

The Remedy For Your Envy

Sermon Starter

Scripture: Psalm 73

Text: *“When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.” (Psalm 73:16-17, NIV)*

Outline:

- I. Your envy says that other people’s money is the key to your well-being and future.
- II. Each impulse toward other people’s wealth is an indicator to turn to the sweet presence of God.
- III. In God’s presence, envy gives way to worship. We are convinced God is enough!

Summary:

“With that kind of money, anybody could have their dream job and not worry about failing. How sweet is that?”

This is a line I rehearse regularly whenever I hear about the careers and lifestyles of people I consider to be uber-wealthy. Wanna hear another one?

Here you go: *“With that kind of money, anybody could be that fit and trim. It must be nice to afford healthy foods and have so much time to exercise. Botox helps, too!”*

Upon introspection, these unholy proclamations reveal my obvious envy and unwillingness to own my shortcomings. It’s easier to blame and deflect than to admit insecurities and weaknesses.

But notice how each of these statements begins the same way: “With that kind of money.”

Ooh, that’s the *real* issue here, isn’t it? My problem is the mountains of money surrounding people who have almost no earthly limitations. In my extremely short-sighted and carnal estimation, cash is the key that unlocks the door to my greatest thriving and success.

This little pill of truth is especially bitter, because it’s light years away from what Scripture teaches us about seeking God as our refuge, instead of money.

The psalm writer gives a front row seat to this struggle with envy in Psalm 73. He describes being pinned to the mat by envy and its deeper root, idolatry. “I had nearly lost my foothold,” he says “for I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.” (Psalm 73: 2-3, NIV)

Why such struggle? Because having tunnel vision for cash allows you to see only the doors of opportunity that constantly fling open for the wealthy. Meanwhile, as door after door slams in your face, your spirit sours. In no time, you’re bitter toward God.

“Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence,” says the psalmist. “All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishment.” (Psalm 73:13-14, NIV)

So, what’s the remedy for your envy? There’s a turn we have to make away from our own anxiety and shame when confronted with other people’s wealth. This change in direction faces us *toward* God, whose abiding power anchors us in ways money can’t touch.

Watch the psalm writer’s turn ... in three, two, one: *“When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny.”* (Psalm 73:16-17, NIV)

Each impulse toward other people’s wealth is an indicator to turn to the sweet presence of God. It’s here that an upside-down world gets turned right. The blinders fall off, and we see how things are—how we really are. *Down to the core, we understand our deepest desire is for God, not money.* We see the roots that bind us forever to our God through Christ Jesus.

In the most holy place of God’s presence, envy gives way to worship. Along with the psalmist, we make our life’s confession to our God: *“Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.”* (Psalm 73:25-26, NIV)