

THE TWIN SINS OF
ENVY & JEALOUSY
Message 4
Scripture: James 3:13-18

INTRO: Let me begin by quoting once more from the tract I have mentioned a number of times. The writer says, "I'm going to confront this evening, by God's grace, one of the most wicked spirits that I've seen working in churches. It seems you can never identify him. It seems whenever you think you have him, he somehow is gone. All we see is tracks. Often we could conclude that he is not there, but we see tracks. I think you would agree with me that if you see tracks of this spirit he must be somewhere. This spirit that is roaming in the churches today has damaged many people and many churches. No one wants to deal with him. That's the burden on my heart this evening. This spirit leaves tracks. It hides, it escapes identity, and when you think he's there, somehow he moves and he's gone or he changes into a different look. I have never heard a message preached on this subject."

Well, I have defined envy and jealousy as, *"To envy is to see someone who has or has the advantage of getting something or someone one does not wish that person to have and which causes one to have ill feelings towards that person or it aggravates still further ill feelings that were already there prior to this. Jealousy in a bad sense is to want something for oneself which another has or has the advantage of getting, causing one to have ill feelings towards that person."*

We have likened these two sins to two foxes in a fox hunt. You hardly ever get to see the fox, but you can find his tracks. So, consider these tracks, and I'm not sure I got them all, but listen to these; anger, a fallen countenance, confusion, misery of the wrongdoer, a broken relationship, unreasonable, lying, acting innocent, and last, an ever tormented conscience.

This morning I want to just give some brief examples, both of those who were not envious or jealous and those who were. Then we want to look at what James has to say about this, and then we will close this rather unpleasant subject, with the prayer that we might be delivered from these sins.

C. Moses

Let us consider first, Moses. When Israel wandered in the wilderness, there came a point when they were tired of

manna. "Manna, manna, manna," was their complaint. "Who will give us meat for once? We remember the fish and the cucumbers and garlic and all those wonderful foods we had in Egypt. And now, yes, more manna. We are sick of manna" (Num. 11:5-6). And Moses got tired of their complaining and he said to God, "Why have you afflicted me like this? Why have You laid such a huge burden on me? Did I bring all these people into existence? Do I have to carry them like a guardian carries a nursing child. And now they weep all over me and say, 'Give us meat.' This burden is too heavy for me. I can't do it any more. If you treat me like this, well, please just kill me and get it over with" (Num. 11:11-15).

And God told Moses what to do, and He said, "Tell the people, you will eat meat. Not one day. Not two days. Not five days. Not ten days. Not twenty days, but a whole month until it comes out of your nostrils" (Num. 11:19-20).

Well, God had told Moses to gather 70 of the elders before the tabernacle, because Moses said the burden was too great for him. And when Moses had gathered them, God placed His Spirit on them as well. So look at Numbers 11:25-26 (read). Now all of a sudden we have 71 prophets! And then there were two, on whom the Spirit rested and they prophesied. Now consider what happened (read 27-28).

You see, what happened was that This young man and Joshua were jealous about that for Moses' sake. And Joshua said, "Moses, my lord, forbid them!" Now if ever Moses had opportunity to be jealous, it was here. Pastor Boehlig recently preached about this word meekness. Look at Numbers 12:3 (read, KJV, meek). Meekness is requires that pride be absent. And the presence of pride will cause us to envy or be jealous. And I want you to notice how Moses responded to this request to forbid these prophets to prophecy (read 11:29).

And maybe this morning you say, "Well, I would find it very difficult to respond like that." And let me say that most of us would. We need to meet circumstance after circumstance before we learn meekness. Most of us only learn meekness the hard way, and some of us never learn. But it can be learned in the school of hard knocks.

D. David

There is another OT example of envy we want to look at briefly. It is the story of David and Saul. Though Saul was a big man in body, he started humbly. Israel demanded a king from God. The timing was premature, but they insisted. And God gave them Saul. And then, after being king for some time, Saul faced the Philistines and the giant, Goliath. We are all familiar with this account, one of the greatest stories of the OT. You will remember that the young man David, was sent to see how his brothers were doing at the war front.

Now jealousy would not only find its way into the heart of Saul by this young man, but by his older brother as well. When David arrived, Israel was paralyzed with fear. The giant had just come down into the valley once more like he had already done for many days, and he called for someone from the Israeli army to fight with. And the challenge is that whoever would win between the two, their nation would take the other nation as slaves. Look at 1 Samuel 17 (read 25-28). If you look carefully, you will recognize several of the tracks of jealousy in the response of David's older brother.

Well, for the sake of time I cannot tell you the whole account. David slew Goliath. And David became an army general right there. Now I want you to see what happened when they arrived back home (read 18:5-9). Again, if you know how envy and jealousy work, you can recognize some tracks here. And if you will read this story, you will see tracks all over the place. And in it all, never does Saul truly repent.

Now let me tell you what Saul was jealous about. It was not mainly for himself that he was jealous. It was for Jonathan, his son. He wanted his son to be king after him, but from this he recognized that as long as David lived, Jonathan would never be king. So look at 1 Samuel 20:30-31 (read. 1 Sam. 24:20 further bears this out).

Well, as much as Saul tried, he never could kill David. And here is a word of wisdom: let us deal with envy or jealousy before it's venom causes our demise.

F. Jesus

Let me take you to an example in the NT. It is the account of Jesus. First, when Herod, the secular leader heard that a king had been born, he set about to remove this threat. You will see the footprints of envy all over his actions. But I am thinking more of the religious leaders. Nothing much happened until Jesus began His ministry. And in His ministry, over a period of time, things began to escalate. First, the various groups tried to trap Him in His words, but they were no match for Him.

To top that all off, He had the audacity to point out to the religious leaders who they were. Now if we did not know that Jesus lived a perfect life, we would be tempted to say, "Well, He could have done that a little differently." But there are some things that cannot be done in such a way as to not cause offense. And there are times when it is simply necessary to point things out without soft gloves. Let us go to one such example in Matthew 23 (read 1-3).

What is He saying? He is saying that the people could follow many of the teachings of the Scribes and Pharisees. But, He said, you cannot live like they live. Their lives are not in line with what they teach. In real brief, He is saying that they are hypocrites. And then He said, "Let me show you how they operate in hypocrisy" (read 4-7). And if you read on from here, you will read one of the most scathing accounts given anywhere in Scripture, and that, by none less than the Lord Jesus Christ. So look briefly at verses 27-33 (read).

It is very little later that we read these words in Matthew 26:3-5 (read). Now you see, when you take care of somebody out of envy or jealousy, you have to do it nicely; I mean, it must not be evident that you did it out of envy or jealousy.

Now Matthew records an event here that actually took place earlier. But Matthew gives it here so that we will see what is significant about that earlier event. Earlier, when Jesus was at Mary and Martha's house, which was about five days earlier, a woman came with an alabaster flask and poured very expensive oil on His head to anoint Him. John's Gospel tells us that it was Judas that got very agitated at this and he complained because this oil could have fed many poor people. Now John 12:6 says, "This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a

thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it." But Jesus commended this woman, and Luke records one very interesting piece of information. He writes, "Then Satan entered into Judas." And it is after this that he agreed to betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Here is the warning. When we operate out of envy, the devil will find people to help us.

Well, Judas betrayed Jesus and Jesus was apprehended. And then He was taken to the judgment. Now putting several accounts together, here is how some of it reads, "And now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought for false witness against Jesus, to put him to death; but found none: for though many bare false witness against him, but yet their witness agreed not together. And at the last there came two false witnesses, and bare also witness against him, saying, We heard this fellow say, I am able to destroy the temple of God, that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. But neither so did their witness agree together." You talk about envy being unreasonable, and blind!

Well, go with me yet to Matthew 27 (read 11-18). Now if you take time to comb through that whole account, you will see tracks of this fox of envy everywhere. And the end result of the envy of the religious leaders is that a Man who did no sin died while the religious leaders lived on! It is the same end as that of Abel.

E. James

Now there are more examples in Scripture, but I want close this subject by going to one more Scripture, James chapter 3 (read 13-18). Let me approach this passage by making a few observations verse by verse. We have in this passage two kinds of wisdom. There is the wisdom that is pure from any defilement, and then the wisdom that operates from envy and self seeking. The pure wisdom is the exact opposite of envy. First is to be wise and understanding. How does this wisdom manifest itself in a person's life? Well, look at verse 13 (read). Who is the truly wise and understanding person? You will recognize him first by his good conduct. Think of Abel. Think of David. Think of Jesus. That is what you have in every case. And his actions will be done in meekness of wisdom. You will find that in every case as well.

But in verse 14, we now have the exact opposite (read). Here is bitter envy. It is a deep envy. And along with bitter envy comes something else, and it is here translated as *self seeking*. There is nothing much we fallen humans are better at than self seeking, and where will it reveal itself more cunningly than in envy and jealousy? The word in the original is *erethia*. The idea here is strife or contention. The Online Bible speaks of it as electioneering or intrigue for office. A good modern word would be politicking. It is seeking to put yourself forward. Now let me say this, that this can be done in a most Christian looking manner. But underneath if you will listen carefully, you will hear the hiss of the serpent. It seeks any way to get its own way. That is why the NKJV says it is, 'self-seeking'.

Now where envy is, there will be self-seeking or politicking. Oh, it is sneaky; and let me remind us that unless we allow the Lord to sanctify our own hearts, we will not even recognize this wicked monster within. And let me say as well, this hideous sin hates the cross! It will take any severe beating if it will only be allowed to live. Do you see the contrast between this verse and the one before it? Wise and understanding. Good conduct. Meekness of wisdom. And then bitter envying and self seeking! But the verse is not through. It says, "If you have these in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth!" Here are tracks!

Now look at how these kinds of operations are described, "This wisdom..." that is the kind that operates out of envy and self seeking, "...does not come from above..." So, where then does it come from? Well, the writer will spell that out for us too. It is earthly. It comes from below. It is such as we find in politics. Have you ever observed the wisdom of politicians? One time when it was very cold someone said it was so cold that even politicians had their hands in their own pockets. I talked to a man who spent a good number of years in politics. And he said, "I got so tired of always having to put myself forward." It is earthly.

Then it is sensual. Now it may surprise you that the word here would best be rendered literally, *soulish*. It may also surprise you to see that this is the word used in 1 Corinthians 2:14 (read). This natural man, this man that is described as soulish is none but the unsaved man, the

unregenerate man, a man who looks out for his own interests! The wisdom generated by envy and jealousy, though it is experienced by Christians, will make one behave like the unsaved!

And last, and certainly not least, this wisdom is demonic! Behind it all is a demonic host. By now we might well say, "Stop! James! You are too hard on us!" Ah, but the wisdom generated by envy and jealousy and self seeking is demonic. Yes, that is the source of it. It is for such reasons Jesus could say to Peter, "Get behind me Satan!" Oh, I cannot tell you how many times I have bemoaned my own wicked heart.

And now we might say to James, "James, how can you speak so horribly of our hearts?" And he answers, "For where envy and self seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there!" So some trouble springs up in the church. And people will say, "What happened?" And the answer is, "Well so and so said this and that but so and so said that and this. And we really can't nail it down to anything for certain." You see, confusion is there. Here is a track that says the fox of envy or jealousy has been around. Confusion is that track. But the fox? Well, he is nowhere to be found.

But confusion is not the only thing. We have already seen that lying and cover up is there as well. There will be miss-leading language. Every thing that helps keep others from the truth, that will be there. "Cain, where is Able?" "How should I know, am I my brother's keeper?" No matter how evil it is, if it helps cover the truth, it will be used.

But oh, how different is that wisdom that is not earthly, that is not sensual, and that is not demonic; that wisdom that comes from above. Look at it in verses 17-18 (read). This wisdom is first pure! The word here is *hagnos*. It comes from the word *holy*. It is used of godly virgin in 2 Corinthians 11:2. The Online Bible says it is pure from every fault, immaculate and clean. The first affect of the wisdom that is from above is to make our hearts pure and clean from pretending.

Years ago when computers first began to come out with a program that you could draw with, it still had problems. Even the drawing was primitive but it could be done. But

then when you went to print what you had drawn, what you had on the screen is not exactly what appeared on the page. The program was not purified. And then, at last, came this advertisement, "What you see is what you get." The program now was pure. How do you like people, with whom, what you see is not what you get? You made an agreement, but the person was not pure. It looked OK, but you didn't get what you agreed to. The wisdom that is from above is first pure.

Then, it is peaceable. Now we must stop a moment here. It is easy to get the wrong impression from what is written here. We can get the idea that a Christian is passive and docile. He does not take strong stands on anything. And here we are told that the wisdom that is from above is peaceable. Now verse 18 says, "Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

Now there is a huge difference between being 'peace keepers' and 'peace makers'. You can learn this from the United Nations peace KEEPING force. They have a peace keeping force, but no peace making force. A peace keeper tries to smooth over things. He tries to make problems go away without dealing with them. He tries not to rock the boat. Much sooner give in on truth a little, or fudge the lines of truth a little than have problems.

But a peace maker is one who deals with the issues. He realizes that unless you get to the bottom of a matter and deal with it, you are just playing games. A peace maker does not play games. When you see this word, 'peaceable' and you put it alongside Matthew 23, one would say Jesus was not peaceable. But, what Jesus realized was that if the Scribes and Pharisees did not deal with their wicked hearts, there would never be true peace. A peace maker must face the truth and be willing to stand for truth. A peace maker cannot side step truth. But on the other hand, a peace maker knows which issues must be stood for and which are now worthy. And a peace maker is pure and peaceable on the real issues because he does not have bitter envy and self seeking in his heart. So, we must not get the wrong picture here.

You see, a real peace maker does not operate out of envy and self seeking. There is no hidden agenda. He is transparent. So in all matters relating to truth, he is

pure, and peaceable. And third in this text, he is gentle. One day Jesus entered a synagogue on the Sabbath. And there was a man with a withered hand. And the religionists watched to see if Jesus would heal the man. They were already looking for things to accuse Him with. Envy was already at work. And Jesus said to the man, "Stand forth." And then Jesus said, "Is it lawful to good on the Sabbaths or to do evil? Is it lawful to save life or to kill?" So look at Mark 3 (read 3-6).

Was Jesus peaceable? Was He gentle? Now look at Mark 10 (read 17-21). Was Jesus peaceable? Was He gentle? The heart that is not filled with the wisdom that is of the earth, or sensual or demonic; but is filled with wisdom from above knows how to respond because this wisdom is pure and peaceable and gentle.

Then fourth, this wisdom that if from above, which is the exact opposite of that wisdom that comes out of envy and self seeking is willing to yield. I learned one of the greatest lessons I ever learned on this from J. Edwin Orr. I heard him speak one time. He has since passed away. This was some 25 years ago and he was by then an old man. He was probably the most knowledgeable man on revivals in the Church alive on earth at that time. And when he was challenged as to whether he knew what he was talking about on a certain issue he said, "Oh, could I be wrong. Do you have some information I might not have seen yet?" Willing to yield. That is a response from one in whose spirit there is no guile.

Fifth, this wisdom that is so different from that which is driven by envy and self seeking is full of mercy. And since this person is not driven by envy and self seeking, it can also discern when mercy is not needed. Parents need this kind of wisdom. Some children are so crafty that they can draw mercy out of their parents when they should in fact get a spanking. Oh for real wisdom. But this wisdom is merciful when mercy is called for. It is so, because there is no envy or self seeking motivating it.

And sixth, this wisdom is also full of good fruits. It produces good things. You see, that wisdom that is driven from envy and strife is not pure. It is tainted. You can never know for certain where things are with that person. It is not peaceable. It wants to gender strife. It is not gentle, though it may look like it. It can rejoice at

another's demise. It is not willing to yield. The last thing it is willing to, is to yield. It is not filled with good fruits. It brings confusion and every evil work.

Then seventh, it is without partiality. It cannot be partial. It is pure. It goes by facts, not by feelings. It does not have its own agenda, a hidden agenda.

And last, it is without hypocrisy. A person who bears envy and self seeking or jealousy, cannot help but be a hypocrite. This word, hypocrisy, came about in a very innocent way. According to Vine's it basically meant a reply or to give an answer. Nothing wrong in that. But then play acting was developed and the actors on stage, with masks on would dialogue on stage and from there it developed into pretense or hypocrisy; acting like someone else than who you really are.

You see, a hypocrite is one who has a mask on. He is play acting. He is not real. What you see is not what you get. Such a person can even appear to be your friend, but given opportunity he will take you out. Hypocrisy, what a horrible sin! Fifteen times in Matthew, Mark and Luke this word is used; and all 15 times by Jesus. You will remember in a passage earlier, Matthew 23, Jesus told the Scribes and Pharisees that they were hypocrites.

But the word in our text is negated. A person who is not driven by envy or jealousy and self seeking, but is driven by the wisdom that comes from above is without hypocrisy. Pay very careful attention to this sin, and I think most of us will find it more than we wish to in our lives. Oh, to be pure, and peaceable; gentle; willing to yield; full of mercy; full of good fruits; without partiality and without hypocrisy.

CONCL: Well, that brings to a conclusion this topic. It is very important that we recognize the two foxes of envy and jealousy, and that we come before when we recognize them in our own lives and confess them to Him and then set about to win the victory over them by faith. God can deliver us, but for some of us especially it will be a lengthy battle. Meekness and humility are not natural traits. They are learned in the school of hard knocks.

Some of the tracks of envy and jealousy we noted were; anger, a fallen countenance, confusion, misery of the wrongdoer, a broken

relationship, unreasonable, lying, acting innocent (there is hypocrisy), and last, an ever tormented conscience.

And if we have harmed a relationship by envy or jealousy, it is necessary to go and confess and repent and make things right. For the self life, and for pride, this is one of the most painful surgeries that the soul can experience. But afterwards it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

When envy and jealousy lose their hold on our lives, there will come good conduct; works done in meekness of wisdom; purity of character; peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, mercy, good fruits, no partiality and no hypocrisy.

And may it be our prayer to surrender to God again and again until meekness becomes our way of life.