

Series: 2 Corinthians
Title: The Unselfish Love of God
Text: 2 Corinthians 13: 7-10
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Our subject is: “The Unselfish Love of God.” When a sinner is born again of God, God creates in us a new heart. In that new heart, he gifts his child with the unselfish love of God. That was the heart of love in the apostle Paul.

2 Corinthians 13: 7: Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

Paul’s prayer for his brethren is “*that ye do no evil.*” Christ’s great High Priestly prayer for his people was the same:

John 17: 15: I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

I have no doubt our Lord meant keep them from suffering evil, but more importantly, keep them from *doing evil*. This is the most needful thing we can ask of God, both for ourselves and for our brethren, because without him, we cannot keep ourselves from doing evil.

Galatians 5: 16: This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. 17: For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

The Holy Spirit keeps us from fulfilling the evil lust of our flesh that we would do otherwise. So Paul’s spirit toward his brethren is Christ’s spirit of love. Paul’s desire for them is the desire of every believer for our brethren, especially a pastor for those to whom he ministers:

Philippians 1:27: Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Proposition: The love God creates within each believer does not seek our own but seeks the good of brethren.

UNSELFISH LOVE

2 Corinthians 13: 7:...not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates.

We see in Paul the unselfish love that God creates in the believer’s heart. Paul’s enemies were telling everyone in Corinth that Paul was a reprobate apostle (a counterfeit), preaching a false gospel against the law of God. It is because Paul preached that the believer is no longer under the law but under grace. He preached the truth that we establish the law through faith in Christ who established it for us. Paul preached Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes.

But all Paul had to do to prove to everyone that he was a true apostle was come to Corinth and use the apostolic authority Christ had given him. Christ gave his apostles power to take the lives of their enemies. Men today do not have that power.

Yet, instead of proving himself faithful, Paul says “*I would rather see you do that which is honest, though my accusers will go on telling everyone I am reprobate.*”

God-given love *seeketh not her own*—it is not self-seeking, not selfish, even toward those who do not love us.

1 John 4: 10: Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

Love seeketh not her own—God gave his only begotten Son. The love of God is unselfish. Christ laid down his life by humbling himself and becoming a man for sinners like us. Christ laid down his life by living under the law that he might establish it for law-breakers like us. Christ laid down his life on a cruel shameful cross to justify God's elect from our sins when we hated him and loved our sin.

1 John 4: 11: Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

Sometimes I come across men who have something or another against someone who is my friend and brother in Christ. They say, "How can you love them when they act like that?" I answer, "The same way Christ loved me when I was infinitely worse!"

So Paul was willing to lay down his life—his reputation—for his Corinthians brethren. He was given this love from God in the new birth like all believers.

1 John 5: 1: Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him.

1 John 3:14: We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death...16: Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17: But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

About six or seven years ago, a group of men from another church called me and put me on speaker phone and they all joined in rebuking me for dividing their church, accusing me of preaching against the law. I had no idea who they were. But men like that do not turn me from preaching the gospel of Christ because my heart is for you, right here. My enemies can slander me. My gospel will not change because your care is my concern.

Matthew Henry—"The great desire of faithful ministers of the gospel is that the gospel they preach may be honored, however their persons may be vilified."

A RULE TO GAURANTEE

2 Corinthians 13: 8: For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.

The truth spoken of here is the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a sure and certain rule that guarantees Christ's preacher and his people, even his enemies, will only do that which is good for his church.

The chief reason I am not fearful of my enemies is because they are against the truth of the gospel. Therefore, they will not prevail against me because "*we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.*" When Korah and his men spoke against Moses, God made the ground open and swallowed them up. God does the same today when he allows the enemies of his people to leave the gospel and be carried away with the cares of this world.

Paul knew Christ would make him triumph over his enemies because Paul was preaching the *truth of Christ*—and "*we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.*" Remember when the king repeatedly sent the captains of fifty with their fifty to Elijah? Each time, God sent fire and consumed the fifty. Why? Because Elijah was God's messenger preaching the truth of God.

Proverbs 21:30: There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD.

Look to the cross! Men took counsel with each other and by their wisdom and understanding they crucified the Prince of Life. Did they succeed against the Truth? They did exactly what God determined before to be done. On the cross, Christ declared God just and Justifier as he redeemed his people from the curse of the law. Then Christ arose and entered into his glory at the right hand of the Father.

Psalm 2: 1: Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? 2: The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, *saying*, 3: Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. 4: He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. 5: Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. 6: Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.

Brethren, it is great comfort knowing that our sovereign God will not allow men to do anything against the truth! Never fear our enemies. God is greater than them all!

And here is Paul's point in the context: if the Corinthian brethren repented and did that which was honest—for *the truth of Christ*—Paul could not use his apostolic power upon them because “*we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.*” He said the same thing in verse 10—*2 Corinthians 13: 10: ...the power which the Lord hath given me [is] to edification, and not to destruction.* In this we see Christ. He said,

Luke 9:56: the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

John 3: 17: For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18: He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Unbeliever, you are not doing anything against God by your unbelief. We come into this world under condemnation already. So we only hurt ourselves when we refuse to believe on Christ. But here this word and God make you willing to obey it, “*He that believeth on him is not condemned.*”

Christ said, “*God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*” Did Christ succeed? He justified us from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses. He put away the sin of his people by the sacrifice of himself. He obtained eternal redemption for us.

Romans 8: 1: *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Unbeliever, if you only knew the peace of living in this world having peace with God! You would surrender in a heartbeat!

REJOICING TO SUFFER

2 Corinthians 13: 9: For we are glad, when we are weak, and ye are strong: and this also we wish, even your perfection.

Paul's love for Christ and for his brethren even made him rejoice to suffer in the cause of Christ. Paul said, “*We are glad—we rejoice—when we are weak—when our enemies call us weak and cause us to suffer at their hands.*” Remember, what Paul's enemies said about his bodily presence?

2 Corinthians 10:10: *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible.

But Paul said, “*I am glad when we suffer persecutions and contempt if it means Christ makes you strong in faith and love through our gospel.*” Paul considered suffering in the cause of Christ to be a gift of God to his people.

Philippians 1: 29: For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; 30: Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

Not only is suffering for Christ a gift of God, it is the fulfilling of scripture. Christ told us that:

John 15: 20: Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. 21: But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me. 22: If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. 23: He that hateth me hateth my Father also. 24: If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. 25: But *this cometh to pass*, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

As painful as rejection is—especially from those you love—for these reasons, I am learning to rejoice when I suffer for preaching the truth of Christ—*it is God's gift to suffer for Christ's name and it is the fulfillment of scripture.*

Paul meant something else in our text as well—*“I am glad we are weak in the sense that we have no apostolic power against you because Christ has made you strong in faith and love through our gospel.”* And he says, *“We not only want to see you strong, we want to see you perfect—brought out entirely from division and confusion and established in the truth of Christ. Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness,…”*

Men who preach law love using sharpness. Advocates of free will are chief in imposing their will on the will of others. Not Christ's preachers. The apostle Paul had authority from Christ himself. Christ himself spoke to Paul on a number of occasions. But Paul preferred to know nothing among them but Christ and him crucified and to come in love rather than with a rod. Those who believe on the sovereign will of God do not have to impose our will on anyone. We preach Christ and wait on him to make his people willing in the day of his power. That is “The Unselfish Love of God”

Amen!