

Compare and Despair

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Sermon Audio file

If we can all turn into our Bibles once Samuel 18:6 to 16.

Familiar passage.

About Saul and David.

When I was preparing for this sermon, it made me think about sort of growing up. I've got three older sisters. Three sisters who growing up were highly intelligent. They excelled. They got their A's. They got their A stars. They did their homework. They achieved. And then there was me.

I, for years of my early years of school, struggled to spell, struggled to read. Struggled to do many things I look at my both my sons struggle with. That was me. So I remember this one period. I had some exams coming up. And I had failed most of my exams.

And I remember achieving a C for this paper. And Dad's like,

"That's wonderful." And my sister turns around and she says,

"You've grounded me when I got a C." And he said,

"That's because of you could have done better."

However, today, I've been titled the sermon Stop Comparing.

How Saul lost himself and how Christ can serve us free.

So 1 Samuel 18:6-6, it says,

"As they were coming home,

when David returned,

from striking down the Philistine,

the women came out of all the cities of Israel,

singing and dancing to meet King Saul.

With tambourines, with songs of joy,

with music of instruments,

and the women sang to another,
and they celebrated Saul has struck down his thousands.

And David,
his tens of thousands.

And Saul was very angry.

And this saying,

'Displeased him.' He said,

'They've ascribed to David tens of thousands. And to me,
they've ascribed thousands.

' And what more can he have but the kingdom?

" And Saul kept an eye on David from that day on.

So set in the scene with context,
to understand the weight of this.

We have to understand that this very scene is about two lives colliding,
like two cars coming together.

And as we go through this,
it exposes the danger of comparison.

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To set the scene, Saul,
the man,

had everything.

First, King of Israel.

The Bible says he was tall. Impressive.

Physically imposing.

Chosen by God.

Anointed by Samuel.

He started humble.

One battles.

United tribes.

And carried authority.

Yet.

As we read about Saul,

we see internal struggles.

The fear of people.

Impatience.

Disobedience.

Insecurity.

Saul's downfall began before David ever arrived.

David simply exposed what was already going on inside.

Today,

there are things going on in each one of our lives.

David.

The man who had nothing,

but God, at this time.

The polar.

David started with humble beginnings.

The youngest of eight.

A shepherd.

He was even overlooked by his father.

So if you overlook your son today,

he could be the next David.

So stop.

He was anointed in secret. A worshipper.

A warrior. When no one was looking,

he was killing lions and bears with his own hands.

Has anyone else done that?

That's pretty cool.

Before killing Goliath in public,

David didn't seek the throne.

The throne sought after him.

Because he had a portion that God had given him.

The same as today,

every one of you here today has a portion and inheritance allotted by God for his purposes.

So Their lives collide.

David rises.

So David kills Goliath. Israel explodes with joy.

Saul brings David into the palace.

David becomes a commander.

David succeeds in everything he does.

But let's look at Saul's reaction.

Saul notices.

Saul threatens.

Saul begins to what? Compare.

So this is a crazy place.

Because Saul himself is the king with everything.

But because his insecurity led him to comparison,

he.

His eyes off of the blessings and the provision God had given.

And put them on someone else's inheritance.

That was never going to be his.

It's a bit like me wanting Roy's skill on the drum.

I can aspire for it.

But I'm never going to be there because I'm terrible with my rhythm.

But I could attempt to.

But that's the trouble, though.

Saul didn't want David to succeed.

We see this. Twice.

Not just once. Twice in Samuel.

He throws a spear at him.

A bit like when you don't do the washing up and the wife chucks plates at you. No.

Tries to trap David in a marriage.

Sends assassins to his house.

Hunts him in the wilderness.

But you know,

the interesting part here before we get on to our point,

David actually doesn't retaliate.

He doesn't retaliate.

David didn't compare at that time.

At that time,

David never covets after Saul's destiny.

But the one thing we need to remember today is who did David put his trust in?

God. Today,

are you putting your trust in God?

Are you putting your trust in you trying to achieve the destiny you feel you have for yourself?

We'll go through this.

So who do you become when God blesses someone else?

What rises in you when someone else is praised more than you?

Is your identity anchored in Christ?

Or is it shaken by looking at others?

Or are you here today?

Does God still see me when others seem more blessed?

Yes. He sees you.

He says,

"Be still and know I'm God."

But why does God allow others to rise when I struggle?

Because God's time?

Is different for everyone.

If I look at the story of what I opened up with my sisters, you know,

I've done awful in school up until my GCSEs.

And I had some amazing people around me.

Some amazing tutors.

And I achieved some really good grades.

So I went from failing to succeeding.

With only a few changes.

But the blessing?

Does God have a plan for me? Or am I actually just pine?

In Jeremiah, it says, "You'll be prepared."

You have a plan. There is a hope.

There is an allotment. And portion.

For you and you and you and you and you.

All of us. So if you struggle today, we're preparing.

Trust God has a future for you.

So comparison is not harmless. Comparison is a seed.

And in 1 Samuel 18, which we read, we watch that seed grow into tragedy.

So if you're feeling like Saul today, I will pray for you.

Like.

My story,

I compared to my sisters.

I struggled.

But the internal impact it had is for so long,

I felt behind. For so long,

I felt less than.

Felt not enough of.

The expectation of being a pastor's son,

growing up,

was there was an expectation put on my shoulders.

Whether there was or whether there wasn't,

I felt there was.

I felt like I had to I was expected to achieve I had to be the spiritual one. But inside,

I was.

Hearing the comparison.

You're not enough.

You're not like them. You're not messing up. Or you're not measuring up.

Who am I without comparison?

God says,

"You are God's workmanship."

Which means we are workers. For God's glory.

And.

That's the interesting dynamic of comparison.

We start with, "What God wants?"

Or we start with,

"What we want?"

And sometimes they had a polar opposite.

And sometimes We need horses to have blinkers.

Sometimes we need spiritual blinkers to draw us in.

I'm looking at the phone.

I'm drawing I'm looking in the mirror.

But this is to draw us spiritually in. Because who knows life is hard.

And it doesn't.

Stop.

And comparison can lead to many things. So we get to finally point one.

Comparison begins small.

So the women's son sort of.

Sang Saul had struck down thousands and David his tens of thousands.

A victory song.

Not a comparison. Yet.

Saul heard comparison where none was intended.

Have you ever heard something that wasn't actually said?

It's a bit like I had a friend. I could turn around and say,

"Oh, Katie looks very nice today."

And he would always turn around and probably say, "What are you saying?

I don't look nice?" Well, that's not what I'm saying here. You missed the point.

Have you ever taken someone's praise as criticism?

Three truths from the text so far we can see about just that small comparison.

Comparison begins with misinterpretation.

This is a victory song.

This is they were commending David.

It was never about Saul.

So maybe which I have to tell myself many times is remove myself from the situation.

Because if Saul had done that,

he would have realized they were declaring the fact there was victory for the kingdom.

Comparison grows in insecure soil.

When.

We have insecurities, that we allow to manifest,

which we all have insecurities,

it can take us onto a path of comparison.

This.

Is something that I struggle with. Struggled with. Comparison distorts identity.

And growing up in the dynamic of the family I did was one of great blessings.

Having been brought up in church.

Having gone through everything. Actually,

I look back and I realized that's a blessing.

But as my dad would always say,

"Son,

I can't live your life for you.

Son.

I can't live your life for you."

And actually,

it's true. We all have a destiny.

We all have a portion.

We all have an inheritance.

So stop assuming comparison.

Stop reading rejection into someone else's celebration.

Stop letting other people's success shrink who you are.

How do I rebuild identity after years of insecurity? Romans 12:2,

renew your mind.

It's not a once occurrence. It is a daily, daily thing.

How do I stop competing with people I love?

Hebrews 12:1 says,

"Run your race.

" Run your race.

Not Janet's race.

Janet can run.

Janet's race a lot better than Cameron can.

But you all need to run your race.

Point two.

Comparison can grow a deep 1 Samuel 18:8-11.

And Saul was very angry.

And this saying, displeased him, he said,

"Pay the scribe to David tens thousand or tens of thousands and to me by the scribe thousands."

And what more can he have but the kingdom?

And Saul kept an eye on David from that day.

The next day, a half of spirit.

Rushed upon Saul and he raved within his house.

So he sent so David was playing the liar as he did day in,

day Saul had his spear in his hand and Saul held the spear for he fought.

I'll pin David to the wall.

But David evaded him twice.

Comparison grows deep.

So what this comparison has actually led to is consciousness.

Consciousness is not wanting what someone has but believing you deserve what God gave them.

Comparison is cemented as desire twisted by resentment.

Admiration posed by entitlement,

jealousy,

matures into bitterness.

So Paul says it this way.

Covetousness leads to temptation.

Traps spiritually ruined.

But Paul compares it.

He compares it to idolatry.

Putting a god above our god.

Jesus himself,

we can see this in the parable of the rich fool.

He says,

"A man who had everything but what did he want?

More and more and more and more riches."

But he was poor inside.

So today you might have little physically, but spiritually you might be the richest person here.

Free truths from that this part of text.

Comparison becomes insecurity.

Insecurity becomes covetousness.

And covetousness becomes hostility.

So.

We have to be very careful how much we want other things.

So God has given us desire.

And emotion.

God has given us ambition.

There is nothing wrong with ambition as long as you know it is from God and for his blessing. Not our own.

If you know that God blesses and you're not the blesser,

you.

Stop.

Wanting someone else's story.

I had a good,

good friend and I still have a good, good friend.

Again,

his brother was an amazing singer.

His other brother was also an amazing singer.

Fricking now is in the military, succeeding at his identity.

However,

the trouble is he started to try to live his brother's identity issue is it's terrible at singing.

It's terrible at dancing.

And actually, it led him down to trying to commit suicide.

It wasn't until he realized that those.

Things weren't for him.

So how do I stop comparing my life as falling apart with anchor? Who knows what an anchor is?

What.

Do we anchor in? God's presence.

How.

Do I celebrate others when I'm hurting?

Remember,

their blessing is not your loss.

Let's celebrate with one another today as a church.

How do I avoid covetousness when I genuinely need what others have?

And this is one of the hardest things.

Trust God's provision.

You can say to me,

"Cameron,

you don't understand." Of course I don't understand.

I'm not in your shoes.

I can help. I can pray.

We can trust together.

This church is bound by individuals with different talents.

It's a diverse group of people coming together to glorify God.

And actually,

I'm really glad Jen got up to front to encourage people to go to the diversity thing and inclusion on Friday.

Because every one of us has a place here. In God's kingdom.

Every one of us.

So what about when life gets hard?

When comparison hits hardest?

Where it's unemployment, underpayment,

bills piling up, watching others get promoted,

let's.

Anchor three things. God sees you.

Sees you when no one else sees you.

God.

Will provide what you need.

But.

Interesting here with the kingdom of God, God uses lack to prepare you.

Why.

Does God allow me to struggle while others succeed?

Because God forms you in caves and not palaces.

God forms you from clay.

Whose ever used clay to form anything?

I'm terrible.

I was terrible at art. But it takes time.

It takes a moulding.

And some would say the refiner's fire.

So point three. You know what?

Glory to God.

Christ breaks comparison.

So in 12 to 16,

Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him.

But had departed from Saul.

So Saul removed him from his presence and made him a commander of 1,000.

He went out and came in before the people.

And David had success in all his undertakings.

But the Lord was with him.

And when Saul saw that he had great success,

he stood in fearful awe of him.

But all Israel and Judah loved David for he went out and came in,

performed the Lord was with David.

The same as the Lord is with us today.

Three truths from this text.

Christ restores identity.

Christ affirms calling.

And Christ provides contentment.

It was not until I realized that I could not live my dad's journey.

I could not live my sister's journey.

I could not live anyone's journey.

But I then found myself in a place that actually I found myself in a place that comparison wasn't

breaking me.

And I believe every one of us at times in our life compare.

What I'm challenging you today is don't allow that comparison to take you down a path.

But the same is the same as Saul.

Because each one of you has great blessings in your life.

And I want you to see that today.

I want you to see that today.

Walking confidently in a God-given lane.

As a church,

let's celebrate others because the God has a plan for all of us.

Rest in the truth that God's portion is for you and not for someone else.

So how does Jesus practically break comparison?

By giving us identity.

Not a digital identity card like Starmer once.

But a true identity.

A calling.

Unique.

To everyone.

So what does freedom from comparison and covetousness look like?

Peace when others rise.

Joy when others succeed.

Confidence in the talents and the embrace God has given each one of us.

But some of us today are going to say,

"Is God enough for me?"

He's never given me what others have.

Yes, in Psalm 73:

26, it says,

"My flesh and my heart may fail,

but God is the strength of my heart and my portion."

Forever and.

Forever that means when life is getting hard,

remember,

God is my strength of my heart and my portion forever.

Remember that if there's anything that you remember today,

even when my flesh and my heart may fail,

my God is my strength of my heart and my portion.

So what this means for our church and ministry today are healthy church rejects comparison.

Comparison and chooses celebration.

Comparing church competes celebrating church grows.

Comparison breeds jealousy, insecurity,

and division. However,

in Psalms 133,

how good and pleasant is it when God's people live together in unity?

A comparison-free church becomes a safe place where imperfect people can expand. Like a soufflé.

Ministry must flow from calling.

Not competition.

Saul ministered from insecurity at the end of his life.

David ministered from identity.

God didn't call our church to be another church.

He called it to be faithful.

Hebrews 12:1, I've already said this today.

Run the race marked out for you.

Ministry thrives when we serve from who God called us to be not who we compare ourselves to be.

Comparison distracts the church from its mission.

Saul stopped fighting the Philistines and started fighting David.

That's like fighting the internal when.

Church compared,

they stopped fighting darkness and started fighting each other.

To feel, "Man, it brings to snare."

But this is one thing as a church we have to realize.

Comparison-free churches releases people into their calling.

Leaders find this extremely hard.

Sometimes we have to let go.

In order to allow other people to grow.

Who knows.

As a church, this is a unique church.

And I'm not saying we don't take a good ideas from our churches.

But the church down the road is never going to be this congregation.

And just because the church down the road has 2 million people go to it,

it doesn't mean the teaching's great.

We go and we worship where God's at.

And we are a family today.

The Bible says we should test the Spirit.

We should test with the Word of God.

I'm not saying we can't compare to what the Word of God.

But what I am saying is we need to stop comparing today.

Don't be a Saul,

be a David.

Saul didn't lose the kingdom because of David was great.

Saul lost the kingdom because of comparison made him small.

David didn't become king because he coveted Saul's throne.

He became king because he trusted God's timing.

David was anointed king.

But.

It took years.

And years and years before he ever ruled as king.

So the encouragement today is if you want to give up, don't.

God is with us.

So comparison is the seed covetousness in this text is the root. Jealousy is the fruit.

Destruction is the harvest. But Jesus offers a new way.

Secure.

Identity rooted in calling anchored in grace.

You don't need someone else's portion today.

You need God's presence.

So today,

if you are struggling comparing yourself,

let's shut our eyes and give it to God.

Because we all need to give things over to God.

Father, today we come to you.

We ask you to increase our awareness of your working in our life.

Father, in the name of Jesus,

if there is comparison in our heart,

break it. Break.

It with your grace,

Father,

with your direction,

with your embrace, Lord. Father,

we come today with.

We pray you can encounter us, Lord.

Pray for healing over this church today,

over my life, and all of our lives, Lord.

Let.

Us stop comparing and may we start living in who you have us to be,

Lord.

But identify the talents Father, I pray for unity today. In this church,

pray against any seeds of comparison, Lord.

Father,

may we all speak.

To you shake off things of pulling us away from love, Lord. Shake them off, Lord.

And we desire to see your kingdom grow, Lord. Through your provision,

may your trust be the call.

The Word be.

Where we place our feet.

As.

A church today, may we grow together.

Amen.