Good afternoon and welcome to Redemption Church of Plano TX. My name is Scott Fane and I am the youth pastor of our GOAL initiative. We are glad that you have decided to come and learn about the Lord with us. Today, I want to tell you to REJOICE IN THE LORD! DON’T DWELL IN OR ON EVIL. <X2>

You may think to yourself “Pastor Scott, I don’t dwell on or “delight in evil” like it says in 1 Corinthians 13:6.

1 Cor 13:6

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.

But it might surprise you in some of the ways that we can do so. First Corinthians 13:4-6 contains a list of several things love “does not” do. The final item in this list is that love “does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.” Love loves the truth. Love does not love evil, or, as the ESV puts it, “it does not rejoice at wrongdoing.”

To give you some background as to why Paul was writing this to the Corinthians, Corinth was an evil place with pervasive idol worship and rampant sexual immorality. The recently converted Christians in Corinth sometimes had a hard time shaking their old habits. One man involved in egregious immorality had been tolerated in the church (chapter 5), and the Lord’s Supper had been dishonored to the point of including gluttony and drunkenness (chapter 11). To combat these evils, Paul taught that love does not enjoy or “delight in” such actions; rather, true love finds joy in truth and righteousness.

How many people have a Facebook? A twitter? These things are at best, a fun way for us to connect with each other and share information, but at worst, they are something entirely different.

The other day, I saw a post where it was this mugshot of a person whose face had been beaten badly.

Molester Mugshot

The caption was something like “This man touched a 14 year old and this is what he looked like after her dad caught him. Share this post and comment what YOU would do to him!” Then when you look at the post, it has 14,000 likes 150,000 shares and the comment stream is like “if that was my kid, they couldn’t take pictures of what was left,” or someone will proudly proclaim that the man in the photo should be victimized in the same way and there are like 500,000 hateful and angry comments. This simple post has become some sort of “hate maelstrom.” I call it “ragebooking.” In the name of righteousness, evil has reared it’s ugly head and it has been celebrated.

Not “delighting in evil” carries the idea of not gloating over someone else’s guilt. It is common for people to rejoice when an enemy is found guilty of a crime or caught in a sin. This is not love. Love rejoices in the virtue of others, not in their vices. Sin is an occasion for sorrow, not for joy.

Don’t celebrate the evil that others bring to the table, but rejoice in the fullness of the truth that The Lord has and will forgive the sins of even the most egregiously evil people if they call to Him. The same redemption and grace that was available to you is available to “Mr. Mugshot.” And thank God for that!

So if we are not to delight in evil, what should we delight in? What should we do? “Rejoice in the Lord \_\_\_\_\_\_\_and again I say \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_!” <SING song> This is a verse from Philipians 4:4

Philipians 4:4

**4**Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

It offers us a simple command. Rejoice in the Lord always. Easy, right? Maybe not so easy. Sometimes it is hard to Rejoice in the Lord. When you get fired and you’re not sure how long your three year old is gonna’ get to eat, it is pretty hard to “Rejoice In The Lord.” When the Doctor comes back in the room and puts a countdown to the rest of your life, it is pretty hard to “Rejoice In The Lord.” When you lose a kid…

I read an article about a family in Belize who’s son was murdered for arguing with a drug boss. As he died, his father held him in his arms on the front porch and he bit down hard on his father’s arm for comfort. It left a terrible scar and the father says that he touches it lovingly to feel close to his son….

When that happens to you, it is pretty freaking hard to “Rejoice In The Lord.”

A lot of times in church, that’s all you get. Philipians 4:4. “Something terrible happened to you son? Suck it up and rejoice in the Lord or you are SINNING.” But thank God that although cherry picking scriptures can hurt people, our God gives us a little instruction on how to do this. I’m preaching to myself today and this is a hard pill for me to swallow, but most medicine is. Thank God that is His word is so instructional and helpful!

Philippians 4:4-8King James Version (KJV)

**4**Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.

**5**Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.

**6**Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

**7**And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

**8**Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

So, let’s unpack this. Verse 4 is pretty self explanatory.

Verse 5 in the NIV says

Philippians 4:5 NIV

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

I was checking out the Pulpit Commentary for what the Bible means by “gentleness” here and I like the way that they break it down using Aristotelian' Ethics' it stands for the “temper which contents itself with less than its due, and shrinks from insisting on its strict rights. There is no joy in a narrow selfishness; joy involves an open heart, a generous love. Joy in the Lord tends to make men gentle and mild to others.” Wow! That sounds more like Jesus than anything!

Verse 6

Philippians 4:6

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

“Be careful” there refers to not being anxious or worried and verse 6 suggests that we have a running dialogue with God through prayer to build our courage.

Verse 7

Philippians 4:7 is often quoted! It says

Philippians 4:7

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

That’s a good one…am I right?! God’s peace, that doesn’t make ANY sense is going to keep us sane and protected in our minds through Christ Jesus. Supernatural peace is something that I am never gonna’ turn down.

And finally, verse 8

Philippians 4:8

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

It encourages us to walk a higher path and not concern ourselves with evil by concerning ourselves with that which is good. We should be too busy doing good and focusing on the better things in life that we don’t even have time or energy to do evil.

When we do all of this, we can rejoice in the Lord…in all situations. I’m serious. There are steps to it, but think about it….

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If you

\*set your heart to rejoice in the Lord and what He has and will do for you

\*you are gentle and missional to those around you

\*you aren’t afraid, but are constantly working your lifeline to the supreme power in the universe (that LOVES YOU by the way) through prayer

\*then God is going to bless you with peace and

\*help you to focus on good things….

That is a dadgum mathematical equation for joy! And once you receive that joy, Rejoicing in the Lord should be your only response…why wouldn’t it be?

[[[Musician]]]

So, today, I have told you what not to do…delighting in/dwelling on evil. I have told you what to do instead…rejoice in the Lord. And, I have told you how to do that. Now, all that is left is for you to do it, church. Come to this altar and rejoice in the Lord with me.