

Sermon Discussion May 15, 2016

Overview

Witnessing the Israelites engage in explicit idolatry, it's possible to distance ourselves from this narrative and stand aghast at their foolishness. This passage reveals that the heart of sinful man is truly an "idol factory".

1. Exchange of Idolatry
2. Exchange of Authority
3. Exchange of Desires
4. Necessity of Judgment

As Christians we should always be examining our lives and uncovering the deeper idols that we have exchanged for God and His promises.

Quotations

"...the great redemptive religion which has always been known as Christianity is battling against a totally diverse type of religious belief, which is only the more destructive of the Christian faith because it makes use of traditional Christian terminology". "despite the liberal use of traditional phraseology modern liberalism... is a different religion from Christianity", "...it has really relinquished everything distinctive of Christianity". -J Gresham Machen Christianity and Liberalism

Understanding & Application

1. In what ways did the idolatry of Ch 32 mirror the proper covenant ceremony of Ch 24?
 - a. Can you think of an example in your life where Christian forms remained but your heart was no longer serving God?
 - b. Can you share an example of when "God has disagreed with you" and you've been confronted with His truth in a way that was disruptive to your will?
2. As we read versus 7-29, we see God's judgment in response to the Israelite's foolishness. Drew used the analogy of a bride committing adultery after the wedding and before the honeymoon could even begin. We want to take this seriously and avoid the pattern of corrupted Christianity: "A God without wrath brought men without sin into a Kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ **without a Cross.**"
 - a. How does this help us to see the seriousness of sin?
 - b. As we feel the weight of that, are you able to have a heart that longs for obedience as well as a desire for a savior?
3. A few weeks back, Drew shared something like this challenge: "I'll be okay as long as _____." Whatever we use to populate that blank that isn't centered on God and His affection for us should cause us to pause and consider what we are likely loving too much.
 - a. What are you tempted to use in that space?

4. Continuing with the challenge to identify our idols, work through these questions with those closest to you:
 - a. What energizes me?

 - b. What do I “obey” at any cost?

 - c. What irritates me?

 - d. About what do I get most anxious?

 - e. What can trigger an episode of depression in my life?

5. We need to consider deeper idols to get to the heart issue. Example: it’s not just money, it’s the chain of things that money provides and the security and confidence that those bring that we ultimately enslave us.
 - a. Can you give an example of a surface idol and then drive deeper to understand the idols underneath that are driving your heart?

6. Nature abhors a vacuum – identifying our idols should drive another exchange – one that is satisfied and joyfully content with God and His promises.
 - a. What new (or recovered) habits will you put in place to orient your heart towards God consistently in your life?