

Radiant Church, September 20, 2020
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The Church We Can Be Part 4

Acts 20:24 *But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.*

I wish I had different gifts

I wish I was called to a different kind of ministry role

I wish I had a different husband or wife

I wish I had a different upbringing in my home, or in the faith

I wish I was more educated, or I wish I was working at something else = more money

I wish I was younger/older or had a different body type

I wish I had a different personality

(Comparing stats and successes against other Acts29 pastors and churches)

Envy robs us of joy

It will darken anything positive, and color it negative

Envy suffocates usefulness

If we're looking over there, we not focused or effective with the right here

Envy cripples, even destroys our ability to enjoy others' successes

If we wish we were them, we will not celebrate their wins, because we want them for ourselves

(Story of Kaleo Church and Ridgeline Church and Sand Lake Baptist)

Matthew 27:18 *For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up.*

The Pharisees couldn't stand to see Jesus's ministry thriving. They wanted the glory, the popularity, the influence. So they wanted to see Jesus dead.

When our own envy of someone else is allowed to grow, we're aligning ourselves with those same Pharisees.

Acts 20:22-23 *And now, behold, I am going to Jerusalem, constrained by the Spirit, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit testifies to me in every city that imprisonment and afflictions await me.*

That's a lot like the Holy Spirit saying to Paul, "Other people will get whatever, but jail and beatings are for you. You may get other things too, but these two are definitely in your lane."

Paul could've said, "Why me? Why Jerusalem? Why not Ephesus, or Corinth, or even Palm Springs?"

Or, "Why are you making me go through jail and beatings again? I've already gone through more of that than just about anyone else I know!"

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2 operative phrases to notice in verse 24: "My course" and "the ministry I received"

Paul realizes his own life is nothing apart from the will of God for him
No room to envy anyone else. He takes ownership of the life he's been given
Leaving all the room to be content

How can we learn to be content?

Be the first to genuinely celebrate the success of others, especially other churches

Beware of the internet

The internet isn't just a portal for lust. More so, the internet is a giant hub for envy

Ask the Lord for contentment you do not already possess

Read and become familiar with Psalm 73

Psalm 73: *Truly God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.
But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled,
my steps had nearly slipped.
For I was envious of the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.
For they have no pangs until death;
their bodies are fat and sleek.
They are not in trouble as others are;
they are not stricken like the rest of mankind.*

Therefore pride is their necklace;
violence covers them as a garment.
Their eyes swell out through fatness;
their hearts overflow with follies.
They scoff and speak with malice;
loftily they threaten oppression.
They set their mouths against the heavens,
and their tongue struts through the earth.
Therefore his people turn back to them,
and find no fault in them.
And they say, How can God know?
Is there knowledge in the Most High?"
Behold, these are the wicked;
always at ease, they increase in riches.
All in vain have I kept my heart clean
And washed my hands in innocence.
For all the day long I have been stricken
And rebuked every morning.
If I had said, "I will speak thus,"
I would have betrayed the generation of your children.
But when I thought how to understand this,
it seemed to me a wearisome task,
until I went into the sanctuary of God;
then I discerned their end.
Truly you set them in slippery places;
you make them fall to ruin.
How they are destroyed in a moment,
swept away utterly by terrors!
Like a dream when one awakes,
O Lord, when you rouse yourself, you despise them as phantoms.
When my soul was embittered,
when I was pricked in heart,
I was brutish and ignorant;
I was like a beast toward you.
Nevertheless, I am continually with you;
You hold my right hand.
You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will receive me to glory.
Whom have I in heaven but you?
And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength² of my heart and my portion forever.
For behold, those who are far from you shall perish;
you put an end to everyone who is unfaithful to you.
But for me it is good to be near God;
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, that I may tell of all your works.