

3 Actions of Love

1 Cor. 13:1-8a

Introduction:

1. In two previous lessons we have given consideration to the love (agapaō) described in this text.
 - a. In the first we concentrated our attention on verse 4.
 - 1) We observed that love is a somewhat abstract concept and that this passage makes it concrete by observing the actions associated with it.
 - 2) I do not believe that the actions described here are meant to be exhaustive of all the actions of love, but representative actions, that help us understand what love actually looks like from a behavioral perspective.
 - 3) The actions described here are both positive and negative. It is patient and kind. It is not jealous. Does not brag and is not arrogant.
 - 4) One of the things that we learned is that how we feel about ourselves affects the way we either love or fail to show love to others. So love is not just about how we treat others, but also about how we perceive ourselves. Diminishing ourselves seems to predisposition us to be impatient, unkind, jealous, and to lead us to bragging and arrogance as we try to lift ourselves up.
 - b. In the second lesson we concentrated on verse 5.
 - 1) It continues on the same foundation, but involves a series of negatives.
 - 2) Love does not . . .
 - a) Act unbecomingly.
 - b) Seek its own.
 - c) Is not easily provoked.
 - d) Take into account a wrong suffered.
 - c. Apparently the Corinthian Christians needed to perfect love, especially in their relationships with one another, as illustrated throughout the book of First Corinthians.
 - d. It is no easy task, and the mark of sin in our lives that leads to self-diminishing is a formidable hindrance.
2. Our focus in this lesson will be on verse 6. Verse 6 carries a special attraction because it focuses on the rejoicing that is associated with love.

Discussion:

- I. It begins with a negative. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but with the truth.
 - A. The KJV says, “Rejoiceth not in iniquity.” The ESV says, “Does not rejoice in wrongdoing.”
 - B. The original term (adikia) is formed from a word (dikē) meaning “right” with a negative prefix (a). So literally it means “not right.” So love does not rejoice in that which is “not

right.”

1. It can be either used of not being right by God’s standard of righteousness or with the standard of what man knows to be right by his own conscience.
 2. In Lk. 16 the “unrighteous manager” was squandering his master’s possessions. Unlike young Joseph in Gen. 39, who acted faithfully to his Egyptian master Potipher so that his household prospered, this unrighteous manager took advantage of his master.
 3. Another example of unrighteousness is found in Lk. 18:6 where an unrighteous judge was unwilling to give justice to a widow.
 4. Matthew 1:19 describes Joseph, the husband of Mary, as a righteous man. He knew Mary was pregnant and he knew the child was not his, so “being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.” That’s what love looks like.
- C. There is an interesting statement in 1 Cor. 4:14. Paul says, “I do not write these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children.”
1. You don’t write to people who are already feeling “less than” and make them feel even less. No, you admonished them owning them as your own beloved children. (Notice that loving relationship is the foundation of discipline. Without loving relationship discipline is impotent and ineffective.)
 2. How does going to law against a brother, moving to wrong and defraud him demonstrate love? (1 Cor. 6:1-8). Is it any wonder that Paul says, “Do you not know that the unrighteous (adikia) will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9-10).
 3. How does bowing over the conscience of the weak demonstrate righteousness (1 Cor. 8)?
 4. How does congregational division demonstrate love (1 Cor. 11:17)? Note 11:22.

II. In verse 6 “unrighteousness” is set over against rejoicing with “the truth.” Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness but rejoices with the truth.”

- A. So the “unrighteousness” here involves something other than truth (alēthia).
- B. Sometimes we interpret “truth” as “not lying.” And it is that for sure, but the idea here seems to be more than that. It includes the concept of being real and genuine. Jesus is truth (Jn. 14:6; Eph. 4:21). He embodies true faithfulness, sincerity and integrity. We sometimes speak of “two-faced people.” They are not what they seem. The outside façade is not necessarily what is in the heart.
- C. Are the Corinthians looking out for what is true, faithful, sincere and genuine? Well they have embraced one who is sexually immoral and have not mourned? Are they rejoicing? See 1 Cor. 5:9-13. They should have been mourning and removing

such from their midst. How is what they are doing either true to who they are as followers of Christ or showing the love of Christ? They should love their sinful brother more than that. They should mourn his circumstance not embrace it.

III. Verse 6 calls our attention to how love rejoices (sunchairō).

- A. The word translated “rejoices” is used in Lk. 15:6, 9 of rejoicing in the recovery of that which was lost.
- B. It is used in 1 Cor. 12:26 of members of the body of Christ (the church) suffering and rejoicing with one another as one member is honored.
- C. Love rejoices with the diversity of gifts. It does not elevate and diminish on the basis of comparing one gift to another (1 Cor. 12:25-26; cf. 1 Cor. 14:1ff).
- D. Like the 70 disciples who returned from preaching the kingdom we sometimes miss the real reason for rejoicing. They rejoiced that the demons were subject to them. Jesus said, “Rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven” (Lk. 10:20).
- E. Love does not rejoice in unrighteousness. Let us not rejoice in someone else’s calamity. “They got what was coming to them!” Let us not rejoice when someone is laid low by their sin as if somehow we are better. And certainly we should not contribute to their being shamed and embarrassed. Love rejoices in truth, sincerity, genuineness, integrity.
- F. When we don’t feel good about ourselves we may rejoice in unrighteousness. Respect for oneself leads to rejoicing with the truth.

Conclusion:

1. Let us not be among those who rejoice in unrighteousness, in deeds that are destructive, malicious, and self-centered. We must not rejoice in the sinful behavior of craving evil things (1 Cor. 10:6).
2. Let us be among those who rejoice in truth, and deeds that build up. Let us use the gifts that we have been given for the common good, for the building up of the body of Christ.
3. Without this love we are no more than noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.