



See service sheet online at www.knbc.org

Welcome

Opening Scripture Psalm 147:1,3,4

Opening Hymn: At the Name of Jesus (MP 41)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r4d4UXSJXig>

Reading: Isaiah 43:1-13 (page 728)

Prayer: Adoration and Praise

Main reading: Psalm 73, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Sermon: Love does not envy

Hymn: More about Jesus would I know (MP889)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X9FhQICSJX4>

Closing Prayer and Benediction

Close -----

Listen to today's sermon by clicking on the link at www.knbc.org.

The audio file is [20_11_15.mp3](#)

Welcome, pray

You are at a morning meeting, you talk to the visiting speaker after the service and he asks how it is going. So you explain something of what you do, the issues you face, how it is ebbing and flowing, the highlights and the more often disappointments. Then he says that there is someone in their church doing the same thing and it is going really well, and he reels off examples of progress and people coming to saving faith. etc.

✚ How do you feel? Of course you say how delighted you are to hear it - but how do you feel?

Here - in essence - is this morning's message.

As we continue in our series looking at 'love' we come to the text "**Love - does not envy**" x2 It's the first negative love is not, love does not.

The question is "Do you seek the best for yourself - or the best for others? The challenge of this verse is "Will I now seek the best for others?"

Three sections 1st What is **envy**? 2nd Avoiding the snares of **envy**, 3rd How not to cause others to be **envious**

What is 'envy'

What do we mean by envy let us answer that by looking at the word behind the English translation "envy"

The word is ζήλος *zelos* (dzay'-los) Hence the word Zeal or Zealous and hence the word Jealous.

But Zeal can and should be good, even jealousy can be good. So how is it used in the Bible.

First the OT – As the OT was written in Hebrew and Aramaic you won't find the Greek word there. But the idea of being zealous is. As a human emotion it occurs only in the latter parts of the OT as it is alien to the underlying Hebrew. It is seen not in mood, but in specific action.

The most consistent use is in Proverbs, where it means "to strive after," It has a derogatory sense in Pr 27:4; "**Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?**" One of man's strongest passions

Marital jealousy is the reference in Pr 6:34 "**for jealousy arouses a husband's fury, and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge.**" Pr 6:34

It is particularly seen in zeal for God, you will you will recognise Ps 69:9

“for zeal for your house consumes me, and maybe also Ps 119:139 where the psalmist declares “My zeal wears me out, for my enemies ignore your words.” You are probably thinking that God described himself as ‘Jealous’. Yes and in the LXX, the Greek OT the word Zelos or Zelotaes is used as in Ex 20:5 **You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God,** θεος ζηλωτης

And again in Ex 34:14 **Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.** θεος ζηλωτον θεος ζηλωτης

This jealous zeal is not a mood - but belongs to God’s very essence. It turns against Israel in case of disobedience De 32:19 but may also work in her favour. Eze 39:25. Often in the Greek OT the word Zelos denotes the intensity of God’s action, whether this means good - or ill - for those concerned. It is linked with anger De 29:20, with fire Zep 1:18, and with His compassion Isa 63:15.

What of the NT?

A first meaning is that of zeal for God. The disciple Simon is called a ‘zealotes’ in Lu 6:15 Ac 1:13; denoting membership in the Zealot party, This zeal may be in hostility to Christian preaching for example in Thessalonica. **the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob** Ac 17:5. Paul had been one of these zealous Jews. Ga 1:14

Zeloo is used later to show Paul’s positive attitude to the Corinthians **I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy.** 2Co 11:2 while others were zealous against then “**Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may be zealous for them.**” Ga 4:17

✚ It is good to be zealous – As long as it is for the right thing.

If you are young make the most of it, direct your zeal wisely. don’t be an impetuous fool (‘Impetuous’ = from Peter = quick to put his foot in in)

■ Last week there was an article saying that it is at the age of 54 (for men) that the desire to initiate new things and general zest to achieve tails off

Is zeal abating says the hymn writer. Remember what Paul said: “**Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord.**” (Ro 12:9-11

This is striving for what is good - all positive. But this word is used in Jas 4:2 in the opposite the sense of being envious or a passionate striving after something you shouldn’t have. “**You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, Zeloo lit. ‘you burn with zeal’ but you cannot have what you want.**”

Jas 4:2 And so we come to our passage in 1 Co 13:4

✚ So Zeal can and should be good, even jealousy can be good, - but envy not so. The translators chose this word to avoid ambiguity.

Envy is, if I can say ‘evil zeal’, so we are told ‘do not envy’ love **does not** What is the opposite of love? – ‘Unloving’ OK Yes maybe selfish?

✚ Love wants what is best for the other person - to be unloving is essentially selfish - That is, it doesn’t want to give – it wants to keep.

There is a clue in the succeeding phrase **Love does not boast, love is not proud** “I am someone” is the root of pride, which leads to...

“I deserve something” the root of boasting – and the result is - envy.

Dig with me, if you will, into the roots of envy.....

God is the ‘**I am**’, it is only in him that we are someone.

Apart from Him we are nothing - and so we can do nothing.

Isn’t this seen so clearly in the sin of Adam and Eve. The moment they sinned that life connection with God was severed, a drastic alienation took place. In their sin they had forfeited the right to anything.

Without God they were nothing. – And so foolishly they believed the devil’s lie - who had promised that they could be someone without God. No.

It is only with God, in God - united to him now through Christ and receivers of His life giving Spirit that we are anything. Only **In him do we live and move and have our being.**

There is nothing in me to boast about. Paul quotes from Ps 34:2 **Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."** 1Co 1:31, 2Co 10:17

Quoted in both letters, Paul had to say that twice to the church at Corinth. They were vying with each other in spiritual gifts. They were envying each other and proud. Tongue speaking tended to puff them up - it did then - and it does today in many of those who attempt it.

God has given you natural gifts, & supernatural gifts, how are you handling them? Have they made you puffed up? Do you pat yourself on the back?

Paul has to say to them **eagerly desire the greater gifts. eagerly desire** There’s that word again Zeloo 1 Co 12:31 that is the gifts that build people up Paul says:

And now I will show you the most excellent way. It is the way of LOVE Because love is not about me but about the other person, it always build people up and always desires what is best for them.

How not to be envious

How to avoid the snare of envy. Envy is an unseen sin. A hidden sin that can remain hidden and be allowed to fester as a secret sin. The previous one in the list was 'love is kind' x2. Love is most often seen – and experienced - in kindness. Not so with envy which hides away unseen.

✚ **Kindness is benevolent: envy is the product of ill-will.**

As envy is an inner hidden sin it's easy to become a hypocrite, to act lovingly, to appear to be pleased with another, but actually inside to be the opposite.

Here are some tests for you. What are your immediate thoughts, be honest:

You hear that someone you know well has been awarded the OBE,

- You are in a group and someone else is singled out for praise. You think "I do as much as he/she does, even more why aren't I recognized"
- A friend has just returned from a really good Holiday, someone in church turns up in a new car. Another couple you hear have moved into a smart new house, she has a new phone. She has new expensive clothes. Etc..

Do you feel envious? What is it that unearths envious jealous desires in you?

When you recognize these feelings then stop and ask some questions because there is something wrong with your thinking.

I was talking to Warwick some months ago about the way life passes so quickly and how easy it is to look at and envy the excitement of the lives of some of those around. One scripture came to our minds: "**Surely in vain have I kept my heart pure; in vain have I washed my hands in innocence.**" Ps 73:13

Asaph the Psalmist wrestled with envy "**But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.**" Ps 73:2,3

The whole thing seemed overwhelming, he says he found it oppressive "**till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.**" Ps 73:17 **till I entered the sanctuary of God** in other words when he entered the sanctuary he saw things differently; he saw things as God sees them. That is how you and I should see them. He saw God as the source of life, **your love is better than life** is a verse that has been speaking to me (Ps63:3).

The truth is that I am a sinner who deserves nothing - and is owed nothing from the hands of God. But God in his amazing grace through Christ has saved me from the judgment I truly deserve. He has removed the curse the cloud over me and blessed me with everlasting life through His Son.

Let us never for a moment forget that this life you and I have with God is better by far - and it is all by underserving grace.

That's not true for the others out there, don't worry if they have their moment of pleasure in sin, Jesus describes it their consolation prize. Hell awaits the ungodly, don't for a moment envy them!

What was the end result of those who were envious in the Bible? Examples?

1. Envy! We find it in Cain, the first murderer, who killed his brother, at the instigation of envy.
2. We find it in the dark and gloomy and revengeful spirit of Saul, who, under the influence of envy, plotted for years the slaughter of David.
3. We find it in King Ahab, when he pined for the vineyard of Naboth and shed his blood to gain it.

✚ *And of course the cross – hear what J. A. James says: It was envy that perpetrated that most atrocious crime ever planned in hell or executed on earth, on which the sun refused to look, and at which Nature gave signs of abhorrence by the rending of the rocks: I mean the crucifixion of Christ; for the evangelist tells us, that, for envy, the Jews delivered our Lord. Let us beware of envy! —*

How to help others not be envious

In love we must not cause others to fall to the sin of envy. Are you through thoughtless putting obstacles in your brother's way?

We spoke earlier of the gifts God has given you both natural and supernatural.

Gifts should be used, but it takes self-control to use them to God's Glory and not your own. Parade your gifts, wear them on your sleeve so others notice them and the result is not only do you steal from God when you siphon off Glory to yourself - but you are putting up an obstacle that can easily cause your brother to sin.

It could be gifts, it could be name dropping - the world does this all the time constantly including things to make me look good in the sight of others – It provokes envy. In fact the inner aim is to puff yourself up in sight of others.

So always think how my actions are seen by and affect my brother and sister

- When someone is due to come round and you tidy up? - do you also leaving things our interesting objects, books, etc. etc. to enhance how they see your home - and by extension - you?
- When you are in the car showroom think about what you are about to buy will affect your brothers and sisters in the Lord will it provoke envy?
- Or the phone showroom... or the fashion shop or or Or as I mentioned before talking about that really good Holiday you had and all the things you did.
- There has been an increase in the number coming into charity shops in search of hard back books, not any old book but certain books? Why?
- The Zoom meeting. They have seen so many others with neat rows of books and they want to do the same, so they can in turn cause others to be envious. One well known journalist was in the papers because he had books arranged by colour!
- As I was preparing this a circular message came through from a Christian who said how while he was able to do certain things on the computer here: "In the meantime I can work in the background putting together my syllabus for next year's 'evangelism and discipleship' course at the Baguio Bible College in the Philippines, when I will be teaching three hours a week via zoom to about 10 students - happy days." Why add that? How does it make others feel? I was impressed - did it make be envious? It could easily have done.

If a brother or sister in the Lord is distressed because of something I do then I am no longer acting in love. May my actions never destroy my brother for whom Christ died. Ro 14:15

✚ So let's beware of this subtle, oh so subtle - hidden sin of envy

Finally

Paul reminds us in Gal 5 that **jealousy, (Zelos)** is a sin of my flesh. Will you, will I put to death that harmful sin?

With the bad press of the RC on Tuesday, bad press which in the sight of the world rubs off on all Christians let us show that as true follower of Christ I am different, **Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in**

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step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. Gal 5:22-26

Hear is one way to conquer out feelings of envy.....

F.B. Meyer held meetings in Northfield, Mass., and large crowds thronged to hear him. Then the Bible teacher G. Campbell Morgan came to Northfield and people were soon flocking to hear his brilliant expositions of scripture. Meyer confessed at first he was envious. He said, "The only way I can conquer my feelings is to pray for Morgan daily, which I do."

The best way is to train yourself to want the best for others is do just that. The apostle John said to a brother "**Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.**" 3Jo 1:2

It's is not a verse one hears much of - I remember hearing a sermon on that years ago - it must be 30 years ago - Do I really - do I really want '**all to go well with you**' Desiring what is best for others is a challenge to our selfishness.

✚ That requires me to be a giver and not a taker, to give credit, to give praise, to be glad when another succeeds, is promoted, prospers. Do you?

God's love is supremely manifested in his Son. He always wanted what was best for his father. How proactive he was in it?

Let us His people actively honour each other above ourselves. That pleases the Lord and is certainly noticed by others as they look in on our meetings and see Christ's body, his Church which is God's showcase of love, his shop window. May patience and kindness be prominently on display, but may those who stay and get to know us see there is not an inch of envy between us.

Let us **have the same love, the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus:**" we are told to **in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.** Php 2:3-5

So to sum up - Love does not envy - it is not grieved at the good of others; their gifts their good qualities, their position or their possessions. If we love our neighbour we shall be so far from envying his welfare, or being displeased but rather share in it and rejoice at it.

So as we started: Will you now seek and rejoice at the prospering of others? May the Lord help us all.

END

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