

4-22-16
session 1

Idolatry Notes

Idolatry is used in two forms in the Scriptures: (1) the literal worship of hand-crafted idols or, more likely for us, (2) **blind or excessive devotion to something other than Christ, His mind, His heart, His ways.**

Famous examples in Scripture:

- Jonah was angry that God would have compassion on an enemy of Israel. His view that God's goodness, grace and favor should be shown only to Israelites, not to Gentiles, indicates he did not have on his heart what was on God's heart – and that's IDOLATRY since he had replaced Jonah – did not have on his heart what was on God's heart, namely the opportunity for the Ninevites to repent. When they did, Jonah was furious. It's hard (impossible) to have on one's heart what is on God's heart and be upset when God accomplishes what is on His heart. Key Verse: **Jonah 2:8** (while Jonah is in the fish – rather focuses one's perspective) **“Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs.”** Jonah's idolatry was his will/values over those of the Lord.
- Samson - from Judges 13:5, he had a tremendous calling- set apart to God from birth, and to begin the deliverance of Israel from the hands of the Philistines. The sad story of a man who had a mission from God, but took his eyes off of God, cocky about His unique purpose and calling. His idolatry may have been his calling, though a good calling and actually fulfilled at the death of Samson, his substitution of his calling for obedience to the Lord was his undoing.
- Solomon – it pleased God that Solomon had asked for wisdom, but he took his eyes off of the Lord, instead relying on his wisdom to get him through, and pursued 1000 foreign women and concubines. **1 King 11:1-6** His wisdom did not protect him from the idolatry of failing to keep the Lord the center. If he wrote Ecclesiastes, it's the musings of a man who knew the truth but didn't live it, and at the end of his life, it all seemed so meaningless.

Barbara Brown Taylor, in *Home By Another Way*: “I am convinced that 99% of us are addicted to something, whether it is eating, shopping, blaming, or taking care of other people. The simplest definition of an addiction (IDOLATRY), is anything we use to fill the empty place inside of us that belongs to God alone.”

Paul in Eph. 5:3-5 and Col. 3:5 specifically identifies greed as idolatry along with immorality and impurity – but mainly Paul is demonstrating that idolatry is the opposite of submission.

When it comes to idolatry, the danger is not in an item, it is in us!

John Calvin: Our heart is an idol factory.

St. Augustine (5th Century): For what am I to myself without You, but a guide to my own downfall?

Rick Warren: You are designed to worship God, and if you fail to worship Him, you will create idols to give your life to.

THE WAY OUT OF THIS MESS: Pretty much contained in Philippians.

What One Believes Jesus Said in Matthew 5

What Jesus Said

- | | | |
|---------|---|---|
| v3 | Blessed are the confident and self-sufficient
for theirs is the kingdom of others' admiration | poor in spirit
kingdom of heaven |
| v4 | Blessed are those who dismiss all pain
for they will never need comfort | mourn
be comforted |
| v5 | Blessed are the strong
for they will inherit the earth | meek
(same) |
| v6 | Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for truth
for they will be proven right | righteousness
be filled |
| v7 | Blessed are those who exact justice
for they will never need mercy | the merciful
be shown mercy |
| v8 | Blessed are the astute and wary
for they will be heralded as discerning | pure in heart
see God |
| v9 | Blessed are the confrontational
for they will be called towers of power | peacemakers
sons of God |
| v10 | Blessed are those who deflect persecution
for theirs is the peace of heaven | are persecuted
kingdom of heaven |
| v11, 12 | Blessed are you when people universally praise
you...because great is your reward on earth
and you have exceeded the prophets before you. | insult you, persecute you, and
falsely say all kinds of evil against
you because of ME...great is your
reward in heaven, for in the same
way, they persecuted the prophets
who were before you |