

Lord, if You Had Been Here

by Erlo Stegen

Jesus teaches that jealousy is a sin that hinders the work of the Holy Spirit and that faith is more important than physical presence.

Duration: 1:12:07

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, John 11:21

Topics: "Purpose Of God"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the negative impact of jealousy and communism on individuals and communities. He shares a story about a gifted and intelligent person who refuses a promotion out of fear of jealousy and harm from others. The preacher emphasizes the importance of supporting and encouraging one another instead of pulling each other down. He also highlights the contrast between the communist doctrine of equality and the biblical concept of individual talents and differences. The sermon concludes with a reference to the story of Mary and Martha, where Jesus assures Martha of his power and ability to answer prayers.

Transcript

We ask your Lord to please be with us and to speak to us through your holy word. Amen. Our text we find in John chapter 11 and verse 21.

Lord Martha said to Jesus, if you had been here my brother would not have died. Now Martha and Mary's brother became ill. Seriously ill.

And then they sent a messenger to Jesus. Jesus wasn't there, he was elsewhere at another place. Perhaps more than 25 miles away.

When they brought the message to Jesus. Reporting to him about Lazarus's illness. And I said to him, Lord the one whom you love is seriously ill.

It's quite amazing that they took note of the fact that the Lord Jesus loved Lazarus dearly. And if we continue with the matter because it's quite a long matter. We find that Jesus also loved Mary and Martha dearly.

So in other words, this was a family dearly beloved by the Lord. Now very often we have the spirit of the communists where we say everything has to be according to equal measure. Everything's got to be the

same.

And we are jealous. And if we see that someone seems to be loved more than somebody else or more than what you are loved. Then you can die of jealousy.

And you say, well, that person is always being greeted friendly and he's gone to visit that person twice already. And he hasn't even yet come to visit me once. And then your faith collapses and comes to an end.

But with God, it's not like that. Neither with the Lord Jesus Christ. When the Lord dealt out talents to the one, he gave five to the one, two, and to another one, one.

But we Christians have already been influenced very seriously and we've been finished off by communism. Well, it's good that it's God who is the creator of man and not man himself. The communist doctrine says everything has got to be equal.

The amazing thing is that their leaders are not equal to the others. They are wealthier than the others. Jesus had his twelve disciples.

Yes, he loved all of them and they were all dear to him. But at certain times when he would walk with them and go to certain places like when he went to the mountain of transfiguration and also when he went into the garden of Gethsemane to go and pray, he would choose out some of them, three of them, to go with him. Well, it's good that we were not there because if we had been there, we would have forsaken the Lord Jesus a long time ago already.

We would have grumbled and murmured and said, but why is it that he loves those more than what he loves us? Why does he choose them out rather than us? And he also had a separate group of seventy disciples. Now, why do I say this? Because this isn't really very important. It's not the gospel.

No, it doesn't seem to be important. It is very important because if you have jealousy in your heart, you will be a curse to God's church. The Holy Spirit will never be free and at liberty in your life.

And if we wanted everything to be equal, then if we had our hand and all the fingers were equal, we would get a shock at its appearance. If maybe such a hand would come to you at night, you would run away thinking it's a ghost. What would you say if a person's thumb was as long as his index finger? You would say that person is a cripple.

He is malformed. What would you say if someone were to come to you and say, well, we've got to change the hand and chop off the fingers that are longer, cut them off, and sew them onto the fingers that are shorter, that they'd all be equal? You know what the communist approach was in Europe to try and infiltrate the youth there? The teachers would speak to the children and say, tell me, how big is your bedroom? And then they'd say, and then they'd say, now tell me, how big is your parents' bedroom? Obviously theirs would be much larger. It would never be the same as ours.

And then I'd ask, now tell me, how does the furniture compare? And then they'd say, well, how big is the bedroom of your parents and yours, the bed they sleep in, the bed you sleep in? And they'd say, well, our parents' bed, it's queen or king size, and ours, no, it's so small, maybe it's a double bunk. And they'd say, oh, so it's not the same. Oh, kanga bona.

Manja nina o man fige kaya, ni fige ngas katsini. And then they'd say, oh, so things are like that then, are they? And when you have to come home, what time do you need to be at home? And your father, when he comes home, what time does he get home? And if you are told to be home at three in the afternoon and you only get back home at four, what happens? Oh, we'll be cross-examined and we'll be questioned. Oh, my figa, uya buu swayin, uguti ubuyanini, ugufuti ubebebebelepi.

And your father, what time does he get home? Oh, well, five, six, seven, sometimes even at eleven at night. Now when he gets home, is he asked where he was and why he's so late? Kaga buu swayin. No, he doesn't get asked questions.

How? So why are things then like that? You know why you young people fail to be true believers? Why you fail to live for the Lord Jesus? And why you fail to be a healthy influence in society, in the community and bring life to them? It's heart-breaking. Not one country in the whole world has ever profited through communism. On the contrary, when communism takes over, that country loses everything that it had.

I'm not a politician. But when I stand here at the pulpit, allow me to tell you the truth. I hadn't intended saying this.

I hadn't even dreamt that I would say it today. But why do I say it? Because of this message, that the sisters of Lazarus sent Jesus, the one whom you love is sick. In other words, it was evident that the Lord Jesus loved him dearly.

There was a very close relationship between him and Lazarus and also between Jesus and Martha and Mary. And he'd regularly go and visit there. And when he would go to Jerusalem, he'd always go via their place and go and visit there because they were about two miles away, even though today you measure things in kilometers.

Jesus loves us all. Completely. No one can say he doesn't love me.

For he died for you. There's nothing more than that that he could do for you. But don't ever enter into that error where you say, oh, so it seems like the Lord Jesus loves others more than what he loves me.

And because of that, you enter into sin. And if he gives somebody else five talents and he only gives you two, that shouldn't make you disheartened or disappoint you and make you downhearted, you should understand it is because it is the will of God. And if he blesses somebody else richly, then you too should bless that person.

And through that, you too will be blessed. As God said, I'll bless Abraham and those who bless him, I'll bless as well. And those who curse him, I'll curse.

Never be like that. When God blesses your neighbor, perhaps he gives him a car. Perhaps when he plants something, it grows very well.

Never be like that, that you wish that something bad would befall that person. No, be happy together with him, rejoice with him and bless him as well. There's somebody whom I know.

Well, it's in a factory. And the owner said, I'd like to give you a promotion and give you a higher position. For he saw that he was very gifted, very intelligent and very practical.

And he thought, well, the job that he's got at the moment, it's a waste to have him there. Let me rather give him a better position. So he said, I'll promote you.

And this black person said, no, I'm sorry. He said, why? He said, these others will become jealous of me and eventually they'll kill me. Now, tell me, such a nation, such a people, such a congregation, can it ever prosper? Can it ever advance? It's like two crabs trapped in a box and when the one tries to get out, the other crab constantly pulls him back.

Do you hear that? Where he pulls him down and he pulls him back rather than pushing him and encouraging him and helping him to get out. And if you have any jealousy in your heart, pray to God that he'll finish it off, that he'll save you from it and set you free for you won't get anywhere with that jealousy in your heart. Yes, the murderer, the drunkard, the prostitute, they're all guilty, but you are just as guilty as they are with the jealousy in your heart.

So ask God to deal with it, to wipe it out of your life, to get rid of it totally and completely because when you look at people through that eye and you say, oh, so that family, that surname, they are always treated better than what I am. Oh, what a cursed attitude. And whilst you have that attitude, let me tell you, you won't get anywhere.

You'll get into a grave one day without having reached places with God. And whereas it will be said at the grave side of a drunkard, this is the grave of a drunkard. At your grave side will be said, this is the grave of somebody who always had jealousy and who could never wish anything good for somebody else.

And if you only have one talent, whereas somebody else has got five talents, you can hate that person. You could look at that person with an evil eye, but when you stand before God, God will take even that one talent which you had and He'll take it and give it to that person who had five talents. Have you heard and understood and grasped this point? Can I leave it now? And don't be like Judas Iscariot and be a devil in their midst.

Be careful of that. You can be a disciple, and yet, in the end, you're a devil. You can be a disciple, and yet, in the end, you're a devil.

For Judas had a sin, which was his pet sin, which he nurtured in his life. And he kept the purse. He was a treasurer, and he would secretly take some of the money and keep it for himself and use it for himself in secret, very cleverly, that nobody else would find it out.

You get some people that are close to Jesus, but they are evil. You won't catch them in their sin, unless they're slim. Even the wisest among the disciples, not one of them ever got a thought that there's something not right, something unclean in his secret and hidden life.

No chance. No chance. That little sin, so-called little sin, is the master of your life, and you won't end where you want to end.

You will end where that evil force will drive to you. So decide, make that decision, and say, Lord, please finish this thing off in my life, because else that thing will take you to a place where you don't want to be. And in the first place, this jealousy that I've mentioned, pray that God will finish that off in your life.

Otherwise, if it continues to reign in your life eventually, Jesus will have to say, well, I can't go and visit at Lazarus' home anymore because of the jealousy of the others. Else you won't be of help to the Holy Spirit

in the building up of the church, of God's work. Instead, you'll be a hindrance.

You'll be a stumbling block, and the church will be happy the day that you are dead and buried and out of the way. Now, let's leave that point. That topic, let's go to another one.

When Jesus heard that this one whom he loves was very sick, he stayed where he was two more days. So he didn't go immediately. He stayed there for two more days.

And remember, it was still a distance that he had to travel from where he was to Lazarus' home. And when he got there, they told him that he had been dead for four days. But Jesus had stayed for two more days there where he was.

And then he said, well, let's go off then there to Judea. To Jerusalem. And then Thomas said, but Lord, how can you go there? Just a short while ago, they wanted to kill you there.

And he said, doesn't a day have 12 hours? If you walk during the day, you will not stumble. Yet, if you go at night, that's when you'll stumble. And Jesus knew it's not the 12th hour yet.

It was the 11th hour. And there was still one hour left for him. And he made full use of it.

And he didn't say, oh, because it's 11 hours already, it's close by, I better stop. That's what only we could do, we foolish ones. And then Jesus said, well, I'm going.

And then Thomas said, well, let's just go together with him and go and die with him. We'll die with him. You get many Christians that are like this man.

They always see the dark side of things. They always see the dark side. You all understand German, don't you? If you don't, oh, there's something missing in your life.

That's what the Germans say. A pessimist is that kind of dung or fertilizer on which nothing grows. If you understand German, you'll know where the fertilizer comes in, in the word pessimist.

We had a German friend here and it was so misty. So I made a mistake when he left. I said, I'm sorry that you have to drive in this mist.

He says, ja, es ist richtig ein schlechter mist. Mist, es ist kuhmist. It's cow dung.

Mist is nebel in German. So, you get those people. They always see the dark side of it.

Well, Thomas, you didn't do too bad. You were prepared to die with our Lord. You'll get a point, one point for that.

We had a German friend here and it was so misty. So, you get those people. Well, Thomas, you didn't do too bad.

You were prepared to die with our Lord. You'll get a point, one point for that. You'll get a point for that.

Thomas was wrong! Sickly and sickly and sickly in the name of Jesus Christ. But Thomas was wrong. Absolutely wrong.

because we didn't take the person to the doctor quicker or they gave the person the wrong treatment or because of that, always looking for a reason or a scapegoat.

Maybe your husband said he's got a terrible headache and you didn't really take notice of it. And then he complained again that he had a headache. Oh man, well, take an aspirin or do this.

I'm tired and you don't really take notice of it. And the next thing, he's got a stroke and there he lies. And then you say, oh my, I would have only done this or that or this.

And then the next thing, he's got a stroke and there he lies. And then you say, oh my, I would have only done this or that or this. And so it was like that with Martha and Mary.

There they had sent the message to Jesus. He didn't come. In the meantime, the fever was rising, the temperature was rising, the fever was continuing.

And every now and again, they'd look out the window, look out the door. Anxiously, is Jesus coming yet? No, he isn't coming. And things were only getting worse.

And eventually, he died. And buried, put in a place in the tomb. And Jesus hadn't yet arrived.

And he's not coming. But there where Jesus was, he said, I am glad for your sake that I was not there. And on his arrival, when it was said Jesus is there, Mary and Martha jumped up, ran to go to him.

The whole home was full of people, some highly placed, important people there as well. To Eastern custom, if somebody had passed away in your home, and you've got family or you've got friends that are coming there to grieve together with you, passing their condolences, you can't just jump up and leave them there and go somewhere else. But that shows us how close they were to each other.

But Jesus wasn't there. And so Martha jumped up first and got to the Lord Jesus. And I don't know whether she was upset or what, but it was almost as if she scolded the Lord, saying, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

You are to blame. It's your mistake. If you would only have been here.

Now what must the Lord do? Apologize. I'm so sorry that I didn't come earlier. But I'm sorry.

I'm sorry. Saying, I'm sorry. Like three leaders of three different countries, they had a meeting with the Queen of England.

But they came late. You know, with the whites, if you are one minute late, that's a terrible crime and a sin. And they'll get upset and angry with you about that.

But that is not a big sin to them. So Margaret Thatcher, when she got to the Queen, she said, I'm so sorry for being late. And then another president came as well.

And he said, I'm sorry too. And then somebody else came. And I won't tell you the name of this leader.

He didn't know English too well. And he said, I'm sorry three. I'm sorry.

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

I perfect and he knows what he's doing. Jesus stayed 2 days longer there where He was. Before He even started traveling and when he got there Lazarus had been in the grave already for 4 days and was already smelling.

Now Mary and Martha were very close to the Lord Jesus but the heartbreaking thing is that on the other hand they are as far apart from each other as the East is from the West. On different wavelengths. It's heartbreaking if a person walks with Jesus and yet isn't on the same wavelength as he is.

Jesus told his disciples I'm glad for your sakes that I wasn't there when it happened because God is going to be glorified through this and I as well. And you'll believe in me. But to Mary and Martha it had seemed as if all had gone wrong.

It was pitch black. And so Jesus said to Martha I am the resurrection and the life. And Martha said I know whatever you ask of God he'll do for you.

Whatever you ask I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask. Martha spoke very well. Oh it was wonderful and sweeter than honey what she said.

In such a situation, under such circumstances, that she could say such a thing, in such circumstances, I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him. And Jesus said your brother will rise again. And she's answered I know you'll rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

Mary what have you said just now? Martha what have you said just now? When Jesus said I'll raise him she says I know God will give you everything you ask. And now when he says I'll raise him she jumps and she says on the last day. So what went on? Seemingly she didn't really mean what she said.

She didn't mean what she said. She didn't mean what she said. She didn't mean what she said.

It's very sad. It's terrible when a person says something very sweet, something wonderful and yet that person doesn't mean what they say. And they're not complete in that.

It's a pity that we can talk like a saint, like a holy one, but we are not in it perfectly. Two different things. She must have said it like a parrot.

She must have spoken something that she knew, but she wasn't in it. It wasn't part of her. It was her lips and not her heart.

So pause for a moment. Examine your life. Examine your faith and see what it's like.

Are you perhaps a very sweet-talking, smooth-talking saint and yet in your heart you are far removed from that. You are double-minded or like it is said in the Bible, where God said of Isaiah, he prophesied correctly about you, that you draw nigh to me with your lips, but your hearts are far removed from me. I think I've spoken enough now.

I've still got much material here. I thought I'd talk about it, but the time is gone, so I'll stop. But I ask you to take to heart what you have been told and chew the curd properly, properly, like a good cow when she chews the curd.

Jesus said to them, take the stone away. He went to the grave, commanded them to remove the stone. According to the Talmud, they were not allowed to touch the stone.

Because a corpse was unclean. And even the grave and even the stone, there had to be a certain distance between them and the stone. But Jesus broke those Jewish rules, take away the stone.

And then he cried out with a loud voice. He never did that in his whole life. He did it only once before he died on the cross.

He cried out with a loud voice and gave up the ghost. But here at the tomb, he cried out like that. Some people say, why did he have to cry out so loud? Well, that's the question a little child will ask.

Some child will say, well, he had to cry out aloud so that Lazarus could hear him and come out. You remember the little girl who was raised from the dead? Some translations say, I think, little girl rise. In Greek it is, my little lamb arise.

He didn't cry with a loud voice. He just spoke silently to a little lamb and she arose. He didn't cry with a loud voice.

He just spoke silently to a little lamb and she arose. Are we still on the same plane? Maybe he had to shout so that God would hear him. That's the mind of a little child that still needs to develop.

Maybe he said it for the sake of his disciples and those that now bathe us. Lazarus come out so that they could all hear what he said. And he came out.

My, what a Lord. If only you had been there, oh, my dear sister, Martha, Martha Mary, Eva, he was always there. Only you were so stupid and so blind as to think he wasn't there.

He was there. He was present. He was there.

He was in control. And he said, I'm glad, I'm happy that I'm not there. Because then most probably you would have to raise him.

And what a pity if Lazarus would have been healed before he died. And he said, I'm glad, I'm happy that I'm not there. Because then most probably you would have to raise him.

And he said, I'm glad, I'm happy that I'm not there. Because then most probably you would have to raise him. And he said, I'm glad, I'm happy that I'm not there.

Because then most probably you would have to raise him. And he said, I'm glad, I'm happy that I'm not there. And he said, I'm glad, I'm happy that I'm not there.

Because then most probably you would have to raise him. Now we can ask a little question, a little child would ask. Why isn't everybody raised from the dead? Why didn't he raise my wife? Who had her second birthday two days ago in heaven? Now I'll answer you like a little child.

They were told Kay is going to come and if she wouldn't have come they would have been disappointed. Because if you love a person and you hear he's coming, you're happy and then if he doesn't come, oh you're disappointed. Paul said let me speak like a foolish man for a while, so I'm just speaking to you like a fool does.

But she says if only you had been here and she didn't know that he was there all the time. And what he had planned and he had ordered was much higher than what they asked for. So much as the heaven is above the earth.

In closing, Peter, what I do now you don't understand. But one day you will understand. As standards, shall we pray? Lord Jesus, reveal to us your heavenly mysteries.

That we might truly understand and grasp what you are saying. And that which has been spoken, that it might bring forth much fruit.

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