

Empire Church of the Brethren

## Sunday Service Sermons

23 July 2023

Envy

“A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones”. *Proverbs 14:30*

Contentment is such a blessing.

The Apostle Paul learned to be content in all situations, plenty or want, free or in prison.

Have you gotten to that point in your spiritual maturity?

Not an easy place at which to arrive.

It takes being in prison, or in want or without funds to get to where Paul was.

What we are thinking about today was addressed in the ten warnings.

Do not covet anything others might have.

The second part of that is to be content with what you have.

The Bible even talks of being content with the physical characteristics of your mate.

Let your wife’s breasts satisfy you.

Be content and satisfied with the mate with whom you chose to live your life.

The Bible covers it all, one place or another.

Envy and jealousy are identical twins.

They walk hand in hand through our lives.

Like the sins of pride and anger, envy is an all-too-common sin.

Few of us escape its clutches.

It creeps into our relationships and destroys our confidence in ourselves and in others.

Some people claim that it is not a problem for them.

They might even say, “I don’t have a jealous bone in my body.”

There are many examples of envy and jealousy in the Bible.

King Saul was jealous of David’s growing popularity.

*First Samuel 18:28-29* states, “When Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David, and that all Israel loved him, Saul was still more afraid of David.”

Joseph felt the jealousy of his brothers.

“And his brothers were jealous of him.”

Jesus was also a victim of jealousy.

“Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews. asked Pilate, knowing it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him.”

Envy is the least understandable of the seven deadly sins.

Envy has no rewards!

It does not make one’s position or status more secure.

Jealousy destroys relationships without ensuring that one’s status can be enhanced.

It is never gratified and does not gain a profit.

Envy grows out of fear

Jealousy fears that someone else’s success will be the beginning of one’s own demise.

Mistrust and suspicion are the beginning of an evil attitude.

Such fear invades marriage, family, the marketplace, school, professions, and the church.

Christianity’s history is littered with the ugliness of coveting.

Church history reveals persecution and death by those who felt their status was threatened.

Envy creates a grudging spirit.

Doubt gives way to bitterness.

A person who has a happy marriage, successful employment, and intelligent children may be the

target of jealousy.

A sister may hate a brother because he does well in school.

An employee may dislike another employee who gets a promotion.

A church member may resent another Christian's being selected for the office of deacon.

And in all these cases, not one person profits by letting such a spirit enter his or her life.

Envy needs no justification.

This point is seen continually in the Scripture.

David did not pursue the throne of King Saul, yet Saul let envy grow to the point where it blinded his judgment and his relationship with God.

David was willing to be a loyal and faithful servant.

Even when David had the chance to kill Saul, he did not.

If David had killed Saul, most would have called it self-defense.

There was no justification for Saul's jealous rage.

Jesus would have willingly spread the Christian message through the Pharisees.

Their religious knowledge could have been as useful as the apostle Paul's was to him.

Yet their jealousy kept them from becoming the tools of God.

Eventually the ugly envy in the hearts of the religious leaders led them to contrive false charges against Jesus and deliver him to Pilate.

Yet Jesus loved the Jewish leaders and would have rejoiced in their salvation.

He meant no harm.

Their jealousy was unjustified.

Therefore, let us remember that jealousy is seldom a proper response.

Coveting destroys spiritual health.

It attracts its opponent with vengeance.

Envy takes away the joy of living.

King Saul became a madman.

Finally, with his son dead and his enemies surrounding him, Saul fell on his own sword.

The joy of life had long since departed.

Envy isolates one from other people.

It sows the disposition that causes people to see life in a begrudging manner.

The book of Esther tells the story of jealousy..

It is the history of a man named Haman, whose jealousy of the Jews centered on the Jewish leader Mordecai.

Haman became obsessed with hatred and his hatred led to deceit and a desire to enhance his own status with the king.

By the strange twist of God's hand on history, Haman was hanged on the very gallows he built for Mordecai.

Haman was trapped by his own envy.

Happiness and contentment are two qualities all of us seek in life.

Yet our Scripture text, *Proverbs 14:30*, tells us that the opposite of such peace is envy.

Since envy and jealousy constantly stalk humanity, we must constantly guard our souls against their destructive power.

They do not enhance our status and often cause us to lose more than we gain.

Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, is the way to peace, and he alone is capable of putting the mind at peace.

If jealousy is one of your major sins, you need to turn to Jesus for help.

As *Proverbs* says, "A heart at peace gives life to the body."

So give your heart to Jesus and have more life than you ever expected to have in this life.