

TODAY’S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor / Opening Prayer by: David Smith
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#611 Heavenly Sunlight
#2 We Praise Thee, O God

Scripture Reading by: Joseph Girard
#509 I Will Sing the Wondrous Story

Communion Devotional by: Bobby Rader
Lord’s Supper and Contribution

#650 Send the Light
Sermon: by Daniel Balch “Be Different”
Romans 12:2

#909 There’s a Fountain Free
#523 I Know the Lord Will Find a Way
Closing Prayer by: Wayne Noonkester

Small Groups

Our Small Groups will meet today.
Ken Coleman’s group will meet at the building at
5:00 p.m.. If you have signed up and not been
contacted, get with Bryant or one of the Elders.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

May 7, 2023

“Stand Firm in...Liberty”

Galatians 5:1

Avoid Envy

As we continue considering everyday problems we struggle with in this space, let’s think together about envy. A person can be a good, faithful Christian by all outward appearances—they can attend church services on a regular basis, they can live a morally upright life—and yet harbor envy in their hearts and stand condemned. And envy is common; we have all probably had some experience with the green-eyed monster from time to time. But I have yet to hear anyone publicly confess it.

What is envy? It is a “feeling of resentful longing aroused by someone else’s possessions, qualities, or luck.” Often in Scripture it is associated with malice or spite; it is that discomfort we get over another’s good fortune. We wrote about discontent earlier in this series, and envy is certainly a form of discontent. But it is more specific than that: envy is not general dissatisfaction, but specifically desires what someone else has, often to the extent of wishing ill on its object. As an example, *when Rachel saw that she bore Jacob no children, she envied her sister. She said to Jacob, “Give me children, or I shall die!”* (**Gen 30:1**). It was not so much discontent at her lack of children: she envied her sister; she wanted what she had instead of her.

When we explore the nature of envy, then, we begin to see how dangerous it is. It is insidious, so much so that the righteous can envy evildoers. *Let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the Lord all the day.* (**Prov 23:17**, and there are 2 more warnings in **v. 24**). It is so deceptive, in fact, that it can be the motive of good...provided that good could result in the bad of the one envied: Paul talks about those who *proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment* (**Phil 1:17**). It is not confined to any one segment of society: we have seen warnings that God’s people can be envious, while Paul classifies it with the life before Christ (**Tit 3:3**). Ultimately, it renders its victims miserable. Remember: envy is discomfort at another’s good fortune. The elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son was envious (**Lk 15:30**). Would you consider him happy? Absolutely not! He forgot what he had because of envy of his brother

Now we might be tempted to write this off as something minor: sure, envy is a character flaw, and it might have some negative consequences for us. But it’s not a “big sin.” But scripture repeatedly classes it among the worst sorts of sins. *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, every, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God* (**Gal 5:19-21**). Other passages make similar associations. That gives us a good idea of God’s estimation of envy: we wouldn’t dream of being guilty of some of those vices! But we are guilty of envy, and it is just as despicable and destructive as any of those other sins enumerated

We get a clear idea of that when we see some consequences of envy. Because of envy, Cain killed Abel. *We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil and his brother’s righteous* (**1 Jn 3:12**). It provoked Joseph’s brothers to sell him into slavery (**Gen 37:11**). It caused Saul to hunt David like an animal (**1 Sam 18:8ff**). It was even behind Jesus’ crucifixion: *Pilate knew it was out of envy that they had delivered him up* (**Matt 27:18**).

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Kelly McCain is in the VA Hospital in Egypt, TX.

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Deacons, Minister meet Monday, May 8th at 6:30 p.m.

We will have a meal this Wednesday night at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

Primetimers will be meeting at Hartz Chicken Buffet on Tuesday, May 9th at 6:00 p.m. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

Continued Prayers

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stiflemire, Donna Wilson, Bryan Senegal, Cynthia Deblanc, Patricia Prater, Richard Prater, Edna Semien, Wilson Semien, Gloria Moore, Betty Spencer, Willie Spencer, James Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen

Shut Ins

(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique, Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

But in the end, those consequences turn back on those who are envious. Due to envy, Haman built gallows for Mordecai; ultimately, he was hanged on them (**Esther 7:9-10**). Daniel's opponents envied his position in the kingdom; they were consumed by the lions instead (**Dan 6**). And even if we do not suffer the consequences in this life, we will reap what we sow hereafter: *we will not inherit the kingdom of God*.

Given both how commonplace it is and how dangerous, how do we overcome? First and foremost, through love. Envy is born in hatred, as we have seen. But *love does not envy* (**1 Cor 13:4**). Have you ever envied someone you really, truly loved? Does a mother ever resent the good fortunes of her child? If you want to overcome envy, fill your heart with love.

We also need to walk in the Spirit. Envy is one of the works of the flesh, as we saw earlier (**Gal 5:19**). *But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh* (**Gal 5:16**). If our lives are guided by the Spirit we will overcome envy: he influences our lives through the Word, and he dwells within us as Christians. It is no coincidence that love is listed as the first fruit he produces in that chapter!

Within the church, we need to remember that we are members of the same body (**1 Cor 12**). Unfortunately, some of the ugliest examples of envy occur in the church. Members can become envious of each other over someone being justly praised or given a responsibility. Preachers can be envious of another's success in evangelism or speaking ability or service in a larger congregation. Congregations can even become envious of each other, feeling compelled to be in competition with each other. This ought not to be! That is the point Paul makes with the image of the body: my left arm doesn't envy my right because it is stronger; my hands don't envy my feet because they can run. There must be no envy in the body of Christ.

We must crucify ourselves. Envy is born of pride and selfishness; we consider every blessing to another a curse for ourselves, so we react to those advantages they have. That means self-denial is the antidote to envy. As Paul wrote to the church in Philippi, *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others*. (**Phil 2:3-4**)

Finally, we need to emulate Jesus. That's the very next thing Paul says in that same place: *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross* (**Phil 2:5-8**). No envious thought ever lived in Jesus' heart. If we would be his followers, we will overcome envy. May God help us to do just that.

Bryant Perkins

"Stand Firm in...Liberty"

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Office Phone Number (936) 336-2213; Fax (936) 334-8280;

Minister's (Bryant Perkins) Cell Phone Number (903) 407-5737

Website: libertycofc.org Facebook page: Liberty Church of Christ