



Sermon – 03/12/2017
2 Corinthians 13:11-12
Ephesians 1:3
James 1:2 - 4
Acts 4:12
John 1:1

Man I appreciate you being here. Spring break, time change, cold and wet, I figured we could meet in my office upstairs today. Turn to 2 Corinthians 13:11. We're going to spend two more Sundays in this book. He's going to detail for us here how we treat each other in this church horizontally. And then next week we're going to look at a statement he makes about the trinity which is the essence of why Islam hates us. Because they believe we are polytheistic, that we worship more than one God instead of just one God and that they're monotheistic. So we'll look at that next Sunday morning.

I was in, Peg and I were camping this week. I had to teach some at the seminary Tuesday. I did a luncheon panel with a couple of guys and then taught a break-out session for the Pastor's Conference and then I stayed Tuesday night to listen to one of ours, Central Baptist graduates we'll call him, Matt Carter, who's pastor at The Stone in Austin. Closed out the service with the last sermon. Did a phenomenal job. Just knocked it out of the park. But while I was there my wife and daughter and grandson and then my daughter-in-law and the twins were at the campground grilling hamburgers. So my daughter-in-law and the twins were down by the water and she stepped out on the dock with the twins and the dock split. So she began to float out into the lake. Nobody can get to her. She looks like she's stuck on an iceberg in the middle of the ocean. She's paddling. She's not going anywhere. Nobody can reach her. The people on the shore are giving her brilliant statements like "hold on". Well I thought I'd jump in, but since you told me that I'll hang here. So she floated a little bit, people called the park people, they came down, they can't do anything, everybody's talking to her, and finally she sort of drifts over to the other side and is able to walk around and come back. That is Facebook. No don't misunderstand me today. Do not go home and say we can't do Facebook anymore. No! There's nothing wrong with Facebook. It's a neutral tool. It's nothing bad or evil in and of itself in Facebook. But that is Facebook. Nobody could reach her. Nobody could help her. They can like or not like what's happening. They can respond to her and say, "Hold on. Help's coming like tomorrow." I mean

you can say things to her and she can hear them and she can respond to them. But really you've got to be right there to help her.

Now we've become enamored with Facebook. It will not function properly. There are all sorts of studies; I looked at several last week. They're talking about the fact that Facebook is creating a massive amount of loneliness among us. And it's because even though we can hear people and they respond to us there's such a chasm between us and real people that it's damaging. Now in 2 Corinthians 13:11 he details what we're to do with each other. So this is how we're to treat each other in the room. OK. As a church. Now I want you to listen carefully then because he's going to list several things and he starts out with something that's imperative for us to pull into our life or we can't do the other things he says.

¹¹For the remainder, brothers, number one, rejoice,

Keep on rejoicing. Now obviously from that statement, now I want you to listen to me carefully today because this is key to your marriage, it's the key to any friendship, it's the key to how we deal with each other in this building. He assumes that rejoicing is a choice you make, not an emotion you feel. Happiness is an emotion you feel. That can come and go in a second. So you're not trying to be happy. That's not what he's saying. I want you to be happy. No. He's saying I want you to rejoice. I want you to make a choice in Christ to be a person who rejoices. Now let me walk you, now we're going to cover a little ground here. So let me walk you to just two verses of scripture that I think are a great basis for what he's talking about. Go to the book of Ephesians, just two books over, look in chapter 1. It's bad when we're kind of empty. I only hear a few pages. How many of you have your Bibles today? Alright. You guys are so well trained. Listen, Ephesians 1:3. Listen to what he says. He's very precise.

³Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us

Past tense or Future tense? He's blessed us. In other words something has already happened.

He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ.

Now you put all that together he says every single spiritual blessing in the heavenlies when you came to Christ was given to you in Him. You have every spiritual blessing you need to be able to rejoice. You say, "Well how do I get Him them in my life?" Very simple. The Bible's composed basically of two things: promises and principles. You live out His principles, you trust in His promises and God then, that is the writing of the check, and it pulls God's blessings down in your life. So there's number one. I have the capacity, if I live inside the principles and believe the promises, that God's blessings flow down into my life thus as a basis to be able to rejoice. You say, "Well what about if I'm going through massive trials?" Look at the book of James chapter 1. James chapter 1. Right after the book of Hebrews. Listen to what he writes, and it is true, a trial by definition, takes away your happiness. Can't strip your joy, but it can strip your happiness. As a matter of fact that's the definition. If it doesn't strip your happiness, it's not a trial. The definition of a trial, it's going to rip your happiness out of your life. Listen to what James writes, verse 2:

²Consider it all joy, my brothers, whenever you walk in the middle of different kinds of trials, ³you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect work, that you might be mature and complete, lacking in nothing.

I can rejoice even when my happiness is stripped away because I know that no matter what happens in my life God still has my back. He's still there. He's active in my life. He's not going to let me go through some trial and let it be wasted. Let me tell you something. No matter how bad the tragedy in your life is, God never wastes tragedy in the life of His child. So I can rejoice whether I have happiness or not. I can choose to believe in the promises. I can choose to live in the principles and I can believe that no matter what happens in my life, God has my back and He's there. So I can every day rejoice. Now this is critical. If you base your life on being happy you will try to get happiness in everything in the world. Now here's the distinction and this is key. He gives you, this is the first command because you can't do any of the rest of it unless you learn to rejoice. In every relationship, marriage, friendship, work, every relationship, I go into with one of two things. When you go to a wedding reception; couple's leaving, they've finished the day of the wedding, they finished the reception, they've changed clothes, they're heading into the car to head off on the honeymoon, and they're walking down that gauntlet. Whoever started the rice-throwing thing really is not going to heaven. That's all I'm saying. So you're walking down the deal. You're both holding each other's hands. People are peppering you. But as you walk down there are one of three scenarios, one of three, that will occur as you walk down. One scenario, which is incredibly dangerous, if you're living for happiness, right, you're not living in joy, you're living in happiness, I will walk down holding her hand believing that she makes me happy. If she walks down the same way, believing that I make her happy, if we leave feeling that about each other it will not be long before the normal stuff of marriage will cause us to disintegrate. It's going to wreck us. You've got personality differences, you've got love language differences, male/female, all the things that creep into a marriage that you have to deal with. And what happens is you discover pretty soon they don't make you happy all the time and all of a sudden now anger, resentment, bitterness comes up and when you have a couple that both of them think the other will make them happy, when they don't they will sooner or later pack it in. If I walk into it thinking she makes me happy, but she's walking in joy, so she walks into it going, "OK. I'm going to make him happy because I receive my joy from Christ so I can give to him." If she walks in that way then what happens is over time I bleed her dry to the point where she gets nothing back for her energy and at some point she is absolutely fatigued. If, though, we both walk in joy and we walk out saying, "I receive my joy from Christ. I want to make her happy." She walks out saying, "I receive my joy from Christ, I want to make him happy." So now my joy in Christ is deepened by the horizontal relationship I have with my spouse.

Now those are the only three possibilities and it's true in everything you do. And so the reason he starts here with the idea that you've got to learn to rejoice, that is the fundamental key to marriage, to work, to church, working properly. For us to work properly, we have got to be people that choose to rejoice. Now, so now he goes into the list. Look at the second thing:

[Restore](#)

Now literally that's the Greek word used in Matthew for fixing the broken part of the net. These guys had the fishing nets, they cast them in the water, the weights would get them down, they'd pull it up and pull the fish in, and they'd pull the net in, well sometimes the net would be broken and so they'd have to mend it. They would have to fix the hole; fix the broken part. That is what that Greek word means. So when he says restore, here's what our job is. Our first job with each other in Christ is to restore each other to the original intent God had for our life. Not what I think it should be, but what God thinks. So our job is to fix each other. Now I want to be careful here. OK. Because there's somebody out there that's going, well that's my job and I believe it. Everybody else is broken except me. And I know what everybody needs and I'll tell them. If that's your person, you're more broken than the rest of us. Because you don't get it. We're all broken. Every one of us has something we struggle with; bitterness, unforgiveness, sites on the web we shouldn't be at. We all struggle with something. That's the whole point of church. Our goal is to make sure when we get here, that we work with each other, helping each other go through the broken aspects of our life. You can't do that on Facebook. You can send somebody a note, you can do this, but you can't mend somebody because that takes face to face personal time where you're in somebody's life. That's why I do not believe at all in the churches that spring up in our communities that try to target the 18 to 25 year olds. I want us to target cradle to grave because we need every single age in this church because all of us have been through something that we've come out of the other side victorious, and there are people entering where we came out and God has put us together so that we can mend each other in those broken moments. I think sometimes the reason our marriages fail is there's nobody anybody has to go to except some goofy, secular counselor who will say, "You're not happy? Well then get out of the relationship." It's the church that needs to do marriage counseling. It's the church that needs to do pre-marital counseling. It's the church that needs to mend each other. There are none of us that don't need fixing (even wives). So here we go. Yeah, I'm dead there. Third thing. He says, "I want you to rejoice. I want you to mend each other." And three:

[I want you to encourage each other](#)

Now can you do that in Facebook? A little bit. When my daughter-in-law's laying on the boat and somebody's saying, "You know we're praying for you. Here's a scripture verse: trust in the Lord and all things will work out well for those who believe in Jesus. Hope you make it to the other side. If you don't, you know where you'll go when you die." I mean you can send some good stuff on Facebook. Absolutely! The Greek word, encourage, is a combination of two words: to call, to come to the side. You can't encourage from a distance. When there's a funeral, you lose somebody you love, can Facebook impact us? Sure. When my dad died I had a lot of cards, lot of calls, lot of stuff, and I'm telling you they were rich. But when we get to the funeral in Alabama and several people show up from here, that personal, face-to-face encouragement was massive. Do you know why we have visitations at funerals and why you even have funeral services? We don't need to have a funeral service. Just put the body in the ground. You know why we do that? So that we can sit with the family and tell them we love them. Because there's something about face-to-face encouragement that cannot occur from a distance. Facebook's OK but it will not do what face-to-face is. We have got to encourage people right there in their midst. We encourage.

[Think the same thing](#)

OK. We're Baptist. We can't do that. You put two Baptists in one room, three opinions. That's Baptists. I mean I get it. We're all different. Even in this church our grace and mercy allows Auburn people to worship here. Their tithe is 15%, but that's OK, we still let them come. We're not going to agree. We're all different. We all have different personalities. So what in the world does he mean when he says, "When we come together, out of rejoicing, we mend each other's nets, we encourage each other, and we make sure we adopt the same beliefs." How in the world can we do that? There are two things to keep and they're in your face when you come into this building. Outside those doors there's the statement by the very first president of the Sunday school board Southern Baptists ever had that basically says we are committed to inerrancy. We believe this book is completely true; table of contents to the maps. That's where we are. You say, "Well there are different interpretation." You know there really aren't. There are some, Calvinist/Armenian, yeah, we're going to argue about that. Whether or not there's a rapture. But there's a ton of stuff in here that isn't open to interpretation. Can a husband not love his wife and be Biblical? No. Can a wife not submit to her husband and be Biblical? No. Can you go to a site you shouldn't on the website according to this book? No. Do you raise your children in the admonition of fear of the Lord? Yes. This book has a ton of things that are black and white. And so there's one thing we're going to make sure of that we will all agree on is that this book is center. When we do a new member's dinner now we bring people to my house, we have them in the yard, and the whole reason for doing a new member's dinner is I look at them and say, "Look if you're not committed to two things; if you're not committed to the scripture, this is not the church for you." And there are some people that are not. The second thing we're committed to is that cross. That the, the, the only hope for mankind is in the blood of Jesus Christ. There isn't any other hope. We are committed to Acts 4:12.

¹²There is no other name given under heaven whereby men may be saved.

It is the book and the blood and that is the basis of what we agree on in this building. Nothing else. Alabama; winning football team. I can't help that. It's an answered prayer, but I can't help that. We're going to disagree on all sorts of crazy things, but we cannot disagree on this book and on the blood of God's Son. So we can think the same thing in those arenas. Then he says:

Be at peace

Talked before, both the Hebrew and the Greek word, be at peace means God's best. So here's what we want for each other, right. We're going to rejoice, we're going to fix each other, we're going to encourage each other, we're going to make sure we're lined up on the same things, and we're going to want for each other in this room God's best, not our best. Parents I don't care what you want for your kid. You want God's best, not your best. And if God's best is they go to the mission field, then they go to the mission field. If God's best is they stay here, if God's best is they don't follow you in engineering, you take God's best for your children and everybody else in this room. And then he says:

If we rejoice, we mend each other, we exhort each other, we have the same beliefs, and we want the best for each other that God has,

Watch this,

And the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Now if we want, now listen, if we want to experience God's love and peace, not just know about it, but experience it, we have to do those things. And there's a difference between knowing about and experiencing. So men that are married here, I want you to finish this statement for me. At some point in your marriage your wife's going to preface a question with these words. If I were to die, would you..... What's the next part of that sentence? Marry again. First time you hear that question you think the answer's simple. And then you realize there's no correct answer. They're both wrong, whatever you have. But I have finally answered my wife on that question. She said, "If I die would you marry again?" And I said, "Yes. As a matter of fact I already have the person picked out. I have her name: Condoleezza Rice. Why would I marry Condoleezza Rice? Somebody tell me. She's got a membership to Augusta. Catholics go to the Vatican. Golfers go to Georgia. She's got a membership to Augusta. Somebody said, "What do you bring to the table?" I don't care. I get to play there all the time. So I went one year, a guy got us practice tickets, right. Because there's a difference between watching on TV and actually experiencing it. So my son and I go, we drive to Georgia. We're at the Masters, we're walking the hallowed grounds of Augusta. I mean we walked every hole. We counted the blades of grass on every fairway. So I see something and I start running. This arm grabs me and spins me around and it's a Pinkerton guard. And he goes, "We don't run at the Masters, sir." I start crying and go, "Please don't throw me out! Please!" You can watch it on TV all you want. You can read about it. You can look at pictures. There is nothing like being there. We can read all we want about God's love and peace. We can read what people feel. We can talk about it. But if we want it literally in this building, we've got to do exactly what he says to do because that's his condition. If we rejoice, we mend each other, we exhort each other, we think the same thing, we want God's best; when we do all that together then God's peace will come down to us. Look at this. And then he finishes. Look at this.

Greet one another with a holy kiss. ¹³All the saints greet you.

He finishes with the idea, now listen carefully, that if we're going to do this and experience God's love and peace, if we're going to do this, he finishes with the idea that there's got to be personal contact and you don't get that in Facebook. I want to read you something. Listen to this. We've based our small groups in this church on this verse.

¹In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and God was the Word, and the Word was God.

Now listen. It says the Word was, here's the Greek, *pròs tòn Theòn*, it is a phrase that means the Son was face to face with the Father. They don't do Facebook in the Trinity. It's a close-knit relationship. And if we're going to model the Trinity in our lives, we've got to focus on each other. We've got to physically be in each other's life. I am amazed now at what I see. And my wife's had to drill this into me because women are far more relational than men and so she's drilled this into me. I don't know about you, but I still have a tendency, I take my phone, even if

I turn it off. I hear the buzz or I'll see the light. And immediately my attention goes there. I've been amazed. I will, I will go to a restaurant now; there'll be four high school girls at a table. All four of them talking, none of them looking at each other. They're just scrolling down talking. No real physical, personal, face-to-face relationship. We've lost that. You go in a restaurant in this town, you've got your phone, you've got the TV's with sports on them, and you've got the music that is blaring. We have lost, in this society, an understanding of face-to-face and we as Christians should know better because we're to greet the brethren with a holy kiss which means we're to pull each other inside, physically in our lives. Do you not wonder why our country's so mad? We're mad at Hillary. We're mad at Trump. We're mad at the Republicans. We're mad at the Democrats. We're mad at the police. We're mad at everything because we are a disjointed America because we've become controlled by noise and sound. We've lost the ability to relate to each other and how we must never allow that to occur among God's people. We of all people understand the distinction knowing Christ and giving to each other. It cannot come inside our church. And I'm telling you it's a difference. I think the most embarrassing thing for me as a parent. I grew up an only child. My dad, and I inherited one deep thing from my dad, he was a voracious reader. I love to read. And so I inherited that but when I was a little kid, as an only child, I would play and do my desperate part to get his attention. But he was always reading. He'd just kind of look up for a second and then he would continue to read. So we never had a great intense relationship. But I remember when my kids were little, I think like 5 and 3, I can't remember the exact time. But they're playing on the floor and they asked me to play with them because I'm sitting there looking at them and reading and I mean the Holy Spirit just nailed me and said, "You're going to raise your children like you're father raised you. He was in the room, but he wasn't with you." We have to be sure that we are in each other's life, in our families, in our church, in every relationship we have. Put the phone down. Call somebody that's a brother or sister in Christ up, take them to lunch, and say, "I just want to know is there anything I can pray for you about." To begin to rejoice, restore, encourage, and base our lives around our walk and our relationship with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We owe that to Christ and to each other.

Father your Word is telling, but it is gifting. Father I ask you if there's a person in here that is alone, Father let us make sure in this church they don't come here and are ever alone. If our families are broken inside the home, let them fix that today. Father just let your Spirit minister to us and pull us back to you and to each other. I ask you that in Jesus Christ name.