

Envy

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[0 : 00] Hey folks, I just need to get a few things set up here as we get into opening God's Word. We're going to have a very long introduction before we get into Philippians chapter 1, verses 12 and following. So you might want to get your Bibles, but there's a bit of a longer introduction than usual for this sermon. Philippians chapter 1, verse 12 and 18.

But before we open the Word, let's just pray. Father, this is your Word. You know each human being individually, in our uniqueness, and in our depths. And Father, we ask that the Holy Spirit would bring your Word deep into our hearts so that we would be gripped by the Gospel and learn to live for your glory. And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Start my timer. I used to have the great privilege of visiting this. When I say an older man, I mean an older man. His name was Ephraim, and he lived in a nursing home. This is a decade or more ago.

And I got to start visiting him when he was 98. And I visited him in 98, 99, 100, 101. And then I moved to a different church. And so my visits with him stopped. And about a year after, six months or so after I stopped visiting him, he passed away. Anyway, he was a really, really, really interesting guy. Full of his mental faculties were perfect. He was really smart. He was a really interesting guy to talk to. And one of the day, one of the times, I don't know how it came up, but one of the things, all out of the blue one day, he said, you know, George, one of the things that changes when you get older, he said, is when you get older, you don't notice the pretty girls like you used to.

And he said, you know, there's all sorts of things you think about that are different as you get older.

But you know, when I was a young guy, you know, I found women attractive all the time. And it sometimes could be a bit of a distraction in my life. But you get a certain age, he said. Now, he's 98 when he's 99 or 100. When he's telling me this, he said, you get a certain age, those things sort of don't have the same power or attraction that they did when you're a young man. Now, I mentioned this because I'm going to talk about a sin today, in light of the gospel. And I'm going to talk about the sin of envy. And one of the things I think that surprises both Christians and non-Christians is that often, both within the Christian church and outside of the Christian church, there's this perception that we Christians are obsessed with sexual sin. And some, I guess, are obsessed with sexual sin. If you think about it, it's definitely the case that we live in a culture which is obsessed with sex. So maybe Christians are just reflecting the culture. But actually, in older, in ancient

[2 : 57] Christian moral thought, there was this very, very interesting way of trying to examine your conscience, examine your life. They came up with this idea of the seven deadly sins. And lust, which is the desire to have sexual knowing or sexual stimulation with someone who is not your married husband or wife, in a heterosexual sense, that actually is on the list as one of the seven deadly sins. But believe it or not, it's actually usually considered to be the least deadly of the deadly sins. And if you think about it, partially because it's so completely and utterly connected to your body. And if your body goes and lives long enough, like Ephraim's, I mean, he didn't have a problem with that at all anymore. Just not because he'd been increasing in virtue or self-control, he just got old and tired. That wasn't something that he had to struggle about or even think about very much. So surprisingly, the two most deadly sins, the sins are pride, see if I can remember them, pride, envy, anger, sloth, gluttony. I'm going to forget one right now. Lust is the seventh. The other one, I should have written them down. I just can't remember what the sixth one is. Probably the one I'm most guilty of. Anyway, but pride and envy are considered to be the two most dangerous of the seven deadly sins. They're all deadly. It's not saying, okay, just because I have pride, then lust isn't deadly. No, no, they're all deadly. But for the ancient Christians, pride and envy were actually the two most deadly sins. And we're going to talk about envy. And part of the reason is, is that they are so completely and utterly connected to the mind and to the will. They're not as connected to the

body so much. And while the body can wither away, the mind and the will, in fact, can become very strong. I never talked to Eph about this. I don't know if he struggled with it.

But you could well imagine that a man who lives to have his 100th birthday party with all of his mental faculties, just as sharp as a pin, as they used to say, that he might not struggle with lust, but you could easily imagine he struggled with pride. I mean, he's outlived everybody. In fact, he even outlived some of his kids. And so you could see how that could be a bit of a problem. So we're going to look at envy. And one ancient Christian writer described the sin of envy as a sorrow, having sorrow at another person's good. It was a person by the name of Thomas Aquinas. He wrote about 800 years ago when he was just summarizing older Christian writers. He was a brilliant summarizer and systematizer of centuries of Christian thought. And he described the sin of envy as feeling sorrow at the good that someone else has. Now, some of you might say, George, that sounds like a weird sin. Like, don't you think that envy is like a very helpful thing? Like, don't you think envy fuels improvement and development and trying to be a better person?

And I'd say, well, if you're interested, by the way, underneath on the little comment sections, I'm going to have seven brief things I'm going to say about envy. And if you look in the comment section, you'll see them posted as I go around. But here's the first one. Envy is corrupted, poisonous aspiration. Envy is corrupted, poisonous aspiration. So when you say, George, don't you think that envy is actually a good thing? Because you see a good that somebody else has, and that can motivate you to try to be a better person? What you're really thinking of is aspiration.

You're not thinking of envy. Envy is a corruption of aspiration. And I'll try to give you a bit of a sense. Well, I'll do it when I give you the second point about envy. And the second point about envy is that envy is zero sum. It has a zero sum view of the universe. So here's an example, some examples about envy. Maybe you're in a, I'll use a personal one like myself. I can look at another man who preaches, who opens the word, who's a public speaker. I'd think of somebody like Tim Keller, for instance, a simple one. But I really admire him. I can think of Kevin DeYoung. And I watch these guys or listen to these guys. And I think, gosh, I wish I could speak like them.

And that's aspiration. You see somebody who does something really, really, really well. Maybe you go to visit another family. And you see how the big family interacts. And you see a person who's obviously the favorite aunt or the favorite uncle. And you just see how they're, they really, they relate to the parents well, the kids well, even the teenagers, the young kids, the babies, you can just sort of see, there's just something about the way they love and the way they live and the way they relate to people and their selflessness, maybe that you think to yourself, gosh, you know, when my family gets a little bit bigger, I hope that I'm, I'm like that. I hope I'm like Uncle Joe. I hope I'm like, you know, Aunt Betty, or whatever, Aunt Ruth Joe. That's aspiration. But envy is corrupted and poisonous. It's when aspiration, this, this thing which actually can help us to inspire to get better and better. It's when it gets corrupted and gets poisonous that it becomes envy. So in this particular case, you're in the family and you notice that Uncle Joe is the favorite uncle.

[8 : 53] Everybody loves him. And you see this and you notice this, and it makes you unhappy. It makes you dissatisfied. You want to have that role.

And it never sort of dawns on you that there could be two favorite uncles or a favorite uncle and a favorite aunt, or there could be three, or how cool would it be if everybody's love and compassion and fun and generosity was such that everybody in the family, you couldn't pick a favorite aunt or uncle because they were all so awesome. You don't think of it in those terms. You think to yourself, that makes me unhappy that people think that way about this man or this woman. And dang it all, that should be me. And not only does it, and it starts to irritate you. You no longer think of them. You look at, you see everything they're doing as in a negative light. And then before you know it, you start to make little insinuations about their motives. Because you see, at the heart of envy is that you want to bring them down so you can have that place.

You know, you think about it, so it would be as if, you know, in a church, if there's a bigger church, I, you know, or Daniel or somebody like that. And I start to think that Daniel is preaching better than me. And rather than thinking that Daniel is preaching better than me, I think, wow, that's, he's, it's fantastic. He's a young guy and he's doing such an awesome job.

You know, that's a really interesting thing, the way he handles this and the way he handles that. I want to learn to do that. But instead of that, if I start to, to make innuendo or do other types of things to hurt him so that he gets lower and I try to take that place. You can go on and on and on and on.

You see, aspiration isn't zero sum. You can have two brilliant preachers, three great uncles, four spectacular aunts. You can keep adding to it, but in envy you can't. It's zero sum.

[10:53] And here's the other thing about it is that, number three, it is a short walk from envy to hatred. It is a short walk from envy to hatred. Like just as a, as a bit of an aside, if you see in two of the Gospels, when they ask why it is that Jesus died, like what is the reason why people hated Jesus?

I mean, all he did was feed the hungry. He healed the sick. He delivered people from demon possession. He, um, he showed mercy to people who were in the down and outs. He healed lepers. He reintegrated them into society. Like he only did good things. And yet as his ministry continued and continued and continued, there was more and more hatred of him until the point that there are so many of the people who should know better, who should be the leaders, is that they couldn't look at him without trying to figure out a way to bring him down and tear him down. And they eventually found a way to do it and they end up hanging him on the cross. And it's interesting in two places in the Gospels, it says it was for envy that the leaders put him to death. It was for envy that the leaders put him to death.

Think about maybe somebody, anyway, you can just sort of see it. It creates and sustains a type of, so envy creates and sustains, sorry, it's a short walk. I lost my place in my points. It is a short walk from envy to hatred. You know, I use that in the example, a simple example of being the favorite aunt or the favorite uncle. But it can go on other places. If, you know, if you're an employee in something like a Starbucks or something like that, and you don't sort of think to yourself, there's lots of Starbucks, there's lots of chances for promotion. And to see a person who's obviously doing a really, really good job as a barista, and you maybe think to yourself, you don't just think, wow, if I just learned that and learned that and learned that, I could get that promotion. I could get that respect, like people would think I'm, but no, no, you, that's aspiration.

Envy is when you start to think of, how can I bring that person down? How can I make little asides? How can I do things to make their life miserable? And the more they succeed, the more you don't like them, if you're honest. The more you don't like them. And it's the same thing, you know, in churches and denominations, it's a major, major, major human problem. You see, when the older Christians were talking about the seven deadly sins, they weren't talking about Christian things. They were talking about human experiences and human problems, trying to bring them to light. Here's a fourth thing.

Envy creates and sustains fear. You see, here's the interesting thing about it is that as you become more and more taken up with envy about a particular person or a particular situation or several different situations, first of all, as it starts to enter into one person or one situation or one context, it becomes easier and easier and easier to carry over into other types of contexts. You know, maybe it begins at work, but before you know it, it's affecting how you view your extended family.

[14:00] And then maybe it affects how you start to view your friends. You don't look at a person in the group of your friends and everybody loves that friend because they're so funny. They're so witty. Everybody just hangs on their every word. And you think I should have that place. I don't like that person. And you start to do things to try to undermine them. And what happens is the envy creates and sustains fear because, you see, the heart of envy is this sense, like often the anthem of envy is, I'm as good as that person. I'm as good as that person. But I'm better than that person.

But nobody who says that ever gets any pleasure from it. And the fact of the matter is, is that it begins with a deep type of insecurity and it grows your insecurity. And it grows your fear that you're never going to measure up, that you make all your attempts to undermine that other person, but they don't get undermined. They just get better and better. And it creates a type of not only a hatred of them, but a fear of them and a fear of your own inadequacies and a fear of yourself. And before you know it, it's hard to even, you just, as the sin becomes a bigger part of your life, it becomes the lens by which you see everything. Now you see the other people around you and you wonder, you think to yourself, you know, I've struggled and I've struggled and I've struggled to get a little shred of respect and a little bit of a shred of a foothold in this particular place. And you look around at other people and you start to have a fear that they're trying to undermine you. And so that when they make a comment, when they make a joke, it's not just a joke, it's not just a comment, you start to see it from a fearful perspective that they're trying to do the same thing to you that you're trying to do to this other person. So that envy, as it grows within you, it creates and sustains fear. Now here's another thing, and this by the way is, many Christian writers have said this, it's very true, that in

some ways, and I know that for, if you're a non-Christian, one of our non-Christian friends watching this out of curiosity, and the word sin is a very, very odd word for you. It's sin, for Christians, isn't another way of talking about sex, as I hope you get from my talking about envy as a sin. The thing about sin is it reminds you of the fact that it's because the triune God exists and he's created all things, that right and wrong is rooted in the reality of the triune God, the character and the nature of the triune God, which is reflected in this created order in which we live.

And so sin helps to remind you that doing right and wrong isn't just a matter of hurting people or not, and it's not just about human conventions, that it always involves this aspect of God. It's always in light of who God is and what God is like. And so, in some ways, ancient Christian writers have said this fifth point, envy gives you no pleasure. This fifth point, envy gives you no pleasure. You know, in some ways, there's pleasure from being proud. I mean, it also crushes you and ruins you.

Obviously, gluttony, there's some connection to pleasure with gluttony. Lust, obviously, there's a whole range of pleasures that go along with that.

You know, there's actually a type of pleasure from anger as well, but there's no pleasure from envy. There's no pleasure from saying, that person has a position and a respect that I think I should have. That never gives you pleasure. And at the end of the day, Christians would say that all sin is ultimately something that robs you of pleasure. It might not in the brief moment, but if you look at it over the course of a day, a week, a year, a month, sorry, a year, a decade, the rest of your life, it actually is a pleasure sucker, something that sucks it up and robs you of pleasure rather than giving you pleasure. So in some ways, the sin of envy is a window, an opportunity to understand all sin. Now, just a couple of things before we actually get into the Bible text, which talks about envy in a very, very helpful and insightful way, actually. The sixth thing is that it's very hard to see envy in yourself, but it is easy to see envy in others.

[18:45] See, that's one of the reasons the problem with, one of the reasons that the ancient Christian writers looking at the Bible sort of gave a bit of a rank of the deadliness of sins is not only are the sins more deadly in the sense that they become more spiritual, because they're not limited or constrained by physical things, or the aging of your body. But at the same time, the more dangerous sins are the ones that it's hardest to see in yourself, to recognize in yourself and to deal with in yourself. So part of the reason that envy is, I mean, maybe some of you have been listening to this and you say, yeah, that exactly describes my sister. That describes my husband. Now I understand why my mom is the way she is, right? And some of you might be thinking this, but the fact of the matter is, is that it is hard to see envy in yourself. It is easy to see it in others. I use you all the way in my points to try to make this more personal, but I could be saying me. In fact, part of my reflection all this week is how much, in fact, I'm not going to go into self-confession, but I realize that some of the things that are going on in my life, that envy is in fact part of it. And it's not a pleasant thing to realize that that's part of what describes who I am. And this is a final thing as we go into the Bible, the seventh thing, you matter to the triune God. So he reveals sin in the hope of connecting with you for your true good. You matter to the triune God. So he reveals sin in the hope of connecting with you for your true good. See, this is the very powerful thing about maybe starting to recognize the place of envy in your own life and your powerlessness in the face of envy, is that God reveals it to you so you'll call out to him for help, only the help that he can give. So let's look at this very short passage of the Bible that talks about envy in a very helpful way. I'll try to, maybe you'll see some of it. I have my Bible opened to the wrong passage. Philippians chapter 1, verses 12 to 18. We'll see how fast I can find it. There we go. And this, just in terms of the context, well, actually, I'll give you the context as we start to read it a little bit.

Verse 12, I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. Now just pause. The word imprisonment there is literally chains, and it means imprisonment, but actually chains is a very, Paul could have said imprisonment, but instead he used this very, very powerful image of chains. And so what he's talking about is this. He's, here it is, it's very, very interesting. He's a Jewish man who used to hate non-Jews. He's writing to a group of Christians who used to be pagans, mainly pagans, very few Jewish people, mainly pagans, who had come to accept Jesus as their Savior and as their Lord. And he's calling them his brothers and sisters. And what he's saying is, they know that he's been through this terrible journey, that he was in Jerusalem. He ends up being accused of proclaiming that Jesus had died, which is not anything that would get him in jail for, but that he'd actually risen

from the dead, and that he was the Messiah, that the thousands of years of ancient Jewish writings, that Jesus is the fulfillment of all of these prophecies in his life and death and resurrection. And he is the one who can make you right with God when you put your faith and trust in him. And because of this message, this message of the truth of Jesus's resurrection and what it means in terms of vindicating him as the

Messiah. And what it means is having this universal message, in a sense, out of envy and hatred. He gets thrown in jail. And he begins this very long process of being in jail in Jerusalem, being in jail in Caesarea, of having shipwrecks, of finally being brought to Rome. And he is writing from Rome in chains. And we don't know if it's the beginning of his imprisonment. We know that he spent at least two years in this first imprisonment in the center of the empire. And what he's saying is funny, you know, if I had gone through all those things, if I had done hard time in Jerusalem, and then hard time in Caesarea, and then hard time in a ship, and then hard time in Rome, or maybe just medium, like, not maybe hard time in Rome, because it's house arrest, but he's still in chains. You know, I would be talking about, you know, by the way, I'm feeling grumpy. You know, I hope you're all, you know, I talk about me, right? The amazing thing is, if you read the book of Philippians, it's such an upbeat letter. And you can see it right here. Look at it again, verse 12 and 13. I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me, hard time in Jerusalem, he almost got beaten to death by the crowd, hard time in Caesarea, lies about him. He got moved from hard time in Jerusalem to hard time in Caesarea, because there was a plot on his life to murder him. The long, painful sea voyage, the time actually shipwrecked in chains in Rome. And he says, all of this has served to advance the gospel, which is the good news about who Jesus is, and what he has accomplished for ordinary people like you and me, in his life, death, and resurrection. Why it actually means he sort of,

I mean, if you think about it, on one level, he does this hard time, he ends up getting to talk about these powerful kings and Roman leaders for an entire region. And here he is now in Rome, and all of the elite guards are guarding him. And he gets to tell them about Jesus, and all of the officials, he tells them about Jesus, and he's eventually going to appear before the emperor himself, and tell them about Jesus. And so rather than viewing this as a shameful thing, because to be arrested for these reasons, and give away a bit of the plot, later on, about five or six years after this, I mean, Paul will eventually be released from jail. But about a few years after he is released, he's arrested a second time, and he's martyred. He dies a cruel, torturous death at the hands of Nero in Rome. If you read the book of 2 Timothy, it's a very precious book, because in this book, he lets you know that he knows that this time he's not going to be delivered. He's been delivered from jail a lot of times. He's gotten out of, he has a long record, a record as long as your arm. He's got out of jail time and time again. But the, you read 2 Timothy, he knows that this is it. This is the time that he's going to actually die the horrendous death. And he's doing really, really, really hard time in Rome. But he says, they know about my, you know, look at verse 13, they become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my chains are in Christ. That's actually what it says, literally, my chains are in Christ. He sees Christ and the gospel as shaping how he understands his experience. And he continues in verse 14, and most of the brothers and sisters, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. In other words, to tell people about Jesus. The people in Rome, they see what's happened to him, and rather than being ashamed of him, many of them have now actually become far more bold in sharing the gospel.

[26 : 30] But then there's a bit of a dark turn, and this is where envy comes in. And one of the things which is so neat about this, it's what's neat about most of the Bible. I don't know if you have a friend who's really good at drawing, but if you have a friend, or if you've seen somebody on YouTube or whatever, there's some people and they can do like five lines, and you think to yourself, wow, like, that's the person, or like, that's like this scene. And they just do one, you do, do, do, do. They seem to do it quickly and effortlessly, and you have this wonderful representation of something. And that's what happens in the Bible time and time again. It's one of the things we miss if you're like me and you race through the Bible. But these couple of little things which perfectly capture the issue, and look what happens in verse 15 to 18a. Some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry. And rivalry here, the other types of words, the ways that you can translate that word from the original language is strife and contention. So it's not to be understood as a type of a good rivalry where one person, you know, maybe two rock climbers are sort of egging each other on to climb faster, climb better, climb stronger, and they're really helping each other with a type of

friendly, good-spirited rivalry. You have to understand the word here means contention. It means fighting.

It means discord. Okay? So some indeed, read it verse 15 again, some indeed preach Christ from envy and rivalry. It's connected to envy, right? In other words, for some reason, people are preaching the gospel. They're telling people about Jesus. They're trying to do a spectacular job, but they're trying to do a spectacular job in such a way. Well, let's look. Paul goes on to it.

They're doing it out of rivalry with Paul and rivalry with each other to try to create strife and contention as to who's the best, who's numero uno, who will have that place and put other people in a lower place. Let's look at verse 16. The latter, that's the ones who are doing it out of agape love, a self-forgetful, giving, generous love that seeks the good of the other person.

That's what the word love there means. It's agape in the original language. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. The former, that's those who are characterized by envy and by contention and strife. Proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. See, you get all of it right there, this sin of envy, the contention and strife that's caused by it, right? Because if you go into a family, you start trying to do insinuate that the other person's doing bad things or do things to bring them down, all that does is create discord. People push back. And before you know it, there's the, the family is, is, is ruined. The workplace is ruined. The church is, is ruined. The academic department, the dance studio is ruined. Um, and so many, you know, the neighborhood is ruined and, and he captures this. There's the envy, there's the rivalry, it's selfish ambition. It's not, it makes you insincere and it wants you to afflict, to hurt the other person. But here's the really surprising thing in verse 18. What does Paul say? What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed. And in that I rejoice. And some of you are thinking, what?

What? What? That makes no sense. Like here you've given us this big buildup about this sin. And then it looks as if Paul just sort of just shuffs it off as if says, you know what? Look, look, some people are, they're, they're doing a good thing or apparently good thing, but their motives suck. And it's actually, they're trying to hurt me. It's, it's rivalry. It's envy. It's a very, very dangerous type of sin. [30 : 38] And then he seems to say, what? You know, it doesn't really matter. Okay. So this, this actually, one of the things which then is so helpful about this text is why it is that Paul says what he says in verse 18. And, and why it is that Paul says this in verse 18 is that it has to do with what the gospel is. You see, if the gospel was just about me being able to persuade you of particular things, if, if I was just so winsome, so funny, uh, so persuasive, uh, that you are start to change the way you think. And in a sense, it's all about my abilities to do something like that with you.

Then what Paul is talking about makes zero sense. But what is the gospel? The gospel is me telling you that God has provided grace. That means a type of power that comes from him that will work in you to make you right with God and through being made right with God to begin to be made right with other human beings, with yourself and with the entire created order.

And you begin to live that now. And when the end of the end of the end of the end of the end comes, when the entire world comes to its proper end, all those things that begin in you now come to their completion and fulfillment and that you will once again be at peace with the triune God. And there will be a wholeness and a peace within yourself and a wholeness and a peace with other human beings and a wholeness and a peace within the entire created order and a completely different way of relating to everything. And that begins now. And it comes to its completion when Jesus comes back.

And the point of the matter is, is all I can do, all I can do is share with you who Jesus is and what he did for on the, on the cross. The Holy Spirit has to bring that into your heart. If you feel a, a bit of a longing for it, don't resist it. Say, come Lord Jesus, come Holy Spirit, come into my life. And it's God who does this work. I can't do anything.

[32 : 48] It's God's work. And that's why he says, you know, on one level, it doesn't matter. Because you see, if it was all about me persuading and me persuading you to be more like me, then it really matters.

Now, it still matters because it's still a sin. And we're going to see that Paul's going to talk about this very powerfully, not this next sermon, but the one after that. But it matters, but it doesn't matter on one level because the gospel is God's power in you. You see, if any of you have tried to deal with any type of really major sin, you realize there's this fundamental part of you that just can't really deal with it forever. You might have a bit of a power over it for a while. You might even have power over

it so that it no longer is the case. I know of people who've had, you know, drug or alcohol problems and through the gospel they go away. But it doesn't mean that there aren't other sins that they have to deal with. It just means they're not struggling with that, you know. And maybe you deal with envy in your life as the gospel grips you. But then what happens is you have to deal with pride because you're proud of the fact that you dealt with envy. And I'm way better than all those other people who weren't able to deal with envy. Or you deal with envy, I don't know, by lust or something like that, which just is moving a more deadly sin for a less deadly sin, but it's still deadly. It's like eating, say, oh, I no longer eat poison that 10 times can kill me 10 times. I just eat a poison that'll kill me three times. It's still going to kill you. It doesn't get you anywhere. And it's all about God's work in you. You see, when we were talking last week about grace and peace to you, grace is God's unmerited kindness and favor to you to bless you. And blessing means a power from God for you to thrive. And you do that through receiving Jesus. When you hear this good news and you ask Jesus to come into your life and you ask that you can get into Jesus's life, there's a power that comes from God for you to begin to thrive in a way that is good for you. And so that's why he can say that. You see, and saying, and the other thing is, you notice what he says, brothers and sisters, when you say yes to Jesus, who he is and what he has done and what he will do, you are given a new identity and destiny. You see, this points to this remarkable reality that it doesn't matter if you're watching this in Africa or China. It doesn't matter if you're watching it in the Arctic. It doesn't matter if you're watching in South America. It doesn't matter if you're watching it in Lebanon or Jordan or in Ottawa. But when you give your life, it doesn't matter if you're gay or straight. But when you give your life to Jesus, he comes in and you are now the adopted child of the triune God. But one of the things which is so powerful about the gospel is that whenever it talks about adoption, it says you're adopted as a son. This is some of the thing that made the gospel so attractive because the language is always used as the favored one who inherits everything. And so in a world where a third of all the people were slaves, if you give your life to Jesus, you are no longer a slave is not your identity. Your identity is the adopted son. If you're a woman and you have no power whatsoever in Roman society and you give your life to Jesus, he comes into you, begins a work within you, and your new status is as if you are the adopted son, the favored, beloved son who will inherit everything. That's the status you have. And so we have this wonderful picture of receiving Jesus and how it gives you this new identity, which is characterized by brothers and sisters. You see, that's why if you're watching this in China or in Russia or in Jordan or in Saudi Arabia or in Korea or in South America and you have given your life to Jesus, you are my brother and you are my sister.

[36 : 39] That is my new primary identity and it speaks of the destiny that I have in this identity that is given to me freely by Jesus. And what we're going to look at, if you go later on, because I'm having to wrap this up now, if you go and look at Philippians chapter 2 verses 5 and 11, which we're leading to, you'll see that what brought evil into the world, the source of evil isn't some demonic power or some evil force, the source of evil is within us. Human beings looked at God, the triune God, and we wanted to be like God. But we not only want it to be like God, because if we're like God, then God can't be God.

And that means that we not only have to, we don't only want to like God, have God to be like us, it means that we are going to have God under us. He has to be under us if we can be like God. And and and that's just something which is so completely and utterly powerful about how we understand, how we understand our relationship with God. We don't want the triune God to be real, because if he's real, how on earth could we possibly be over him? We don't want we want his place. We want him to be under us. We want him to serve us or leave us alone according to our demands and whims. We do not want the gospel to be true, because for the gospel to be true, we have to surrender something we feel is essential to being human. But all we think of as essential to being human is envy, which is poisonous, corrupted aspiration. And see, the wonder of the gospel is, and it shows you the power of envy in your life, is that the gospel describes, you'll see it in Philippians chapter two, verses five to 11, we can't solve this problem for ourselves. And so the the Philippians two, five, eleven, unpacking the gospel says, God, the son of God lives in glory and splendor with all of his divine prerogatives. And out of love for ordinary people like you and me, out of love for ordinary people like you and me. He sets aside his appearance as God, his privileges, his prerogatives, all of the things that if you saw him face to face, it would unmake you. He sets all of that aside, but remaining God, he he takes into himself our human nature, even to the point of being

born, being being in the womb of Mary. And he lives a human life suffering the trials and temptations that we suffer only without sin. And he continues to, rather than wanting to grasp and be like God and hold on to that and be over God, he continues this descent, even to the point of taking into himself all of the lovelessness, all of the hatred, all of the envy, all of the pride, all of the gluttony, all of the sloth, all of the lust that characterizes human life. He takes it into himself going lower and lower and lower. And from that lowest place, he is exalted. You know, it's as if he's taking all of the pride and all of the envy, and it's as if it's bent you and me and bent you and me and bent you and me and every human being. And it's as if the only way that he can fix is that if God, the Son of God himself, so to speak, comes down and reverses envy and reverses pride to get to that place where we can get the status of the one who is straight, we'll only begin to taste the beginning of that on this side of the grave. But when he returns, when the new heaven and the new earth comes, we will experience the sweetness and the fullness to be unbent for all eternity. You see, as the gospel grips you, as the gospel advances in you, you begin to see the story of your life and the story of the world through the gospel. As the story of who Jesus is and what he has done for you, it becomes the ground in which you stand. It becomes the thing that covers you from the elements. It becomes the lens by which you can start to look out and see the world. It becomes the lens by which you can start to look within. It gives you a safe spot with God's power to begin to see a different story to live out of that changes all of your story. Friends, consider Jesus. Let's pray. Father, help us to recognize the place of envy in our own lives. And Father, we know that if we just see that and don't know about the gospel, it can only depress us. So we ask, Father, that you would grip us with the gospel. You would help the gospel to become more and more real to who we are so it can be the place by which we see our envy and call out to you for help. Father, we want to aspire to be better. We want to have a good ambition that seeks the good of the city and the good of the world and the good of the family and good of others that is generous and just and merciful and good. We want those things to be true of us. So, Father, grip us with the gospel and we ask that the Holy Spirit would move in a mighty way in our lives to humble us, grip us with the gospel, and help us to begin to amend our lives. And all God's people said, Amen.