

The Darkness of Jealousy

by Zac Poonen

The sermon explores the darkness of jealousy and its implications for spiritual growth and community relationships.

Duration: 1:04:27

Scripture: Job 38:19

Topics: "Jealousy"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of giving our best to God, using the example of Abel's offering. He highlights that God accepted Abel's offering because it was given with sincerity and devotion. The speaker also cautions against judging others based on outward appearances, urging listeners to wait for the Lord to reveal what is truly in a person's heart. He encourages believers to be mindful of their own actions and attitudes towards others, reminding them to follow Jesus' command to not judge others.

Transcript

Introduction music Chapter Thirty, and verse nineteen. Where is the way to the dwelling of light and darkness, where is its place? The holy sight on all the areas of darkness that we should avoid, and if we open ourselves to his revelation, we will get light. Why did God speak to Job like this? God had blessed Job in many ways.

And when God blesses a man, two things happen. Spiritual people look at that and rejoice. That's one way to find out if you are spiritual.

You see God blessing somebody else, and it makes you very happy. Oh, God has blessed my brother. God has blessed my sister.

God has blessed their children. That's how a spiritual man reacts. Because it says if one member is honored in the body, all the members rejoice with it.

See, supposing a man wins a medal in some race, they put a medal around his neck. It's not only his neck that's rejoicing. The whole body is rejoicing.

That is one way that we know we are in the body of Christ. I'm not honored. Somebody else is being honored, and I can rejoice because he's a member of the same body.

But if you're not a spiritual person, then when somebody else is honored, you feel a little jealous. And then you try to find some fault with that person. If somebody says something good about somebody's children, you feel a little unhappy.

Because they are not saying that about your children. And so you say, yes, that's true, but you know there is something wrong also. You know, in these circumstances, it is very easy for you to find out if you are a spiritual person or a religious person.

What is the question? Where does darkness dwell? You must know it. Otherwise you will go there. And you will think that is an area of life.

There is a lot of difference between being religious and being spiritual. And religion is an area of darkness. Spirituality is an area of life.

But they look so similar. I'll give you an example. The Pharisees, Jesus called them a generation of vipers.

What is that? That is darkness. That is not light. He said, how will you escape the damnation of hell? They were full of darkness.

And Jesus was full of light. But if you compare Jesus and the Pharisees, you know, Jesus never started preaching till he was 30 years old. But every Saturday he would go to the synagogue.

And people didn't know who he was. Because he had not taken his baptism. So he would sit in the synagogue just like this.

And all the Pharisees were also there. And he looked just like the others. See, all of us, when we sit here, we all look very holy people.

How do you know whether you are religious or spiritual? The Pharisees prayed. Jesus prayed. The Pharisees read the Bible.

Jesus read the Bible. The Pharisees fasted. Jesus fasted.

The Pharisees went to the meetings. Jesus went to the meeting. The Pharisees believed in the Bible.

Jesus believed in the Bible. So how to make out? Who is religious and who is spiritual? You cannot make out from the external thing. Religious people are always concerned about their external testimony.

They are always trying to give a good impression to others. But God will allow something to show you the condition of your heart. He will show you some jealousy in some situations.

You are jealous of so and so. Because I have blessed him, you are jealous. You don't know anything about his private life, but you are judging him.

See, other people don't know that you are jealous of somebody. Because it is in your heart. But you know it.

And when you know it, if you don't do something about it, darkness will flood your life. And this is how we see sin in the beginning of the Bible. In Genesis chapter 4, we read about two brothers, Cain and Abel.

Both of them were religious. Both of them were fearing God, in one sense, externally. They came to make an offering to God.

And Cain was not an idol worshipper. He did not worship some strange God. He was not an atheist.

It says in verse 3 of Genesis 4, Cain brought an offering to the Lord, to the true God. He made an altar. He was a farmer.

He brought the best of the crop and gave it to God. And Abel also brought something. There is a difference.

Read carefully, you will see. See, it says here in verse 2, Abel was a keeper of flocks, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. Now read very carefully.

We must learn to read the Bible slowly and carefully. You read the next two verses. Verse 3 and 4. And you see a difference between the two offerings? Yeah, some people say, Abel brought a blood offering.

See, these people were not offering a sin offering. Sin offering must be with blood. They were offering a thank offering.

And in the book of Leviticus, it says the thank offering can be any type of offering. You can even offer grains as a thank offering. Cain was thanking God for a good crop.

Abel was thanking God for multiplying his flock. So, they were thanking God. Here is my thank offering.

Abel said, here is my thank offering. Notice one little difference. Verse 3. Cain brought an offering to the Lord.

What did Abel do? It doesn't say Abel brought an offering. Abel brought the firstlings of his flock and of their pack portion. He gave the best.

There is a difference between giving an offering to God and giving the best offering to God. Among all of us, maybe we all bring offerings to God. But God sees what type of offering you bring.

Either you bring the best or the worst somehow. Do you remember when Abel brought his wife? She gave the best. It was very little.

God is not worried about the amount. This is the best. He gives the best.

He gives everything to God. That was the difference between Cain and Abel. Cain brought an offering.

Abel brought the best of his flock. All of us give something to God. You give the best of your time.

The best of your life. The best of everything in your life. See, the chief minister or prime minister is coming to your house for a meal.

You will give him the best. You won't give him a cheap offer. That is how we must also ask when we give something to God.

Because Cain gave just some offering casually to God. It says here in verse 5, God had no regard for Cain's offerings. But the Lord had regard, verse 4, for Abel and for his offering.

How did Cain know that God accepted Abel's offering but not his offering? I believe one fire came upon Abel's offering. That is how God approved an offering in the Old Testament. Fire would fall from heaven.

That is how we know that God has accepted your offering. Many people say, I am praying for the baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire. Do you know when it will come? When you give your best to God.

When you just give an offering, your prayer can be just an offering. Another person gives his best and the fire falls on him. You just come and offer a prayer.

Nothing happens. You say, how is it God met with him? He didn't meet with me. There is no partiality with God.

When Cain saw that, the fire fell on my brother's offering and he is younger than me. Jealousy came up in his heart. That shows he was a religious man.

He came with the right words but there was jealousy in his heart. That is what we read in the beginning of human history. Two people bringing an offering to God and one is jealous that God is blessing the other person.

I want to say something to all of you. If you are jealous of something that somebody else has, you are not a spiritual person. You are a follower of Cain.

You are walking in Cain's footsteps. The end will be destruction. In the same way, we read many other times in the Old Testament.

God blessed David and Saul, the king, was jealous of David. Finally Saul destroyed himself. God blessed Jesus in his ministry.

The Pharisees were jealous of him. So always in the Bible you will find, the mark of a religious person is he is jealous of somebody else who is spiritual. Jesus was jealous of nobody.

Abel was not jealous of anybody. David was not jealous of anybody. A spiritual man has got zero jealousy in his heart.

This is a very good test by which you can test yourself. Are you jealous of your younger brother or sister who has got more blessing from God than you? Are you jealous of somebody who was poorer than you but now has become richer and better off than you? Your brother, your sister, why are you jealous of him? Because you are a religious person. All religious people end up in Babylon.

At the end of the Bible you read about two churches. A false church called Babylon and a true church called Jerusalem. The false church is full of all these people who have got jealousy about it.

You are unhappy that God is blessing other people. You are unhappy that somebody else's children are doing better than your children. You know, even in one family there can be jealousy.

I want to say to you, if you want to be a spiritual person, you have to get rid of all jealousy from your heart. When you see a brother blessed by God, when you see a sister blessed by God, rejoice! And if you find some jealousy coming up in your heart, kill that snake before it kills you. Like a snake.

It came up in King's heart against his brother. But he didn't kill it. So that snake killed him.

Who was the one who died in this story? You say Abel died. No, Abel didn't die. He was still physically.

He went to heaven. It was King who died. He lived physically but he was a dead person.

You know, when you don't have love and joy in your heart at God blessing somebody else, you destroy yourself. God told King, you will be a wanderer on the face of the earth. I have seen some believers like that.

They never come to a fellowship with Godly people. They are always seeking something for themselves. They come to a church.

They want honor to themselves. They try to make money from other believers. You have to pay it off.

These are all deceivers. God will expose them one day. A truly spiritual person.

If he rejoices, he is God blessing somebody else. Now we can go to the book of Job. In the book of Job also we will see the same story.

Job was a spiritual man. But he had three sons. They thought they were spiritual.

But he is down in their heart and there is a jealousy. So, in the book of Job, Job was jealous of his brother Job. He was happy that God has blessed him.

God is a caring man. God helps the poor people. He has brought up his 10 children so well.

God has blessed him financially also. But instead of being happy at Job, they were jealous. Their needs were so far, still there, many times.

Job was a proper, well-educated person. He was a priest. He had the ability to defend his priesthood.

He was not a battling character. But he was down in his heart. He had a big jealousy of God.

Now, when you read something like this, you have to examine your own heart and see if you are right. Now, if Job was a poor man and he was spiritual, they would have been happy. Or if he was a rich man and he was a worldly man, then also they would have been happy.

But when he is a rich man and spiritual also, then they would have been happy. If he is rich, he should be worldly. But this man is rich and he is spiritual.

You don't say anything. Just be with yourself. Just be with yourself.

If you want to find some fault in him, you wait. Look in, look in, look in, see if you can find a fault. See the verse in Luke chapter 6. Luke chapter 6, verse 7. It says about Jesus.

Christ and the Pharisees, they watched Jesus closely to see if He was a Sabbath, or if they might find some reason to appeal to Him. Now, why did they watch Jesus so closely? They were not watching Jesus closely to follow His example. When I read the Gospel, I read it carefully because I want to follow Jesus.

But these people were watching Jesus closely to see if there was some fault or some point in Him. And in the same way, they were listening to His words also very carefully. See Luke 11, verse 54.

Verse 53 and 54. See, Christ and the Pharisees were trying to catch Him in something He might say. They were listening to His words not to do that.

They were listening to His words to find fault. They were watching Him closely to find fault. I want to ask all of you a question.

Do you watch other believers in your church very closely to find some fault? Then you are a follower of the Pharisees. You watch people, you listen to find some fault in the words they say. You are a Pharisee of the Pharisees.

When you look at a godly man, you look for an example to follow or to find some fault in him. You are a follower of a king. You are a follower of Saul who wanted to throw a javelin at David.

You are a follower of the Pharisees who wanted to find something to accuse in Jesus. So Job had his three friends. Eliphaz, Zophar and Bildad.

And they were also observing Job carefully. And they saw he is rich, spiritual and everybody admires him. They were jealous that everybody is respecting him and admiring him.

Then one day they hear the news. His children have died. His business has collapsed.

He has got sickness also. And a little joy comes in their heart. At last something bad has happened to this man.

Are you seeing a mirror of yourself there? Do you feel like that when you hear some bad news about somebody you don't like? So they came to see him. And you know when you come to see a man suffering, you don't tell everything that is in your heart. Oh brother, we are so sorry to hear that your children died.

Inwardly you are very happy. But you pretend that you are very sorry. Oh brother, we are so sorry to hear that your children died.

Inwardly you are very happy. But you pretend that you are very sorry. Inwardly you are very happy.

But you pretend that you are very sorry. See what it says in Job chapter 2. Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, they made an appointment together to come to sympathize with him and comfort him. Chapter 2 verse 11 last part.

The three friends heard of his adversity and came each from his own faith. They were his friends. But some friends are very jealous of us when God blesses us.

See what good actors they were. They really pretended that they were sorry. In verse 12 they raised their voice and wept.

They tore their robe and threw dust on their heads. In 7 days and 7 nights they sat without speaking a word. See from chapter 4 onwards what all they say to him.

Job, there must be sin in your life. That is why God is judging you. I don't have time to show you all the things they said against him.

Job, your children must have committed some sin. That is why they all died. God doesn't punish righteous people.

God doesn't make righteous people suffer. Let me ask you a question. When you see a godly man suffering, what are the thoughts that come into your mind? When you see a godly man sick or his children die, what are the thoughts that come into your mind? There must be some sin in his life.

That is why God is judging him. You are a religious wicked man just like these friends of Job. A spiritual person will never think like that.

Why? Because the Bible says, judge not. The Bible says, don't judge other people. You don't know why those things are happening.

Was God judging Job here? If God had to judge Job, he should have judged everybody on the earth because Job is the best man on the earth. The best and most spiritual person on the earth. But these religious preachers thought he is an evil man.

He has sinned. His children have sinned. God said, this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

But the Pharisees looked at him and said, this is beautiful, the prince of devils. See, when you are a religious person, if you are jealous of somebody, you cannot have the same opinion about him that God has. Job was God's greatest servant on earth.

Religious people could not see that. Sometimes the heathen people can see that. See that Roman centurion, he is a heathen man.

He didn't call Jesus Jesus before. Jesus said, this is the son of God. He is a heathen.

But what about the Bible reading Pharisees? They were jealous. They said, this is the prince of devils. It has been like that through all these 20 centuries.

They call Paul a false teacher. Every true man of God is called a heretic and a false teacher. Godless, religious people.

Jesus said, blessed are you when men speak evil of you. Because that is how they spoke about the true prophets in the old days. Jesus said, blessed are you when men speak evil of you.

Because that is how they spoke about the true prophets in the old days. So what do we learn from that? The opinion of men, even of religious men is always wrong. All the religious leaders said, Jesus is a false prophet.

He must be crucified. I will raise him from the dead to prove that he is the son of God. So be very careful that you don't follow in the footsteps of the Pharisees.

Don't judge. Among all the commands that Jesus gave in the Bible, one of the most disobeyed commands by Christians is this one. John 7.24 This is one of the most disobeyed commands by Christians.

John 7.24 It is a very clear command. Do not judge according to the outward appearance. But judge with righteous judgment.

Do not judge according to the outward appearance. Who gave that command? Jesus. I want to ask you.

When you look at people, do you judge them by their outward appearance? Jesus said, don't judge by the outward appearance. Don't think because the person wears white clothes and white saree or white shirt

and white... Don't judge by the outward appearance. Some sister wears some ornament, don't say she is worldly.

She may be worldly. But I am not here to judge. God is the judge of it.

There may be some other reason also. You know, I remember in one of our village churches in Tamil Nadu, we have some young non-Christian girls, believers from non-Christian families, young girls. But their parents allow them to come to the church.

The parents are all non-Christian. But they allow their daughters to come to the church. But they told them, if you take off your earrings, we will never allow you to go to the church.

What should they do? They said, don't take it off. Come to the church. But somebody can look at them.

Ah, these are all worldly. They are more spiritual than you. So, I have learnt something through the years.

Sometimes I don't know the reason why somebody is doing something. And I can judge a person according to the outward appearance. In my younger days, I was foolish and I used to judge many people according to the outward appearance.

As I have grown older and I have come to know God a little better, I have learnt not to judge other people. I will give you all a good bit of advice. Please obey this command of Jesus.

Don't look at the clean outside cup and say the inside is also clean. And if the outside is dirty, don't judge that the inside is also dirty. Don't judge by the outward appearance.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 4, and verse 5, don't go on passing judgment before the time. Wait until the Lord comes. What does it say? Don't pass judgment until the Lord comes.

And when the Lord comes, He will show you what is inside the cup. He will show you what is inside the heart of that man. He will show you what is hidden in the darkness of that man's life.

He will show you the motives with which he did certain things. Then you can see clearly what everybody is like. You will feel so sorry that you judged some spiritual people foolishly.

So many people you thought they were so spiritual, you discovered they are hypocrites. So the best thing is, don't judge other people. See these friends of Job, they saw Job sick.

They said, ah, this is due to sin. Job's children died. Job's children died.

They said, your children must have committed some sin. Your business is all ruined. Ah, you must have cheated in your business.

That is why God is making you sick. Were they right? They were 100% wrong. And the whole book of Job, you see them criticizing Job, criticizing Job, criticizing his children.

Even his wife criticized him. None of them knew God. Very often when a man of God is going through a difficult time, there are so many carnal people there to judge him.

None of them know God. So we see that even religious people can be in the darkness. So the question is, where does darkness dwell? I will tell you.

In the heart of a man like Cain who is jealous of others. Where does darkness dwell? In the heart of a man who judges other godly people. Not only in hell.

Darkness dwells in the heart of people who judge others, who are jealous of others. Where does the light dwell? It dwells in the heart of a man who is happy when he sees God bless somebody. And who is really sad when they see some godly man suffering.

When one member suffers, they all suffer with him. For example, if my right hand is injured, my whole body is feeling that pain. Sometimes the pain is so bad that the whole body has to lie in bed.

Why? Because one part of the body is injured. That is the meaning of being part of the body of Christ. It is very difficult to see such church anywhere.

Always the devil comes in and one of the first marks of the devil coming in is jealousy. Wherever there is jealousy, the Bible says there is every evil word. See the book of James.

James chapter 3, verse 16, verse 14 first. If you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, don't be arrogant and lie against the truth. That type of wisdom is not from heaven.

It is earthly, natural demonic. Now listen to this. If you have jealousy in your heart, there will be disorder, verse 16, and every evil thing in your heart.

So the Lord asks Job, do you know where darkness dwells? I can answer that. Every heart here that is jealous of somebody else, nobody can see it, only you can see it. Jealous of some sister, jealous of some brother, you want to find fault with the man of God, you want to criticize, you want to judge, you want to criticize.

All such hearts there is darkness. What shall you do? Drive out the darkness. Otherwise it will destroy you.

Where does the light dwell? Light dwells where you become a part of the body. Christ's body. Christ's body where you rejoice when somebody is honored and you weep when somebody suffers.

So God has got many ways of exposing whether you are a Pharisee or not. You don't know that yourself. How will God show it to you? How will God show you that you are a Pharisee? Shall I tell you one way? He will make some godly man suffer.

And he will see what is your reaction when you see that godly man. You may not tell anything to anybody. Oh God, I was a little happy when I saw that godly man suffer.

Oh God, have mercy on me. I am a Pharisee. I am not a member of the body of Christ.

I am a wicked Pharisee. Wherever there is jealousy, there is disorder and every evil thing. That is what God was exposing these trends of Jove.

You people think you are great spirits or preachers. You preachers, I will show you what is in your heart. Let me make this godly man suffer.

I will make him lose his children. I will make him lose his business and health. Then you will see what is in your heart.

And the Bible says, whatever is in the heart will come out from the mouth. You will go to this person and that person and the other person will give you an opinion. You are a Pharisee.

You will see the end of the book of Job. Chapter 42 and verse 7. The Lord says to Eliphaz in verse 7. My anger is kindled against you and your two friends because you have not spoken of me what is right as my servant Job has. Now, before I send you to hell, go and offer a sin offering.

Ask him to pray for you. Because you have not spoken what is right. My brothers and sisters, if you walk that narrow path between these two lions, you will not judge other people.

You will not be jealous of others. You will rejoice with those who rejoice. You will weep with those who weep.

But if you go away from that, a little to the right, a little to the left, go one side and you are jealous of somebody. One lion will eat you up. You go the other side and judge somebody.

The other lion will eat you up. The Bible says the devil is waiting like a roaring lion, waiting whom to devour. So, very often we think we are very holy people.

You know, I have seen this in some people even in our own churches. Please listen carefully. They come to the church very poor.

Financially poor. We welcome them because in our church it makes no difference whether you are rich or poor. They come as sinners.

They are nobody. Nobody knows their name also. And we instruct them.

We love them. We bless them. We help them.

And they begin to prosper. They prosper spiritually. They prosper financially.

And then what happens? Their head becomes big. God has blessed them. And then God becomes their enemy.

They make plenty of money. Spiritually they are destroyed. I have seen this happen in so many cases.

Very easy for God to bless a man. Very typical for God to keep him humble after he is blessed. I have seen creatures, young brothers who are zealous, God blesses them and they become proud.

I have seen people who are nobodies coming into the church. They grow up and become elder brothers. And they become proud.

They gossip, judge, criticize. God pushes them away. I have seen this happen again and again and again.

What shall I say? God blesses you. Be careful. Be careful.

Humble yourself. See, there is a saying like this. In a tree, the branches that bear more fruit are the ones that bow down the most.

Which are the branches that stand up like this? No fruit. The more fruit a branch has, the more it goes down. The more God blesses him, the more he humbles himself.

I remember the story of a very rich Christian businessman. In his big office, in one shelf, he always kept a small suitcase. Always that suitcase was there.

Nobody saw him opening it. Sometimes when nobody was in the room, he would open it. People thought, this must be some secret treasure he is hiding there.

One day, one of his friends came. He said, what is this suitcase you have kept here always? It is here. He opened it and saw it only when nobody was there.

He said, you want to see what is inside? He opened it. There was an old shirt and an old dhoti. He said, why did you keep it here this evening? He said, when I started my business, this was my dress.

God has blessed me. But, lest I become too proud, every day I open the suitcase to remind myself what I was when I started. I will encourage you to do that at least in your mind.

What were you when you first came to the church as a Christian? You were nobody. Nobody knew your name. You were poor.

Nobody cared for you. Now after so many years, God has blessed you. Don't forget what you were when you started.

Don't forget how good God has been to you. Don't forget how good the brothers and sisters in the church have been to you. Humble yourself.

I do that. Many times I look back to my past life. What was I when I was a 20 year old young man? I did not know the Bible.

I was foolish and stupid. I say, Lord, I will never forget what I was. You blessed me in many ways.

You blessed my family. You blessed my ministry. You blessed so many things.

Whatever other people may say, I know what I was. In my mind, I have this little suitcase, which I open now and then to see what I was when I was young. It's so easy to become proud.

Then God becomes our enemy. So let's humble ourselves and say, Lord, show me where darkness is. Don't let me be like the Pharisees, looking carefully to see darkness in other people.

Where is the darkness? Don't look for it in other people. See inside yourself. Examine yourself.

Judge yourself. Then you will discover the darkness in yourself. Shine the light into your own heart.

And the blessing of God will overflow from your life like rivers of living water. I believe God wants to bless all of you. But after blessing you, He wants to keep you humble.

He wants you always to remember that you are a nobody. Two months ago was my birthday. I became 69 years old in November.

I said, Lord, can you give me a message for my birthday? The Lord told me three things. I will share that with you. Number one.

Keep your mouth in the dust always before me. Don't lift up your head to think you are somebody. Just like John the Apostle in the Isle of Madness fell down before Jesus.

Always keep your mouth in the dust. Number two. Always remember you are an auditory man.

You are not a special man. I said, Lord, help me to remember that. I am an ordinary man.

Number three. Don't boast about how much you love Jesus. Boast about how much Jesus loves you.

Always think. Like John the Apostle. I am a disciple who loves Jesus.

Not a disciple who loves Jesus. Because sometimes we can boast, I love Jesus more than you. And I say, I am somebody who Jesus loves.

That puts me on the same level as you. You may be a young 12 year old believer. I am on the same level as you.

Jesus loves you and he loves me. We don't think about what we did for God. What God did for us.

If I begin to think what I did for God, then I will think I am more than you. Don't meditate on that. Meditate always on what God has done for you.

So brothers and sisters. Wherever there is jealousy. Wherever there is judging about it.

Wherever there is pride. That is where darkness dwells. Let's run away from it.

Let's pray. Bow our heads before God. And if God has spoken to your heart this evening.

The devil is very quick to take away the seed which God has sown in your heart. You must watch over that seed that is sown in your heart today. Water it so that it will grow.

And say, Lord tell me to remember what I heard today. Please help me to keep my mouth in the dust. Help me to cure jealousy like a snake in my room.

Deliver me from this filthy habit of judging other people. Lord give me light on myself. Forgive me for looking at other people's lives carefully to see darkness in them.

To see darkness in your wife or your husband.

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