

Small Group Questions

Sermon Based Small Groups – February 5, 2012

Adult Education – Woodbury Community Church
Woodbury, Minnesota
Sermon Title: American Idols

Notes:

Pray: Each week, we want to take time to lift up one another's prayer concerns. True Christians pray for one another. Take some time at the beginning of your small group time to pray for each other. Be real with each other. If you are hurting, take the risk and share how you are feeling with the group. If you have something that God has blessed you with this week, share it. Give Him the glory for what He is doing in your life. Record the prayer requests in the "Notes" section on the right of this page, and make a commitment to pray for the needs of the people in your group throughout the week.

Opening Questions: Have you ever been to a country where people worship idols? Did you see the people engaged in idol worship? What was that experience like? How have you seen idolatry played out in our own country?

Read and Discuss: It's hard to believe that the Jewish people would turn to idol worship so quickly after being rescued by the miraculous intervention of God. Take some time to read Exodus 20:1-21. What do the Ten Commandments teach us about idolatry?

Why do you think 1/5 of the Ten Commandments have to do with idolatry?

Read this quote by Tim Keller and share what insights the quote offers you about idolatry:

Whatever we worship we will serve, for worship and service are always inextricably bound together. We are "covenantal" beings. We enter into covenant service with whatever most captures our imagination and heart. It ensnares us. So every human personality, community, thought-form, and culture will be based on some ultimate concern or some ultimate allegiance—either to God or to some God-substitute. Individually, we will ultimately look either to God or to success, romance, family, status, popularity, beauty or something else to make us feel personally significant and secure, and to guide our choices. Culturally we will ultimately look to either God or to the free market, the state, the elites, the will of the people, science and technology, military might, human reason, racial pride, or something else to make us corporately significant and secure, and to guide our choices.

No one grasped this better than Martin Luther, who ties the Old Testament and New Testament together remarkably in his exposition of the Ten Commandments. Luther saw how the Old Testament law against idols and the New Testament emphasis on justification by faith alone are essentially the same. He said that the Ten Commandments begin with two commandments against idolatry. It is because the fundamental problem in law-breaking is always idolatry. In other words, we never break the other commandments without first breaking the law against idolatry. Luther understood that the first commandment is really all about justification by faith, and to fail to believe in justification by faith is idolatry, which is the root of all that displeases God.

The Challenge

American Idols – Exodus 32

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Read and Discuss: Paul describes the wrath of God that is demonstrated against those who exchange the truth of God for idols. Read Romans 1:18-25. What insights to these verses give us into the heart of God? What do they teach us about the nature of people?

Saint Augustine said, “Idolatry is worshiping anything that ought to be used, or using anything that ought to be worshiped.” Do you agree or disagree with him? How do we use God instead of worshipping Him?

For Personal Reflection: Take some time to pray the words of David from Psalm 139:23-24 –

*23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!
24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!*

As you pray ask God to reveal anything that might currently be an idol in your life. Record what He reveals to you below:

Sharing: If you are willing, share at least one of your idols with your small group. As a group commit to praying for each other. In small groups, confidentially ought to be assumed and expected. Do not share what those in the group share outside of your group time. Pray that God will strip away the idols in our lives. Pray that God would be our chief concern, our greatest love and our consuming passion.

Prayer: As you close in prayer ask God to forgive you for the idols in your life.

Heavenly Father, thank you for revealing the things in my life that I have placed ahead of you. Forgive me for allowing these things to be idols in my life. With your strength and power, I commit myself to laying everything that gets in the way of my relationship with you at the foot of the cross. In Jesus’ name, Amen!