

Destroying Idols (Glorifying God, 2015 Sermon Series) Pleasant Plains 2-1-2015AM NICK ANGEL

- A couple weeks ago, in our auditorium class we discussed the story of King Josiah (**II Kings 23**) and how he cleaned house within Jerusalem and the people so that they could make a clean return to the pure worship and glorification of God. Let's note what Josiah did to clean up Israel and return God to His rightful place.
 - Josiah gathered all the people together and read the book of the covenant to them. (**vv.1,2**)
 - He made a covenant with the people and God to keep the commandments, testimonies, and statues of the Lord. (**v.3**)
 - Josiah gathered all of the idols and their paraphernalia from the house of the Lord and destroyed them. (**vv.4,6,11,14**)
 - He did away with all of the idolatrous priests. (**vv.5,20**)
 - He also broke down and destroyed all the places where idols were worshipped. (**vv.7,8, 12-19**)
- Josiah completely cleaned house and got rid of everything that had to do with the idols that the people of God had given themselves over to. He had read the book, made the covenant, and then he went to work on accomplishing the task of restoring the people back to God.
- As Christians, we have heard the Word of the Lord spoken to us. We have made a commitment to our God to serve Him, and we must make sure that we have removed the idols from our lives. Unfortunately, removing idols from our lives is much more easier said than done. We must remove the idols that we have in our lives. No, we more than likely don't have a little figurine that we need to crush up and throw in the trash, but it is very likely that we have other idols in our lives that need to be put out of the way so we can focus solely on Glorifying God in this life. Let's look at a good 3 step plan that can help us to rid of our lives of any idols that might get in the way of our Glorification of God.

3 Steps to Removing Idols from Our Lives

I. We must be able to identify idols in our lives.

- A. An idol is anything that is more fundamental to my happiness, identity, or sense of meaning than God.
1. We know from our last study that our sense of meaning should be to Glorify God in all that we do. (**Eph. 3:14ff**)
 2. Our identities should be that of Christ. We are Christians, after all, and we should live as Christ would direct us and people should be able to recognize that about us. (**Gal. 2:20**)
 3. Our happiness should be found in God and His ways. (**Psalm 1:1-3**)
 4. When one of these aspects of our lives isn't found in God, when something is the big rock in the stream of our lives besides God then we must understand that something is taking the place of God and that thing is an idol.
- B. There are two types of idols that we can fall before in this life: deep idols and surface idols.
1. Deep idols: These idols are the ones that drive all the other types of idols in our lives. These are the root idols.
 - a) Power- *"Life only has meaning/I only have self-worth if I have some sort of authority, power, or influence over others."* Diotrophes loved being "the guy" among all the people. (**III John 9**)
 - b) Approval- *"Life only has meaning/I only have self-worth if I am loved, respected, and accepted by _____"*
Some of the Jewish Rulers believed in Jesus but couldn't do without the approval of those others in the temple and because of that they wouldn't confess Jesus. (**John 12:42,43**)
 - c) Comfort- *"Life only has meaning/I only have self-worth if I experience a certain quality of life or a particular pleasure."* The Rich Young Ruler wasn't willing to give up the comforts of his wealth for Jesus. (**Mark 10:17-23**)
 - d) Control- *"Life only has meaning/I only have self-worth if I am able to achieve the perfect mastery over this particular area of my life."* Pharaoh was driven by his desire to control the Children of Israel and that led him to putting them under harsh conditions. (**Exod. 1:8-12**)
(THE CHURCH PLANTER, Darrin Patrick)
 2. Surface idols: These idols are easier to spot because they are the result of the deep idols.
 - a) Personal- *"Life only has meaning/I only have self-worth if I find true love, have this many kids, etc"*
 - b) Cultural- *"Life only has meaning/I only have self-worth as long as I am an American or reach this level of social status."*
 - c) Vocational- *"Life only has meaning/I only have self-worth if I average this much money in sales each year or make this much money."*
 - d) Religious- *"Life only has meaning/I only have self-worth if I can follow these particular rules (actions without heart)"*
- C. We relate to these idols in 3 different ways.
1. We love these idols.
 - a) In **Hosea 3:1**, we see God expressing His love for the people, but they did not love Him as they should because they had turned to the love of idols and their perceived blessings.
 - b) We very easily can find ourselves in the same situation where we begin to love other things more than God by focusing on them and committing ourselves to them.

2. We trust these idols.
 - a) God rebuked Israel for carrying around these wooden idols and trusting in them to do good for them when they have no power to do anything for them. **(Isa. 45:20)**
 - b) We can do this so easily. How often do we look towards other things in this life to help us without going to God first and foremost. We look to money or other things to give us happiness and fulfillment without God.
3. We obey these idols.
 - a) God was the King of Israel, but the people rejected God as their King that they should serve and obey. **(I Sam. 8:6-8)**
 - b) If we are not careful then we can fall into this trap of allowing something other than God lead us through this life. Our families, jobs, or interests can easily become the steering factors in our lives.

II. We must expose idols in our lives.

- A. We expose the idols in our lives through deep introspection of ourselves. These questions can help us pinpoint things that we should examine to see if we are setting them up as idols in our lives.
 1. What do I habitually think about? **(Matt. 6:19-21)**
 - Where does my mind continually go when there is nothing specific to think about?
 2. Where do I effortlessly spend my money? **(The silversmiths of Acts 19:24-28)**
 - Where am I willing to drop money really quickly without even thinking about it?
 3. Where do I effortlessly spend time? **(Martha was too busy with things to pay attention to Jesus, Luke 10:38-42)**
 - What things can I do all day long where I just completely lose track of time?
 4. What causes me to lose control of my emotions? What do I fear most? **(The disciples on the boat, Luke 8:22-25)**
 - Where does my mind continually go when there is nothing specific to think about.
- B. The bottom line question we must ask ourselves is this... "If I were to not have this thing, would I still be satisfied with my identity, happiness, and sense of meaning being found in God?"
- C. Once we have identified idols in our lives, then we can begin the next step of destroying the idols and shifting our love, focus, and glorification back to God.

III. We must destroy idols in our lives.

- A. We must recognize those idols in our lives.
 1. We cannot fix any problem that we don't acknowledge as being a problem.
 2. Once we recognize the idols in our lives, then we can begin the process of replacing those idols with the one that should be there to begin with, God.
- B. We must pray to ask for forgiveness and help from God.
 1. Going to God is a must when we recognize that something isn't right in our lives.
 2. We have the promise from the book of James that we can be healed or forgiven of our sins when we confess them and ask for repentance. **(James 5:16)**
 3. The same book also says that if we are lacking in wisdom that we can ask God for that, as well, and He will supply us with what we need in order to be pleasing to Him. **(James 1:5)**
- C. We must transform our affections.
 1. We must shift the focus of our lives from whatever the idol may be to the God of heaven.
 2. God must be the focal point of our lives. He must be that big rock in the stream that everything else has to move around.
 3. Nothing in this life is worth giving our souls to. The Father and Christ are the only things that we should focus and set our minds upon. We must focus on the things about because that's where it all is. **(Col. 3:1-7)**
 4. That doesn't mean that we can't enjoy the things of this life (family, hobbies, etc), but we must recognize that we only enjoy those things through God who gives them to us.
- D. We must be patient.
 1. Very few things in life can be quit cold turkey. We must be patient and be realistic in our approach to getting rid of idols in our lives. If we set expectations that are unrealistic then we can become discouraged very easily and just allow the idols to continue to have that reign in our lives. It is a process. **(Phil. 3:14)**
 2. If we are truly are committed to overcome our idols then Jesus will strengthen us to overcome. If Jesus has commanded it then He will give us what we need to get the job accomplished. **(Phil. 4:13)**

Finding and dealing with idols in our lives is an extremely difficult task. These are things that we all have normally, but sometimes they can take a seat at the head of the table of our lives where God should be. Oftentimes, we don't recognize that they have taken up a spot that God should have, but we should have the willingness to reprioritize our lives and put them where they should be and put God where He should be. May He help us to open our eyes and give us the strength to put Him first and only as the focus of our lives. He is worthy and He must be glorified in our lives.