, CA)

Grace And Truth

Grace and truth complement each other; neither stands alone. Some want a "truth church," but truth without grace is harsh and severe. Others want a "grace church," but grace without truth becomes an "anything goes" church, even "*perverting the grace of our God into sensuality*" (Jude 4).

Truth without grace is not the whole truth. Grace without truth is not true grace.

--Cecil May, Jr. (via *Preacher Talk*)

Jesus: The Only Way

Jesus Christ is the only way to God and salvation. "*There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man comes to the Father but by Me*" (John 14:6).

A recent survey of members of various churches had this statement: "Muhammad, Buddha, and Jesus are all valid ways to God." Nearly two thirds of those 18-39 years old who identified as "Christians" agreed with the statement!

We're not impugning the character, heart, or motives of those who agreed. They may have thought they were just being tolerant. But let us distinguish between tolerance and affirmation. When we affirm something, we treat it as true. When we tolerate something, we allow it to exist.

Religious freedom in America allows many religions to exist. Certainly Christians should be civil and gracious to non-Christians. But that doesn't mean we affirm their false beliefs. We should speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

Jesus didn't say, "I am 'a' way" or "I am one of many ways." And Peter specifically said, "There is 'no other' name." What Jesus and Peter said may strike some folks today as too exclusive.

For centuries missionaries have gone to places where people worshipped multiple gods. They have told their listeners that they must turn from all other gods to the true and living God who is revealed in the Scriptures. We must do the same thing in this pluralistic society where affirmation is confused with tolerance. We dare not assume that everyone else already believes the truth about Jesus being the only way to salvation.

--Danny Tunnell (Miami, OK) via *Old Paths* (adapted)