

The LORD said to Moses: “Bring me seventy of Israel’s elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the Tent of Meeting, that they may stand there with you.

²⁴ So Moses went out and told the people what the LORD had said. He brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the Tent. ²⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took of the Spirit that was on him and put the Spirit on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied, but they did not do so again.

²⁶ However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the Tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. ²⁷ A young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”

²⁸ Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses’ aide since youth, spoke up and said, “Moses, hey

²⁹ But Moses replied, “Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD’s people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!” (NIV 84)

Theme: What Attitude Prevails in your Heart?

The Lord saved the Israelites from slavery in Egypt by sending 10 plagues on the land, which culminated the Passover and killing of the first born. When Pharaoh changed his mind and the world’s most powerful enemy went chasing the millions of slaves who just left their country, God drowned them in the depths of the Red Sea. Soon the Israelites found themselves at the base of Mount Sinai where God gave Moses the 10 commandments as well as some other laws. The Israelites spent almost a year at the base of this mountain before setting out again. But soon they began to whine and complain. Chapter 11 begins with the Israelites complaining about how hard of life was in the wilderness. So God sent some fire that consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. Moses prayed to the Lord and the fire subsided. But the people didn’t learn their lesson. In the verses leading up to our text, they complained once again to the Lord. This time they complained that they didn’t have any meat to eat—even

though God had provided manna, bread from heaven, for them day after day except on the Sabbath. The heads of the families lined up to complain to Moses. And it was too much for him. All the whining and complaining, all the sins that he had to bear created too much of a burden on Moses, and he could no longer take it. He prayed to the Lord for deliverance.

And so God told him to choose 70 men—elders, those who were honored and respected by the people and given positions of authority over them. They were to gather together at the tent of meeting outside of the camp and there God would appear to them. When the time God the glory of the Lord came down in the form of a cloud and he gave a portion of his Holy Spirit to the 70 elders. And this gift enabled them to prophecy—to utter the words of God.

But there were two elders, Eldad and Medad, who for whatever reason, didn’t go out to the tent of meeting. Yet God gave them the gift of prophecy. They were still inside the camp uttering God’s Word to the people. When word reached Moses, Joshua, Moses’ helper who would later lead the people into the Promised Land, said to Moses, **my lord, stop them!** Why would Joshua care that Eldad and Medad were uttering the very words of God? They weren’t at the tent of meeting—they didn’t listen to what God told him to do and yet they were prophesying? That’s not fair, Joshua figured. Perhaps he was also jealous that he wasn’t one of 70 who had been given this special gift—but he had been there the whole time, he had been at the tent of meeting, but he wasn’t given this gift!

Does the sinful attitude of jealousy dwell in your heart like it did Joshua’s? The Lord is gracious and generous in the giving of gifts. But the devil uses the Lord’s generosity to stir up jealousy and envy in our hearts.

God has richly blessed you with many gifts. You have a house to live in, a bed to sleep in, and a car to drive in. Your closet is full of clothes, you have plenty of food to eat whenever you so desire, and you have multiple T.V.’s, computers, and smartphones to entertain and inform you. But you don’t have one of those curved 4K T.V.’s that you buddy has. You can’t afford to buy a new car. The mortgage on that house you really want is too expensive for you, let alone a cabin up north. Some of those clothes in your closet have been in there for

about a decade. You only have the iPhone 6 or maybe even the 5—and not the 6s Plus. You don't always have the newest and the greatest as you see other have, so you become jealous. And so you try to come up with a way that you are able to get the things that you want.

You are smart; you know how to do fix or make certain things. You are good with people, hard working, and honest. And because of this you have a good number of friends and a great job. God has blessed you with a lot of abilities which lead to other blessings. But you don't get along with everyone; there are some who don't like you. You get by well enough to fix some things but you can't make a living off of it. You can make a quilt or two, but it takes you a long time and it doesn't come out nearly as nice as some of those that you see. You may have some gifts and abilities, but not as much as some other people you know—they seem to be good at everything—they are even better than the things you are good at; plus they have many more gifts. What you wouldn't give to have those gifts and abilities and how much better of a person would you be if you had them!

You've been a Christian as far back as you can remember. You have gone to worship every Sunday, you have spent countless hours volunteering and serving at God's house. And you are rarely thanked for it or acknowledged—not that you need to be, you do it out of love and thanks for you Lord. But there was this member who never attended worship, was living in sin, and never volunteered. But he repented, turned his life around and is now attending worship; and everyone acted as if it was some big deal. He doesn't deserve any of it, look how he behaved. So like the brother of the prodigal son we become jealous of the forgiveness that God gives freely to all.

Or maybe your problem with jealousy is just the opposite. You see yourself and how gifted and blessed you are on many different levels. But for whatever reason, you haven't been able to showcase your gifts, or other people don't realize that you have them. Other people are given responsibilities, or positions that you want. Other people receive praise and adoration for what they have accomplished—and you could do the same thing as them—perhaps better, if you were simply given the chance. But no one recognizes you, and no one gives you that chance. And so you become envious of others.

You expect others to be jealous and envious, but when you examine your heart you realize that this sin often dominates your attitude. This

sin deserves punishment but you can't defeat this desire and can never get rid of it. Your need for a Savior is a constant and serious one.

But look again about how gracious God is to you and to all people. You are not hurting for anything—whether it's gifts, possessions, abilities—you name it God has richly blessed you—even if you don't deserve it. Think about the 70 elders. The people were complaining about God, so his response was to give the 70 elders the ability to prophecy—he gave them his Holy Spirit so that they could speak his Word to the people!

And think about Eldad and Medad—they didn't listen to the Lord, they didn't even go out to the tent of meeting—and yet God gave them this incredible gift as well. So the Lord deals with you. He gifts you gifts and abilities that you don't deserve to have. He richly blesses you with far more than have you earned or deserved.

And that is especially the case when it comes to his gift of salvation. And this gift comes to us by way of another gift—the gift of his one and only Son. The Lord gave up his son, Jesus Christ, not just in the sense that Jesus came down to earth from heaven. But he gave up his Son to sin and death. He sent his son to the cross upon which he took our sins upon himself—becoming a sinner in our place. And so the Father rejected the son, making him suffer through the eternity of hell that we deserved. And then he gave him up to death. The Father knew full well what was going to happen to his Son, Jesus. But it was his will and he sent him anyway out of love for us.

And you know the result. Because of Jesus' perfect life, his suffering and death, and his resurrection we have been given a new life. Our sins have been taken away and paid for, eternal life with our resurrected bodies is guaranteed for all who believe in Jesus as their one and only Savior! Because of what Christ has done for us, we know that we'll be in heaven one day where there are no wants or desires—when everything is satisfied.

This gift of salvation cannot be earned by our good works; it cannot be purchased by any amount of gold or silver. God doesn't give it to us because we are cool because he is so impressed with the way we have lived our lives. No, this salvation is a free gift of God given to us by his grace. This gift, then, is the best gift of all—worth more than any possession or ability.

It doesn't matter, then, what other people have, or what they have compared to you. There is no reason to be jealous of envious of others—especially when it comes to unbelievers. They may have more gifts and abilities than you. Perhaps they have a big house, a brand new car, the latest and greatest in technology, and the most fashionable clothes. Perhaps they are rich and good looking, popular, and good with people. They could have everything in the world—but what unbelievers don't have is faith that receives the blessings of salvation. In the end, you have all that you need—you have Christ and eternal life with him.

What about believers who have more than us? Think of Moses.

When jealous Joshua told Moses to get Eldad and Medad to stop Moses replied to him, **Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!** God gives many and varied gifts to his people. He gives all of us these gifts so that we could use them to his glory, for the spread of the gospel, and the benefit of his Church.

What attitude dominates your heart? Is it one of envy and jealousy? Or one of thankfulness and gratitude? Instead of becoming jealous that others have been given gifts that you desire, or that other people don't recognize or give you credit for gifts that you do have—thank the Lord that he has given you and others those gifts. And humbly use those gifts and abilities—as best you can in service the Lord. And go to the Lord in prayer so that others may use their gifts and abilities to his glory and for the spread of the gospel! Amen.