

“Jealousy on Display”
1 Samuel 18:1-13
(Preached at Trinity, July 30, 2017)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapter 17** we witnessed the amazing death of the giant Goliath at the hand of the teenage boy, David. It was a powerful display of faith as David defended the honor of God before the army of Israel. It has a powerful effect upon all who witnessed it.
 - A. The Philistines lost all will to fight.
1 Samuel 17:51 NAU - "When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled."
 - B. The army of Israel, who for weeks stood terrified before Goliath rallied and went to war against the fleeing Philistines.
 - C. Saul, stood in amazement at this ruddy youth who did what none of his mightiest soldiers dared to do.
1 Samuel 18:2 NAU - "Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house."
 - D. Last time we saw the effect of David on Saul's son, Jonathan. His heart became bound to David forging a lasting and true friendship.
1 Samuel 18:1 NAU - "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself."
2. But, it would seem that David's influence affected another group. When the season of war was over and the troops began returning from the Philistine campaign the Israelite women came out to welcome the victorious return of Saul. Demonstrating the low spiritual condition of Israel there is no mention of God; no praise for His wonderful deliverance. But they were joyous and they were singing a new song.
1 Samuel 18:6-7 NAU - "It happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy and with musical instruments. ⁷ The women sang as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."
3. The ladies were not intending to dishonor Saul but were simply expressing their amazement at the exploits of David. Saul took it far differently.
1 Samuel 18:8-9 NAU - "Then Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?" ⁹ Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on."
4. Rather than expressing good natured appreciation for the success of his young servant Saul saw it as a threat to his reign.

5. Saul began a downward spiral of sinful brooding. His jealousy over David would prove to be his undoing. It destroyed him from within. **Chapter 18** begins best at **Verse 5** with **Verses 1-4** being a part of **Chapter 17**. From **Verse 5** to the end of **Chapter 20** the theme is Saul's repeated attempts to destroy David.
6. I title tonight's sermon, "Jealousy on Display." Actually, Saul was being consumed by both Jealousy *and* Envy. Perhaps at this point it would be good to distinguish between these two words. What is the difference between jealousy and envy? Most people use them pretty much synonymously, but they are actually quite different.
 - a. Envy is when you want what someone else has. It can lead you to despise him because he has what you do not have.
 - b. Jealousy is when you are worried about someone taking what you already possess. This can happen in a relationship when one party isn't confident about the fidelity of his or her, particularly when threatened by someone they perceive as a threat.
7. Saul was being overtaken by both.
 - A. He was overcome with envy over David.
 1. David was prospering in all that he did.
1 Samuel 18:5 NAU - "So David went out wherever Saul sent him, *and prospered*"
1 Samuel 18:14 NAU - "David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD *was* with him.
 2. He was gaining favor with the people. His son loved him. Even his daughter was becoming enamored with him.
1 Samuel 18:28-29 NAU - "When Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, ²⁹ then Saul was even more afraid of David. Thus Saul was David's enemy continually."
 3. The lexical definition of envy is "*a state of ill will toward someone because of some real or presumed advantage experienced by such a person*"
Quite simply, Saul wanted what David had.
1 Samuel 18:15 NAU - "When Saul saw that he was prospering greatly, he dreaded him."
 - B. Saul was also jealous of David. He was the king. He was the commander. The people were supposed to look to him. They were supposed to sing about *his* victories, but now David was advancing in prominence. Saul was fearful of losing his position.

I. Jealousy and Envy display a heart problem

A. Saul had an evil heart

1. The author makes a point to describe God departing from Saul and an evil spirit descending upon him
1 Samuel 16:14 NAU - "Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him."
1 Samuel 18:10 NAU - "Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul"
2. This inner corruption resulted in an evil that flowed out of Saul
Anger – **V.8** - "Then Saul became very angry"
Suspicion – **V.9** - "Saul looked at David with suspicion from that day on."
Fear – **V.12** - "Now Saul was afraid of David, for the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul."
V.15 - "When Saul saw that he was prospering greatly, he dreaded him."
V.19 - "then Saul was even more afraid of David."
3. This inner corruption led Saul to overwhelming jealousy over David
1 Samuel 18:8 NAU - "Saul became very angry, for this saying displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, but to me they have ascribed thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?"
1 Samuel 18:28-29 NAU - "When Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, ²⁹ then Saul was even more afraid of David. Thus Saul was David's enemy continually."
4. Envy and jealousy always flow forth from heart corruption.
 James called envy devilish and evil
James 3:14-16– "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. ¹⁵ This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish. ¹⁶ For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion and every evil work."

B. Envy and Jealousy are almost always irrational

1. Jealousy can get its fuel from paranoia. This was Saul's problem. Paranoia and insecurity made him see David as his arch enemy.
 David wasn't Saul's enemy. He wasn't seeking to usurp Saul
 David wasn't seeking the praise of the people.
 David wasn't seeking the kingdom.
2. David was actually very respectful of Saul and humbled himself before Saul. When given the opportunity to take Saul's daughter he considered himself unworthy.
1 Samuel 18:17 NAU - "Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife,"
1 Samuel 18:18 NAU - "But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my life *or* my father's family in Israel, that I should be the king's son-in-law?"
1 Samuel 18:23 NAU - "Is it trivial in your sight to become the king's son-in-law, since I am a poor man and lightly esteemed?"

3. David would later plead with Saul:
1 Samuel 26:18 NAU - "Why then is my lord pursuing his servant? For what have I done? Or what evil is in my hand?"
 4. David stands as a type of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus walked upon the earth in humility and meekness. He didn't possess the least vice. He didn't covet the position or property of others. He was the epitome of love. And yet the religious leaders were envious of Him. Their jealousy consumed them. Never could we see a greater example of the irrationality of envy and jealousy.
Matthew 27:17-18 NAU - "So when the people gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" ¹⁸ For he knew that because of envy they had handed Him over."
- C. Envy is caused by the pride that has convinced us that we are more worthy to receive all of the blessings of God.
1. We naturally want all success, all happiness, all attention. We naturally want to be the greatest. When we perceive someone achieving what we do not have we can become envious.
 - a. This was the cause of Cain killing Abel.
 - b. It was the cause of opposition to the leadership of Moses.
It's really the cause of all resistance to leadership – we want to hold their position. We resent their position thinking we are much more able to determine the proper course.
 - c. It was the cause of Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery
 2. Saul could not tolerate David having what he did not have. He was uncontrollably jealous that David was going to take his position from him. God had left Saul and Saul was left with only the corruption of his wicked heart.
 3. Matthew Henry: "Proud men cannot endure to hear any praised but themselves, and think all their honour lost that goes by themselves. It is a sign that the Spirit of God has departed from men if they be peevish in their resentment of affronts, envious and suspicious of all about them, and ill-natured in their conduct; for the wisdom from above makes us quite otherwise."¹
- D. Jealousy can become so intense and so soul decaying it can lead us to desire harm to others.
1. It led to Cain killing Abel. It led to Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery. It led to Aaron and Miriam rising up against Moses.
 2. It led to the murderous plot to kill Jesus
John 19:15 – "But they cried out, Away with *him*, away with *him*, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar."

¹ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*, (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 415.

3. Saul wanted David dead
1 Samuel 18:10-11 NAU - "Now it came about on the next day that an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul, and he raved in the midst of the house, while David was playing *the harp* with his hand, as usual; and a spear *was* in Saul's hand. ¹¹ Saul hurled the spear for he thought, "I will pin David to the wall."
4. Envy and jealousy eat away at our soul. Solomon described envy as something that will cause a decay in our inner most being
Proverbs 14:30 – "A sound heart *is* the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones."

II. Can anything protect us from the scourge of envy and jealousy?

A. First, we must have a kingdom mind

1. Saul's jealousy of David was self-serving
 - a. For Saul, he would be king no matter what. He would destroy all who got in his way.
 But God had already revealed to Saul His plan and purpose
1 Samuel 13:13-14 NAU - "Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. ¹⁴ "But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."
 - b. Saul was basically saying in his heart, "I don't care what God says, I will be king. David must die."
2. Saul did not have spiritual eyes to see God's design.
3. When we are earthly minded everything in our life is wrapped up in our carnal desires. We will be jealous over anyone who will threaten to hinder our desires.
4. When we are always longing for our share of the earthly pie we will envy those who have a larger piece of pie than we do.
 And we must not fool ourselves into thinking our ambition is heavenly minded when our attention is actually focused on our own plans and we will walk over anyone who gets in our way.

B. Our hearts must be permeated with love

1. **Chapter 18** is a contrast between Jonathan's love and Saul's hate
2. Jonathan displayed selfless love towards David
1 Samuel 18:1 NAU - "the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as himself."
3. It would have been natural for Jonathan to be jealous of David. After all, he probably already possessed respect for his own exploits as a valiant warrior. And now David was being recognized. As the days passed, David would rise as an obvious threat to the ascension of Jonathan to his father's throne, yet we never find a hint of jealousy.

4. Instead of jealousy Jonathan's heart overflowed in a display of selfless love. He removed his royal robe and gave it to David, thus symbolizing his submission to David.
 - a. This was not the way of the ancient world (or ours). When someone threatened the king he would quickly kill them. We can see this as Abimelech tried to consolidate his leadership after the death of Gideon.
Judges 9:4-5 NAU - "Abimelech hired worthless and reckless fellows, and they followed him. ⁵ Then he went to his father's house at Ophrah and killed his brothers the sons of Jerubbaal, seventy men, on one stone. But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, for he hid himself."
 - b. More than once this would be the method of Israel's kings.
 - c. Instead of seeking the life of David, Jonathan loved him and humbled himself before him.
 Jonathan was content that David was the one God had anointed as the future king.
1 Samuel 23:16-17 NAU - "And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and encouraged him in God. ¹⁷ Thus he said to him, "Do not be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father will not find you, and you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you; and Saul my father knows that also."
5. Love is the highest and greatest Christian virtue
 Paul wrote that jealousy cannot survive in an environment of love
1 Cor. 13:4 NAU - "Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous"
6. Love does not envy but rather rejoices in the blessings of others. Love rejoices when others are doing well. And love labors to help others do well, even at our own expense.
Philippians 2:3-4 NAU - "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."

Conclusion:

1. We need to guard our hearts carefully. We all struggle with pride. It is too easy for us to be swallowed up in envy or allow jealousy to sweep over us.
2. The ultimate cure for these things is a great faith in the reign of God. From an earthly perspective, Jonathan would have surely enjoyed the power and privilege of the kingly throne. But from an eternal perspective he trusted in God's direction.
3. This is the place where we need to rest. To rest content with God's provision which will annihilate envy. And to trust in God to protect us from those who would rob us of our earthly estate.
4. Richard Philips: "If we find ourselves thinking spitefully against others whose gifts surpass our own or resenting praise given to others' achievements, we should mortify this sinful attitude. We chiefly do this by taking the matter to God in prayer, leaving no room for such wickedness to settle in our hearts."²

² Philips, Richard. *1 Samuel, Reformed Expository Commentary*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2012, Pages 327-328.