

One of the sins that Jesus Christ deals with most frequently in the Gospels is envy. In story after story, the blessings given to one person are the cause of envy in another.

When Jesus invites Himself to the house of the short tax-collector Zacchaeus, we learn that the crowds grumbled because Jesus had “gone to be the guest of a sinner.” You can almost hear them saying, “Why him and not me?”

In the story of the Prodigal Son, when the younger son returns home after a life of sin, his father receives him with love and festivities. Yet his older brother is filled with envy for the attention shown to his returning brother. “Where is my party?” he asks his father.

It’s a trait of our fallen humanity that we often begrudge the blessings that fall to another. This is especially true when we don’t think the other is quite deserving.

A little boy is always happy with a piece of cake; that is, until his sister gets a slightly bigger piece. An athlete is content with his multi-million dollar contract ... until another athlete gets a little more. I was happy to help out at church until that other lady got some recognition that I didn’t get.

Does this sound familiar? Are we forever destined to begrudge the blessings that fall to others? The Bible tells us to walk properly, not with strife or envy (Rom. 13:13), and that love does not envy (1 Cor. 13:4). If we are loving people, then why do we still envy?

C.S. Lewis, in his book *The Great Divorce*, notes that love in this world is rarely pure, because our love for others is tainted by our need to be loved. Or

maybe better put, our fear that we are not going to be loved.

Envy is the product of this fear. When we are not confident that we are loved and taken care of, we begin to look with envy at the blessings that fall to others. And for some people, looking around with envy becomes a sad way of life. Thankfully, in Jesus Christ, there is an answer.

The antidote to envy is trust in the love God has for us. God shows His love for us in all the blessings we receive. The simple practice of counting your blessings is enough to ward off envy.

Yet there is something greater than our daily blessings. God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to save each and every person for the Kingdom of Heaven. He came to save the rich and the poor; the law-abiding and the criminals; the kind and the irritating. God showers His blessings on each person according to that person’s needs in the hopes that he or she will accept Jesus Christ, and receive eternal life. This love is real, and this love is unconditional. We have no reason ever to fear that we are not loved.

It is easy to fall into the habit of looking around with envy. It is all too common that we begrudge the blessings that fall to those we consider undeserving. But if we remember that God has sent those blessings, and if we trust that God is blessing us as well, we can easily turn from envy, and be thankful that God is working in our lives for our salvation.

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