

SAUL'S JEALOUSY/ENVY
I Samuel 18.1-30

I want to start today with a story about envy.
I used this story three or four years ago and you groaned,
not because it wasn't a good story-it was an ugly story.
It portrayed envy well.
Envy is an ugly and mean monster.

There once was two shopkeepers who were bitter rivals.
Their shops were across the street from one another
and each kept track of how many customer the other had.

Competition was so fierce that if one got a customer,
He would look across the street, raise his fist in victory, and sneer in triumph.

God wanted to teach the shopkeepers a lesson and so sent an angel to one of them with this message,
"I will give you anything you ask for, but know that anything you ask for,
I going to give to your competitor twice as much.
If you ask for wealth-he gets twice as much,
more children-he'll have twice as many,
to be famous-he'll be more famous
to live a long life-he'll live twice as long.

So what do you want?"
The shopkeeper without batting an eye said, "I wish to be blind in one eye."

I told you it was ugly.
And speaking of the eyes, the New Testament Greek phrase for envy is to have an "evil eye,"
to look upon with evil intent.

In Latin the word is "invidia" which means to look maliciously upon.
It comes from the same root as video, "too look at or see."

You see, envy isn't just a bit of friendly or unfriendly competition,
nor seeing the looks, cloths, or the toys of another and wanting them,
nor appreciating the beauty, wisdom, or feats of another and kind of,
would like to have those for yourself.

Envy starts to sprout when we compare ourselves to others.
We're either better than or less than others,
more or less beautiful, more or less intelligent, more or less talented,
more or less strong, more or less rich, more or less this or that.

Envy is that consuming desire to have others as unsuccessful or more miserable than you.
Envy is being sad if others are successful and happy if they fail.
Envy can't stand to have that person successful, especially if they're in our profession or family.

We can't bear to hear them complimented or compliment them ourselves.
 If we do say something nice, we put an asterisk by their names or use a but this or but that.
 We love it when they get caught, get messed up, or are embarrassed.

And we complain that others do not appreciate us as they should.
 We say we're not where they are because life, circumstances, or even God has been unfair;
 mom nor dad didn't do that for me, the boss is bias, and the teacher doesn't really care.

Envy is ugly, it hurts when we see our children taking toys from other children,
 not because they want to play with them but just so the other children don't.

And we cry as read of a postal worker who shot himself and the person with "his" job promotion.

And we shake our heads as we hear of the Pom-Pom-Mom
 who's daughter didn't make the high school cheerleading team?
 She hired a hit man to take out the girl "taking" her daughter's place. That's what envy can lead to.

We're going to talk about envy today because it is a real enemy not only to relationships-
 but it can poison one's soul.

Adam and Eve were envious of God's knowledge,
 Cain was envious of God's praise of Abel's gift, Jacob was envious of Esau,
 it goes on and on throughout the Bible.

One of the greatest examples of envy's destructive power in a person's life is that of Saul.
 Remember Saul's ephatath, I Samuel 26.21c, "**I have acted like a fool and erred greatly.**"
 And he did, many times over.

"Before we take another look at his life,
 let's review some of the things we've already talked about in this series about the Great Kings.

The state of Israel was a theocracy which means God ruled,
 which He did through prophets like Samuel.
 The people wanted a king so God commissioned Samuel to anoint Saul the king.

At first Saul's job rating rockets off the charts, at least with the people.
 But Saul's integrity was compromised.
 His insecurity, impatience, and false pride turned him into a liar.

God's upset, Saul's days are numbered, and David is anointed and gets groomed for the throne.
 The shepherd boy, the one after God's own heart,
 one day stumbles into the middle of a standoff featuring
 the Philistine giant Goliath and the Israelite army.

He didn't like what he heard, thought he'd do something about it so he takes on the giant.
 David and the giant start to trash talk,
 and David throws the first punch...the first stone and TKO's the giant in the first round.

Saul asks who David even is, invites him to tea or whatever they had to drink, and then Chapter 18.1-2 tells us that,

**After David had finished talking with Saul,
Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself.
From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return to his father's house."**

Saul's son Jonathan and David become kindred spirits, bosom buddies, best friends, and Jonathan even pledges his loyal to David as king-ouch. That has to hurt.

And on top of that, verse 5, "**Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well."**

First David takes out Goliath, then Jonathan becomes his friend, and then David is successful again and again and again. Check out verses 14 and 30.

So David is the talk of the town. He has become a celebrity. The media would have picked up the story and run a number of features. David would probably have been a guest on Orpra Whifrey, Larry King Live, or any number of late night shows.

And someone surely would begin to write a book or try to make a movie of David's life. Someone wrote a song, it got published in the Bible. It's the Ballad of Saul and David and at that time it climbed quickly to the top of the charts.

It's chorus, verse 7, "**Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."**

Saul's reaction, verses 8-9,
**"Saul was angry; this refrain galled him. (he took it as a personal insult)
They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only a thousand.
...And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David."**

The Latin word for "jealous eye" is "invideoed."
So from that time on Saul invideoed David, Saul was envious of David.

And it gets worse, Saul, verse 10b-11,
**"While David was playing the harp, as he usually did.
Saul had a spear in his hand and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall."**

And it gets even worse, verse 12,
"Saul was afraid of David," so Saul sends him to the battlefield to die.
David become more successful and Saul becomes, verse 15b, "**...more afraid.**"

And it gets even worse, the chapter ends, verse 29-30,
**"Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.
The Philistine commanders continued to go out to battle, and as often as they did,
David met with more success than the rest of Saul's officers, and his name became well known."**

So as David's success and ratings rise, not far behind are Saul's fear and rage. This passage is a wonderful teaching passage about the progression of envy.

In verse 8 we read that envy spawned anger.

In verse 9 that anger spread to suspicion, a paranoia, an irrational fear of another person. Then third to fear. In review check verses, 12, 15, and 29.

And finally the emotion became so intense, murder became more than a thought, it was acted on. SAUL LOST IT!!! Five times he tries to kill David.

Verses 10-11, while David is playing his harp, an evil spirit overcomes Saul and Saul plays Pin The Spear on David.

Verses 12-30, tells us that Saul made him a captain in the army, wanting and waiting, hoping and praying for him to be killed in battle.

Then we have to fast forward to chapter 19 for the other three attempts on David's life. 19.9-10, tell us that he tried to spear David again.

In 19.11-17, he tries to kill David when he was sleeping in bed but that fails because David's wife Michal tipped David off and they pull the old statue in the bed trick.

They covered a statue with a coat and goat's hair and told the soldiers David was sick.

The soldiers tell Saul, he orders David brought to him, bed and all, to kill him himself. The soldiers do. No David!!! Rats, foiled again.

So Saul tried to kill David at Ramah.

Verses 19.18-24, David goes to Ramah to consult Samuel.

Saul sends soldiers to kill David. The Spirit of God comes on them and they ranted and raved.

If you want the job done I guess you have to do it yourself.

So Saul heads out but ends up naked, ranting and raving.

Saul is such a tragic figure, a good man who went bad, actually insane.

He was poisoned by envy, it contaminated and consumed his life.

Saul failed to kill David, thank God.

Really, it is a thank God.

Remember God had chosen David as the new king and would bring him to the throne even in all the good and bad, ups and downs, rough and tough times.

Now that brings us to the real problem, which explains why envy is a sin.

When we envy we're basically saying God made a mistake.

We're saying that the provision and protection, our gifts and giftedness isn't enough for us.

Life's unfair, we need more, we want more, we should have more and we deserve more-right?

Envy will destroy us, it's eat away at our character until it kills our character.

So what do we do?

Here is what Dr. Ray Prichard suggests;

1-ADMIT you are envious. The first step is sometimes the hardest.

If you don't come clean you'll never be clean.

2-CONFESS that you are envious.

That means that you agree that it is wrong to think wrong of what another person has.

Pray-Good Lord, deliver me. Pray for forgiveness.

Pilate even understood that because of envy Jesus died.

Matthew 27.18, **"For he knew it was out of envy that they handed Jesus over to him."**

Jesus can forgive anything-even envy.

3-PRAY for the person that you are envious of.

Dr. Prichard said he has often prayed,

"Lord, I ask you to bless this person despite how I feel about them."

He said that is a good prayer for people he struggles with,
some arrogant beyond arrogance, some basically arrogant jerks.

It's a good prayer because you're asking God to ignore how you feel and bless the person anyway.

4-This is another tough one. THANK GOD for the gifts or provisions of the other person.

That beauty or business success, wealth or winsome personality, talent or ability is God-given.

5-DO something for someone who needs some help.

That should help take the focus off of yourself and the person you are keeping your eye on.

If your focus is on helping someone you won't have the time to compare yourself with them.

Some of you might think others are immune to this temptation-especially pastors.

Pastors can be notorious for being envious.

In the late 1800's FB Meyer, G. Campbell Morgan,
and Charles Haddon Spurgeon pastored large churches in London.

Morgan and Spurgeon for the most part had a larger attendance than Meyer did.
Meyer found himself troubled by envy.

But he said when he began to pray for their continued success God answered his prayer.
Their church were so full they began to overflow and that overflow filled Meyer's church.

Oh what wonders to perform. God is awesome.

So let's just pray God gives us, uses us, and does with us what He wishes.

Let's stand and sing the prayer, "Have Thine Own Way."