

Theme: Envy is a disordered love that desires the gifts and vocations God has given to others, desiring to be like them rather than who God created me to be.

I. Intro - Amadeus - Salieri's envy

- A. Antonio Salieri - contemporary of Mozart; rivals
- B. Amadeus shows him full of envy at Mozart
- C. Mozart is displayed as an immoral, ridiculous, pompous buffoon - with more talent than Salieri or anyone else
- D. Amadeus means "loved by God"! How can this buffoon be loved by God???
- E. Salieri speaks directly to God: From now on we are enemies, you and I. Because you choose for your instrument a boastful, lustful, smutty, infantile boy and give me for reward only the ability to recognize the incarnation. Because you are unjust, unfair, unkind, I will block You, I swear it. I will hinder and harm your creature on earth as far as I am able.
- F. Salieri actually works to drive Mozart to ruin and death - and is still envious to the end of his days!
- G. At end of life plays some of his tunes for a priest; none recognized - until he plays a Mozart tune!
- H. What is envy? How does it work in our lives? What virtues and practices oppose it?

II. The Root Vice Of Envy

- A. The sickness of envy
A heart at peace gives life to the body,
but **envy rots the bones**. Proverbs 14:30
1. Envy is the opposite of a heart at peace

2. In fact, envy seems like it rots away our bones - very unpleasant!
3. As a moth gnaws a garment, so envy consumes a man - St. John Chrysostom
4. Of the 7 deadly sins only envy is no fun at all - Joseph Epstein

B. Defining envy

Envy is a disordered love that is dissatisfied with the lack or perceived insufficient measure of gifts and vocations given by God, and which resents another person for the presence or greater measure of those same gifts.

1. Envy is a disordered love that is dissatisfied with the lack or perceived insufficient measure of gifts and vocations given by God
 - a. Envy begins with a dissatisfaction with the gifts and callings God has given me
 - b. Augustine's Prayer Book (modern manual for confession) - envy is a "dissatisfaction with our place in God's order of creation"
 - c. This may be the fact that we have not been given a particular gift or calling by God
 - d. Often it is the fact that someone else has been given the same gifts and callings we have - but in an obviously greater measure
2. Envy is a disordered love that... resents another person for the presence or greater measure of those same gifts.
 - a. Envy moves from what I have, to comparing with what others have

- b. Augustine's Prayer Book (modern manual for confession) - envy is a "dissatisfaction with our place in God's order of creation, manifested in begrudging his gifts to others."
- c. Aquinas - sorrow at another persons good (especially when it excels your own.)
- d. This was what irked Salieri so much - he had a great gift in music, but Mozart's was far greater!
- e. Envy is all about comparison with another, and it views life as a zero-sum game. The only way for the envious to win is for their rival to lose.
- f. Envy is essentially a negative posture, believing the world is full of scarcity, and that God has given more to others
- g. This is why envy causes us to resent the other person, and to want to see them brought down.
- h. Story of a Jewish man who envied another; when angel offered to give him anything he wanted, but other would get twice as much - he asked to lose one eye! This is the sad fruit of the root vice of envy!

C. A biblical example: Saul and David (1 Samuel 18-19)

1. Saul is the great, gifted, King of Israel
2. When David kills Goliath, Saul initially rejoices
3. But as David's fame grows, Saul becomes jealous
4. The song "Saul has killed his thousands, but David his ten thousands" caused great envy in Saul
5. Saul became obsessed with David, and feared him
6. He tried to trick David, betray him, and kill him
7. This is envy's bitter fruit at work in the heart of Saul

8. Amazingly, Jonathan had the opposite reaction! David's gifts and callings did not make Jonathan envious - he rejoiced in them!

9. Acid test for envy - do I respond like Saul or Jonathan?

D. Envy's false identity

Envy causes me to seek to find my identity in desired gifting, comparing myself with others, rather than rejoicing in who God created and declares me to be in Christ.

1. Rather than finding my identity in God, envy roots it in my gifts - or the gifts I wish I had
2. This inevitably leads to comparisons with others to see how I measure up
3. This in turn leads to deep insecurity about who I am, and resentment towards others who have my gifts in greater measure
4. Envy truly rots the bones!

E. Envy's sinful fruit

1. Envy leads to ingratitude for what we have been given by God as we focus on what we do not have
2. As we saw with Saul, envy can lead to fear within and suspicion, rivalry and hatred of the other
3. Resentment of the other person - or even those who note their gifts appreciatively
4. Criticism of the other person - to undermine them

5. Bitterness - towards the other person, and ultimately God for giving them such gifts while denying them to me
6. Envy is often mentioned in partnership with malice - we begin to hate the other person
7. If it is not rooted out, envy produces behaviors that attempt to undermine the other person and which ultimately can destroy an entire community
8. Sadly, even if envy has its way, there is still no joy, but only insecurity and fear about the future, and attempts to justify past sins against others

III. Applying the Word - Virtues & Practices

A. Cultivate contentment

1. Contentment with who God has made me
 - a. The soil from which envy grows is discontentment with who God has made me to be, and the callings He has given me
 - b. I need to realize that God has made me as I am - my gifts, callings, opportunities, circumstances - for His glory and my good
 - c. Until I can embrace and rejoice in this, my heart has rich soil to nourish envy
2. To cultivate contentment I must practice deep meditation on my identity in Christ
 - a. Envy's roots run deep - and will require long meditation on my identity in Christ

- b. I must see myself through God's eyes, and find my identity in who He declares me to be in Christ
I seek to find my identity in my desired gifting, comparing myself with others, rather than rejoicing in who God created and declares me to be in Christ.
- c. Our devotions this week give a chance for this practice
- d. We will never root out envy if we do not begin here!

B. Express gratitude

1. Gratitude for all God has given me
 - a. Envy focuses on what I do not have; gratitude focuses on what I do have
 - b. Envy focuses on what I am not; gratitude focuses on who I am in Christ
 - c. If I know who I am in Christ, I should overflow with gratitude for God's great gifts to me
2. Gratitude for what God has given others
 - a. Envy resents what God has given to others; gratitude is thankful for what God has given to others
 - b. Envy sees the gifts of others as something that diminishes me; gratitude sees every gift as a way that God is working to build His kingdom and benefit me
3. To express gratitude give thanks to God & others
 - a. Gratitude in the heart should lead to thanksgiving with the mouth
 - b. We begin by thanking God for who we are in Christ, and for the gifts and callings He has given to us

- c. We move on to thank God for the gifts and callings given to others - this starts to really lay the axe to the root of envy

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

C. Demonstrate love for the other person

1. Envy is the opposite of love for the other person
 - a. Love desires to build up the other person, while envy desires to tear them down
 - b. Love desires to give and bless the other person; envy desires to rob them of what they have been given
 - c. The commandment is to love your neighbor as you love yourself. The envier can do neither. - Rebecca DeYoung
2. To demonstrate love, speak and do things for them
 - a. Rather than speaking evil of them, speak well of them to their face and to others
 - b. Express gratitude to them for who they are, the gifts they have, or something they have done

D. Closing prayer

Envy

Proverbs 14:30
February 18, 2018
Prayer

Romans 15:13

Teaching keywords: Lent; sin; character; sanctification; calling and work; contentment; gratitude and thanksgiving; love

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13