**"Love Does Not Envy or Boast"**1 Corinthians 13:4b

**Good Morning Beloved,**

* How do you handle success?
  + Not only your success…. But how do you relate to the success of others.
* *The Great British Baking Show* (or Bake Off) is a different reality TV show…
  + Instead of the American reality shows which can be “cut-through”…
    - This show... has contestants helping each other…
      * Cheering each other on…
        + As the show is “warm and gentle”.
  + The internet… “it is unique for its wholesome, positive atmosphere, lack of drama, and emphasis on collaboration and good-natured competition rather than sabotage.”
* In our passage today…
  + Paul was writing to the Church in Corinth…
    - And there are two things that are out of place.
      * Two items that don’t belong…
        + Even worse that two items being added to a cake (I put salt instead of sugar)…
    - When envying or boasting is in our relationships…
      * It chokes out the beautifying work of the Holy Spirit in the Bride of Christ.

Reading of God’s Word

***13****If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.****2****And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.****3****If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

***4****Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant****5****or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;****6****it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.****7****Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

***8****Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.****9****For we know in part and we prophesy in part,****10****but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.****11****When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.****12****For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

***13****So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

**Preaching God’s Word**

1. Beware Diotrephes (3 John 1:9)
   1. Love does not brag… boast (NASB)… vaunteth not itself (KJV)[[1]](#footnote-1)
      1. In the church there were those who used their gifts… not to bless the Body of Christ… but to build up their own reputation among their peers.[[2]](#footnote-2)
         1. What does that look like?[[3]](#footnote-3)
            1. It looks like Diotrephes.
   2. Who is Diotrephes?
      1. ***9****I have written something to the church, but Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge our authority.****10****So if I come, I will bring up what he is doing, talking wicked nonsense against us. And not content with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.*
      2. Self-promoter
         1. *who likes to put himself first*
            1. How do you know if some one is called to leadership?

Matt. 20:26ff - *But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, 28 even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

* + - * 1. There is a funny thing to hear John say… “he likes to be first”… because John (or his mother) had asked for that very position.

*Matt. 20:20 - Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.”*

* + - 1. What would ever cure us of ever wanting to be first… like Diotrephes… like John?
         1. In that passage in Matthew… the antidote to boasting… to bragging… to vaunting yourself ahead of your competitors… (eh… eh… I meant neighbors)… is seen in this..

Matt. 20:22 - *Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?”*

Matt. 20:28 - *Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

* + 1. Insubordinate
       1. *does not acknowledge our authority.*
          1. The last of the Apostles… John… is deemed… irrelevant.

“A crucial part of an elder’s work is knowing how to submit to other biblically qualified, gifted, and Spirit-filled men who will, from time to time, see a matter differently. It’s proud to think this will never happen, and it’s proud to think the other elders should always submit to you.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

* + - 1. Application: What John the Apostle perfect? No.
         1. Are your leaders in the church, community, work, or family perfect? Nope.

So what should you do?

Rom. 12:10 *-* ***10****Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.*

* + - * 1. Consider writing a letter…. A hand-written letter to someone who is serving you in your community.

Not for flattery… not with falsehood… but with sincere charity.[[5]](#footnote-5)

* + 1. Slanderous
       1. *talking wicked nonsense against us.*
          1. This is the other side of the “love does not brag or boast”

Diotrepheses is both…

Upward – elevating himself… puffing himself up

Downward – demeaning others… poking at others

* + - * 1. Love is different.

Image here… Isaac is next to the well of water that his Father Abraham had dug…

And the philistines kick dirt in it (Gen. 26).

* + - * 1. Love does not “despise others, or trample on them, or treat them with contempt and scorn”[[6]](#footnote-6).

Is self-conceit (bragging) is like a tumor… love limits the size of the mass as we esteem the value of others and raise our value for them.

* + 1. Spiteful
       1. *he refuses to welcome the brothers, and also stops those who want to and puts them out of the church.*
          1. In lacking love… Diotrephes is like how the Word of God describes people who are natural… not born-again… walking in the flesh.

He is to draw from Tim Keller’s work *The Freedom of Self Forgetfulness* based on 1 Cor. 3:21-4-7.*…*

*#1* empty – Hot air…

Self-promoter

*#2* painful – infected toe is sensitive to the touch

Criticism devastates… so you must undermine the critics authority

*#3* busy - slanderous

#4 fragile – he puts down… and puts out…

* + 1. Love… acts differently…
       1. Rom. 12:13 - ***13****Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality.*
  1. What does it look like to “Beware Diotrephes”?
     1. 3 John 11 - ***11****Beloved, do not imitate evil but imitate good. Whoever does good is from God; whoever does evil has not seen God.*
        1. Or to say it another way… *love does not boast*.
  2. Transition: *love does not envy or boast*

1. Remember Jezebel (1 Kings 21; 2 Kings 9)
   1. *love does not envy*
      1. Beloved, If God does something good for one of his children… he never does it at the expense of another of his children.
         1. Matthew Henry – “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.”[[7]](#footnote-7)
            1. A family travels to the Olympics to see their daughter compete in the balance beam… her success is their joy.
            2. A musical teacher beams with contentment as their student plays the cello.
            3. A judge of *The Great British Bake Off* celebrates as the “Rum and Raisin Baked Cheesecake” garners the “Star Baker” title.[[8]](#footnote-8)
      2. This is the opposite of the “green with envy” as noted in the bible:[[9]](#footnote-9)
         1. Cain envied Abel and killed him (Gen. 4:3-8);
         2. Jacob's sons were jealous of Joseph and sold him into slavery (Gen. 37:11, 28);
         3. the high priest and his associates were filled with jealousy and jailed the apostles (Acts 5:17-18);
         4. the Jews were jealous of Paul and Barnabas and expelled them from Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:45-50).
      3. But one of the worst examples was Jezebel…
         1. Jezebel was a queen.
            1. Her husband king Ahab saw his neighbor’s field and through it would be perfect for HIS “vegetable garden” (1 Kings 21:2).

For those who have watch “The Emperor’s New Grove” how Kusko wanted to take Pacha’s land for his new summer home… that idea came from this part in the Bible.

* + - * 1. Naboth, the owner of the vineyard, says “no sale”.

The king comes home… and throws a temper-tantrum (vs. 4-5).

* + - 1. Jezebel… takes “worthless” men to lie about Naboth…. Have the owner of the vineyard sentenced to death… after he has been stoned (vs. 15)… she tells her husband to go claim his prize.
         1. Envy…[[10]](#footnote-10)

#1 – burns with dissatisfaction with what you have

Even being a king did not satisfy Ahab’s desires.

#2 – resents the prosperity and happiness of others

The small space… for a vegetable garden consumed Abah’s throughts…

It is more than coveting (“I want what you have”)… it is desire to make sure that others lose what they have…

#3 – If I can’t have it… neither can you.

Jezebel’s plotting and murder was a whole-person brutality.

Old joke about two dogs talking…

“it’s not just that dogs have to win… its that cats have to lose!”[[11]](#footnote-11)

* + - 1. When the king goes to claim the property… there is the man of God… Elijah…
         1. But Jezebel’s story does not end until 2 Kings 9.

Her story… where envy eroded her heart… ends with her outside body (which is eaten by dogs) matching her inner spirit which was mutilated by a lack of love.

* + 1. Love looks like:
       1. Praying for others to have a refreshing vacation.
       2. Celebrating another’s promotion or retirement.
       3. Interceding for gifts (1 Cor. 14:1b… same word here) so that others may be refreshed as you teach… administer… give… and serve.
       4. Being content with where God has you.[[12]](#footnote-12)
  1. Transition: How would we ever love like that?
     1. We don’t want to brag like Diotrephes…
     2. We don’t want to envy like Jezebel…
        1. But we don’t want to just avoid those pattern… we want love to be sincere… genuine… from a pure heart.
           1. The only way to get there is to rejoice with John.

1. Rejoice with John (John 3:30)
   1. Paul exercises his authority over a church with love[[13]](#footnote-13) in the same way that John the Baptist fulfilled his ministry.
      1. John the Baptist had a platform in his generation that many people would envy.
         1. He had a reputation in his day that would be easy to boast about.
            1. His father was a high ranking priest (Luke 1).
            2. His mother was righteous and blameless (Luke 1)
            3. Angels announced John’s birth in the temple of the LORD (Luke 1).
            4. His neighbors marveled at him “What will this child be? For the hand of the LORD was with him (vs. 66).
            5. As an adult, crowd flocked to him (Luke 3:7).
            6. The religious leaders wondered at him… who are you? (John 1).
   2. POINT: He had a status that would make it easy to boast…
      1. Yet this man does not give way to promoting his own reputation or name, but instead watches his own following diminish.
         1. John 3 - ***26****And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.”*
            1. Almost like the followers are saying…

The way forward is… envy.

And… let’s go…. Boast about what you’re doing.

* + - * 1. Instead… John rejoices over Jesus with love.
      1. ***27****John answered, “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.****28****You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’****29****The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete.****30****He must increase, but I must decrease.”*
  1. Beloved, the only way for us to put aside envy and boasting is to rejoice in what John knew.
     1. John 1:29 - ***29****The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*
        1. Jesus Christ is the who envied no one and gave with sincerity.
        2. Jesus Christ is the who loved without boasting.
     2. Here is how we know what love looks like… for his mind was this…
        1. *Christ Jesus,****6****who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,****7****but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.****8****And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
  2. Conclusion
     1. *The Great British Baking Show…*
        1. Pretend you’re a contestant… it’s the finals…
           1. Theme… home-made ice cream..

Your entry… Plum, Blackberry & Ginger Crumble with Honey & Ginger Ice Cream

With Three Tier Raspberry, Thyme & Roasted Rhubarb Cake

Strong contender…

* + - * 1. But you lose to…

Spiced Apple, Rhubarb & Plum Crumble with Orange & Ginger Ice Cream

Chocolate & Orange Cake with Hazelnut & Chocolate Swiss Meringue Buttercream

* + - * 1. LOVE looks like being just as happy for others as you would be for yourself.[[14]](#footnote-14)
      1. How do you get there?
    1. Beware Diotrephes… love does not boast.
    2. Remember Jezebel… love does not envy.
    3. Rejoice with John… Love says… “Jesus Christ must increase, but I must decrease.”
       1. For all those who look by faith to Christ, you are adopted by the Father and our God says to you in Christ…
          1. Luke 3 - “*You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased*.”
    4. Nowhere is this truth more clearly seen and celebrated than at the table of our LORD.

1. Vaunteth (περπερεύεται). From πέρπερος a braggart. Used of one who sounds his own praises. Cicero introduces a compound of the word in one of his letters to Atticus, describing his speech in the presence of Pompey, who had just addressed the senate on his return from the Mithridatic war. He says: “Heavens! How I showed off (ἐνεπερπερευσάμην) before my new auditor Pompey,” and describes the various rhetorical tricks which he employed.

   Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament, vol. 3* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887), 264. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *vaunteth not*—in words, even of gifts which it really possesses; an indirect rebuke of those at Corinth who used the gift of tongues for mere display.

   Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 288. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. From Kistemaker - "Love does not brag." Paul uses a verb that depicts a person as a braggart or windbag. Such a person parades his embellished rhetoric to gain recognition. His behavior is marked by egotism, subservience toward superiors, and condescension toward subordinates. A braggart exhibits pride in himself and his accomplishments. But such bragging is devoid of love to God and to one's fellow man, and is a blatant sin. Further, bragging and arrogance go hand in hand. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Anyabwile, *Finding Faithful Elders and Deacons*, 102–3. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, Vol. VI, 574. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Matthew Henry, Commentary on the Whole Bible, Vol. VI, 573. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Henry, 573. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Jo in Season #2. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Kistemaker, *1 Corinthians*, 459. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Jonathan Edwards, *Charity*, 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Philip Graham Ryken, *Loving the Way Jesus Loves, 93.*  [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. WLC 147 - Q. 147. What are the duties required in the tenth commandment? A. The duties required in the tenth commandment are, such a full contentment with our own condition, and such a charitable frame of the whole soul toward our neighbor, as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto, and further all that good which is his. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Taking the negatives first: “not jealous” recalls Paul’s criticism of their jealousy in 3:3; “not boastful” and “not arrogant” (lit. “puffed up”) recall his criticism of precisely these traits (cf. 1:29–31; 3:21; 4:6, 18–19; 5:2; 8:1b); and “does not insist on its own way” recalls the propensity of the “strong” to do just that, in contrast to Paul (cf. 10:24, 33b). On the positive side: “patient” and “kind” are virtues Paul claims (cf. 2 Cor 6:6); “rejoices in the truth” is echoed in Paul’s testimony in 2 Cor 13:8; and “bears all things … endures all things” recalls his autobiographical statement in 9:12b (“we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel”). The force of these correlations with the Corinthians on the one hand and with Paul on the other is considerable. They imply that, as an alternative social praxis, it is love that will unify a church which is divided, and that, as love’s embodiment, Paul is the model to be imitated.

    Stephen C. Barton, “1 Corinthians,” in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, ed. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 1343. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Keller in *The Freedom of Self-forgetfulness* – “Wouldn’t you like to be the skater who wins the silver, and yet is thrilled about those three triple jumps that the gold medal winner did? To love it the way you love a sunrise? Just to love the fact that it was done? For it not to matter whether it was their success or your success. Not to care if they did it or you did it. You are as happy that they did it as if you had done it yourself – because you are just so happy to see it.” [↑](#footnote-ref-14)