

“CHARITY ENVIETH NOT”

1 Corinthians 13:4(c)

(Sermon to the saints gathered at Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas on June 30, 2019)

1 Corinthians 13:”1 ¶ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. 4 ¶ Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; 6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 ¶ Charity never faileth...” (1 Corinthians 13:1-8).

The word of exhortation (Acts 13:15) for today is Charity, which is real Christian love, is directly opposite envy.

The thesaurus helps with these synonyms: hatred, ill will, malice, prejudice, resentment, rivalry, backbiting, coveting, enviousness, grudge, heartburn, lusting, maliciousness, malignity, opposition, spite, evil eye, green-eyed monster, invidiousness, jaundiced eye, resentfulness.

The Greek word, translated “envieth” in 1 Corinthians 13:4, is “Zay Loo.” And means to burn with zeal; to be heated or to boil with envy; hatred; anger; in a good sense, to be zealous in the pursuit of good to desire earnestly; pursue; to desire one earnestly; to strive after; busy one’s self about him; to exert one’s self for one (that he may not be torn from me); to be the object of the zeal of others; to be zealously sought after; to envy.

The same word is used in these Bible verses:

Acts 17:5 But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy <2206>, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

1 Corinthians 12:31 But covet earnestly <2206> the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.

1 Corinthians 14:1 Follow after charity, and desire <2206> spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.

1 Corinthians 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, covet <2206> to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.

2 Corinthians 11:2 For I am jealous <2206> over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Galatians 4:17 They zealously affect <2206> you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect <2206> them.

Galatians 4:18 But it is good to be zealously affected <2206> always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.

James 4:2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have <2206>, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous <2206> therefore, and repent.

The word in 1 Corinthians 13:4(c) is from the Greek word “Zay Los,” which means excitement of mind; ardor; fervor of spirit; zeal; ardor in embracing, pursuing, defending anything; zeal in behalf of, for a person or thing; the fierceness of indignation; punitive zeal; an envious and contentious rivalry; jealousy.

“Zay Los” is found in these Bible verses:

John 2:17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal <2205> of thine house hath eaten me up.

Acts 5:17 Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation <2205>,

Acts 13:45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy <2205>, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Romans 10:2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal <2205> of God, but not according to knowledge.

Romans 13:13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying <2205>.

1 Corinthians 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying <2205>, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

2 Corinthians 7:7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind <2205> toward me; so that I rejoiced the more.

2 Corinthians 12:20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings <2205>, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

Galatians 5:20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations <2205>, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

Philippians 3:6 Concerning zeal <2205>, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

Colossians 4:13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal <2205> for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

Hebrews 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation <2205>, which shall devour the adversaries.

James 3:14 But if ye have bitter envying <2205> and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

James 3:16 For where envying <2205> and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

It is a universal truth that if you are looking to figure out what a word or verse means in the Bible, you look to other words and verses in the Bible.

These verses appear to help in explicating (to make plain or clear, explain, interpret) the meaning of “envieth” in 1 Corinthians 13:4:

Genesis 30:1 ¶ And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel envied her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.

Genesis 37:11 And his brethren envied him (Joseph); but his father observed the saying.

Psalms 37:1 ¶ « A Psalm of David. » Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.

Proverbs 3:31 Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways.

Proverbs 14:30 ¶ A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the **rottenness of the bones**.

Proverbs 23:17 ¶ Let not thine heart envy sinners: but be thou in the fear of the LORD all the day long.

Proverbs 24:1 ¶ Be not thou envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them.

Matthew 27:18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

Romans 1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

Romans 13:13 Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

1 Corinthians 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

2 Corinthians 12:20 For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and that I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest there be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults:

Galatians 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

Galatians 5:26 Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

Philippians 1:15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:

1 Timothy 6:4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings,

Titus 3:3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

James 3:14-16 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish, For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

James 4:5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

1 Peter 2:1 ¶ Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings.

The prohibition is against the envying which is bad. Two prime examples in the Bible of deadly envy will be covered in part in today's sermon: The deadly envy which

Joseph's brothers had for him (Genesis 37) and the deadly envy Haman had for Mordecai (Esther Chapters 3-8). These two events are monumental and very informative; I recommend you study them.

Envy may be defined to be a spirit of dissatisfaction with, and opposition to, the prosperity and happiness of others as compared with our own. The thing that the envious person is opposed to, and dislikes, is the comparative superiority of the state of honor, or prosperity or happiness, that another may enjoy, over that which he possesses. And this spirit is especially called envy, when we dislike and are opposed to another's honor or prosperity, because, in general, it is greater than our own, or because, in particular, they have some honor or enjoyment that we have not. It is a disposition natural in men, that they love to be uppermost; and this disposition is directly crossed, when they see others above them. And it is from this spirit that men dislike and are opposed to the prosperity of others, because they think it makes those who possess it superior, in some respect, to themselves. And this disposition quickly translates into hatred for that particular person, whom they envy. Moses speaks of Joshua's envying for his sake, when Eldad and Medad were admitted to the same privilege with himself in having the spirit of prophecy given them, saying (Numbers 11:29), "Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" And Joseph's brethren, we are told (Genesis 37:11), envied him when they had heard his dream, which implied that his parents and brethren were yet to bow down before him, and that he was to have power over them.

Instead of rejoicing in the prosperity of others (which in reality is the proper spirit), the envious man will be troubled with it. It will be a grievance to his spirit to see them rise so high and come to such honors and advancement. It gives him an uncomfortable feeling to hear of their having obtained such and such advantages and honors and preferments. He is very much of the spirit of Haman, who, in view of all "the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him," still could say (Esther 5:13), "Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting in the king's gate." From such a spirit, the envious person stands ready to rejoice at anything that happens to diminish the honor and comfort of others. He is glad to see them brought down, and will even study how to lower their estate, as Haman did to humble and bring down Mordecai. And often, like Haman, he will show his uneasiness, not only by planning and scheming, but by actual endeavors of one kind or another, to bring them down; and the very first opportunity of pulling them down that offers, he will gladly embrace. And it is from this disposition, that the sight even of others' prosperity often sets the envious on talking against them and speaking evil of them, even when perhaps they do not know them. Envying them

the prominence they have obtained, they hope, by speaking evil of them, in some measure to diminish their honors, and lower them in the esteem of men. (See my sermon on the evils of the unbridled tongue). Haman's response: wipe out the entire population of the Jews.

This envy, this green-eyed monster, this rottenness in the bones, will show itself in hatred of the person. Seeing how others prosper, and what honors they attain, the envious dislike, and even hate them, on account of their honor and prosperity. They entertain and cherish an evil spirit toward them, for no other reason but that they have prospered. They are embittered against them in spirit, only because they are eminent in name or fortune. Thus Haman, it is said (Esther. 5:9), "was full of indignation against Mordecai," because he saw him "in the king's gate," and because "he stood not up, nor moved for him;" and Joseph's brethren (Genesis 37:4, 5) "hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him," because his father loved him, and when he had dreamed a dream implying their inferiority, "they hated him yet the more." And so, the envious generally resent the prosperity of others, and their coming to honor, as if in it they were guilty of some injury to themselves. Sometimes there is a settled hatred toward others upon this account, leading, as in the case of Joseph's brethren (Genesis 37:19-28), to acts of the greatest cruelty and wickedness.

A Christian spirit *disallows of the exercise and expressions of such a spirit*. He that is influenced in the course of his life and actions by Christian principles, though he may have envy as well as other corrupt feelings in his heart, yet abhors its spirit, as unbecoming in himself as a Christian, and contrary to the nature and will and spirit of God. He sees it to be a most odious and hateful spirit, and he sees its odiousness not only in others, but also and equally in himself. And therefore, whenever he perceives its emotions rising within him on any occasion, or toward any person, so far as he is influenced by a Christian spirit, he will be alarmed at it, and will fight against it, and will not allow its exercise for a moment. He will not suffer it to break forth and show itself in words or actions. He will be grieved at whatever he sees of its movements in his heart, and will crucify within him the hateful disposition, and do all in his power to go contrary to it in his outward actions. Romans 8:13: "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify (cause to die; kills it) the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

Matthew Poole says on this verse: "though a charitable person seeth others in a higher and more prosperous condition than himself, yet it doth not trouble him, but he is glad at the preferment, good, and prosperity of other men, however it fareth with himself.

Every envious man, that is displeased and angry at another's faring well, is an uncharitable man, there is no true root of love to God or to his neighbour in his heart."

Matthew Henry: "Charity suppresses envy: It envieth not; it is not grieved at the good of others; neither at their gifts nor at their good qualities, their honours nor their estates. If we love our neighbour we shall be so far from envying his welfare, or being displeased with it, that we shall share in it and rejoice at it. His bliss and sanctification will be an addition to ours, instead of impairing or lessening it. This is the proper effect of kindness and benevolence: envy is the effect of ill-will. The prosperity of those to whom we wish well can never grieve us; and the mind which is bent on doing good to all can never wish ill to any."

Romans 12:15: "Rejoice with them that do rejoice," is not a suggestion, it is a command.

John Gill: "Charity envieth not; or he that has the grace of love to God, Christ, and the saints, does not envy the temporal happiness of others, though it is what he has not, or is greater than he enjoys; as Rachel envied her sister, because she had children when she herself had none; as Joseph's brethren envied him because he had a greater share in his father's affections than they had; or as good men may be tempted to envy the prosperity of the wicked, when they themselves are in adversity; but this grace, when in exercise, will not suffer a person to do: nor will such an one envy the superior measures of grace, the more excellent spiritual gifts, or the greater degree of usefulness, and of success in any spiritual undertaking, and so of greater honour and respect, in any of the saints and servants of Christ to themselves, of which Moses and John the Baptist are remarkable instances, #Nu 11:28,29 Joh 3:27-31." Please read John 3:27-31.

A Christian spirit casts out the evil spirit of envy and disposes us to feel content with our own condition, and with the estate which God has given us among men, and to a quietness and satisfaction of spirit with regard to the allotments and distributions of stations and possessions which God, in his wise and kind providence, has made to ourselves and others. Whether our rank be as high as that of the angels, or as low as that of the beggar at the rich man's gate (Luke 16:20), we shall equally be satisfied with it, as the post in which God hath placed us, and shall equally respect ourselves, if we are endeavoring faithfully to serve him in it. Like the apostle (Philippians 4:11), we shall learn, if we do but have a Christian spirit, "in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content."

This proper Christian spirit is opposite of a spirit of envy because it is insisted upon in the precepts that Christ has given, is enforced by the history and doctrines of the gospel,

and true Christians will yield to the authority of these precepts and the good influence of this spirit of truth.

Christ commands goodwill to others, and of precepts enjoining the principles of meekness, humility, and beneficence (active goodness or kindness), all of which are opposed to a spirit of envy. In addition to these, we have many particular warnings against envy itself. The apostle exhorts at Romans 13:13, that we “walk honestly, as in the day,... not in strife and *envying*;” and again at 1 Corinthians 3:3, he blames the Corinthians as being yet carnal, because there was *envying* among them; and still again 2 Corinthians 12:20, he mentions his fears concerning them, lest he should find among them *envyings*, and that, too, coupled, as envyings too often are, with “wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults;” and again (Galatians 5:21), *envy* is ranked among the abominable works of the flesh, such as “murders, drunkenness, revellings,” etc.; and again (1 Timothy 6:4), it is condemned as implying great wickedness; and again (Titus 3:3), it is mentioned as one of the hateful sins that Christians had lived in before their conversion, but which they are now redeemed from, and therefore should confess and forsake. And in the same spirit, the apostle James (James 3:14, 16) speaks of *envy* as exceeding contrary to Christianity, and as connected with every evil work, being earthly, sensual, devilish; and he warns us against it (James 5:9), saying, “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the Judge standeth before the door;” and, the apostle Peter (1 Peter 2:1, 2) warns us against all *envies*, as connected with various other evils, and as preventing our growth in divine things.

If we consider the Christian scheme of *doctrine*, all of it, from beginning to end, strongly tends to the contrary of an envious spirit. The things it teaches as to God are exceeding contrary to it, for there we are told how far God was from begrudging us the most exceeding honor and blessedness, and how he has withheld nothing as too much to be done for us, or as too great or good to be given us. He has not begrudged us his only begotten and well-beloved Son, nor hath he begrudged us the highest honor and blessedness in and through him. Romans 8:32: “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” The doctrines of the gospel also teach us how far Christ was from begrudging us anything that he could do for or give us. He did not begrudge us a life spent in labor and suffering, or his own precious blood which he shed for us on the cross, nor will he begrudge us a throne of glory with him in the heavens, where we shall live and reign with him forever. The Christian scheme of doctrine teaches us how Christ came into the world to deliver us from the power of Satan’s envy toward us; for the devil, with miserable baseness, envied mankind the happiness that they at first had, and could not

bear to see them in their happy state in Eden, and therefore exerted himself to the utmost for their ruin, which he accomplished. And the gospel also teaches how Christ came into the world to destroy the works of the devil and deliver us from that misery into which his envy hath brought us, and to purify our natures from every trace of the same spirit, that we may be fitted for heaven.

And if; in addition to the doctrine of the gospel, we consider its *history*, we shall find that it also tends greatly to enforce those precepts that forbid envy. And particularly is this true of the history of the life of Christ, and the example he has set us. How far was he from a spirit of envy! How contented in the low and afflictive circumstances in which he voluntarily placed himself for our sakes!

Christian love disposes us to obey the precepts that forbid envy, and to the gospel motives against it; the nature of it is directly contrary to envy. For love does not grudge but rejoices at the good of those who are loved. And surely love to our neighbor does not dispose us to hate him for his prosperity or be unhappy at his good. And love to God also has a direct tendency to influence us to obey his commands. The natural, genuine, uniform fruit of love to God is obedience (John 14:15: “If ye love me, keep my commandments”), and therefore it will tend to obedience to those commands wherein he forbids envy. And so love to God will dispose us to follow his example, in that he has not begrudged us our manifold blessings, but has rejoiced in our enjoyment; and it will dispose us to imitate the example of Christ in not begrudging his life for our sakes, and to imitate the example he set us in the whole course of his life on earth.

And a spirit of Christian love disposes to the same also indirectly, by *inclining us to humility*. It is pride that is the great root and source of envy. It is because of the pride of men’s hearts that they have such a burning desire to be distinguished, and to be superior to all others in honor and prosperity, and which makes them so uneasy and dissatisfied in seeing others above them. But a spirit of love tends to mortify pride, and to work humility in the heart. Love to God tends to this, as it implies a sense of God’s infinite excellence, and therefore tends to a sense of our comparative nothingness and unworthiness. And love to men tends to a humble behavior among men, as it disposes us to acknowledge the excellencies of others, and that the honors bestowed on them are their due, and to esteem them better than ourselves, and thus more deserving of distinction than we are.

Envy is rebellion against God. We thereby ignorantly challenge his wisdom and sovereignty in giving to all what he considers to be good and proper. “Seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.” (Acts 17:25). 1 Corinthians 4:7: “For who maketh

thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” And it demonstrates a discontent in our own hearts about what we’ve been given or not given. Hebrews 13:5: “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” We are required to examine ourselves, whether we are in any degree under the influence of an envious spirit. We should search it out and eliminate it in ourselves. But it may be that in all this you may justify yourself, not giving it the name of envy, but some other name, and having various excuses for your envious spirit, by which you account yourself justified in its exercise. Don’t do it. See it for what it is and stop it.

So contrary is the spirit of envy to a Christian spirit, so evil in itself, and so injurious to others, that it should be disallowed and put away by all. Let it, then, be evident to all, that such is your spirit, by the exercise of that charity that envieth not. In the language of the apostle James (James 3:13-16), “Who is a wise man, and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter *envying* and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” The spirit of envy is the very contrary of the spirit of heaven, where all rejoice in the happiness of others; and it is the very spirit of hell itself — which is a most hateful spirit. And as an envious disposition is most hateful in itself, so it is most uncomfortable and uneasy to its possessor. As it is the disposition of the devil, and partakes of his likeness, so it is the disposition of hell, and partakes of its misery. In the strong language of Solomon (Proverbs 14:30), “A sound heart is the life of the flesh; but envy is the rottenness of the bones.” It is like a powerful eating cancer, preying on the vitals, offensive and full of corruption. And it is the most foolish kind of self-injury; for the envious make themselves trouble most needlessly, being uncomfortable only because of others’ prosperity, when that prosperity does not injure themselves, or diminish their enjoyments and blessings. But they are not willing to enjoy what they have, because others are enjoying also. Let, then, the consideration of the foolishness, the baseness, the infamy of so wicked a spirit, cause us to abhor it, and to shun its excuses, and earnestly to seek the spirit of Christian love, that excellent spirit of divine charity which will lead us always to rejoice in the welfare of others, and which will fill our own hearts with happiness. This love “is of God” (1 John 4:7); and he that dwelleth in it, “dwelleth in God, and God in him” (1 John 4:16).

I love you. Amen