

The Rebellion against the Redeemer

Main Lesson: Idol worshipers distort true worship ([Exodus 32:1-6](#))

Idolatry is putting something or someone in the place of God. Anything you look to for what only Christ can give you--- joy, security, peace, meaning, significance, identity, salvation, and so on--- becomes an idol. Many don't believe idolatry is a problem because they only associate idolatry with shrines, temples, and carved images. But heart idolatry exists everywhere. Common idols include: money, sex, a romantic relationship, peer approval, competence and skill, secure and comfortable circumstances, beauty, brains, success and ambition. A heart that is filled with these things is consumed by them, that is why the bible urges that one should "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." ([Proverbs 4:23](#)).

Since worship is the outpour of our heart whereby we ascribe worth, favor, and esteem to the object of our worship; then that which we hold most dear and cling most closely to will always get the greatest worship from us. Jesus explained it like this "where your treasure is there your heart will be also" ([Matt. 6:21](#)), thus instructing us to "love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" ([Matt. 22:37](#)). If we allow idolatry into our hearts, then our acts of worship {singing, preaching, praying, obedience, etc...} will be like "salt that has lost its flavor" ([Matt. 5:13](#)) and instead of bringing honor to God, we only succeed in displeasing Him and despising His love.

This is the scene we come into at the foot of the mount Sinai. In the 32nd chapter of Exodus, the people of God, Israel, were asked to wait at the foot of the mountain while Moses went to commune with God on their behalf ([Ex. 20:18-21](#)). While waiting for Moses to return, the people fell back into old ways and constructed themselves an idol in the form of a golden calf and made it the object of their worship. It is puzzling when we consider the many encounters the people had with God up till this point that they still fell prey to the sin of Idolatry.

Why did Israel fall into Idolatry?

They disobeyed the word of God

Having just received the ten commandments, whose first command was the prohibition of the worshipping of other gods, the Israelites disobeyed and did the opposite of what was required of them. Interestingly, Israel claimed to be worshipping "the LORD", even offering up sacrifices to the golden calf ([Exodus 32:5](#)). This distorted worship shows us the importance of knowing God for who He truly is and not how we imagine him. Worship is built on a right

perception of God revealed through the scriptures and scripture reveals that Jesus is “the image of God” ([Col. 1:15](#)), and that “in Him the fullness of God was pleased to dwell” ([Col. 1:19](#)).

They distrusted the purposes of God

Instead of waiting patiently for Moses to return with instruction and word from God, the Israelites decided to move on with out him. In their impatience we get a glimpse at their distrusting hearts. Impatience and distrust are what Abraham and Sarah struggled with while waiting for their promise to come to fruition ([Gen. 16](#)), and it is what caused king Saul to lose favor with God ([1 Sam. 13:8-14](#)). Failing to trust God is a sin that leads to countless other sins, it was true for Abraham and Sarah, king Saul, the Israelites at the foot of mount Sinai, and it is true for us.

What we must keep in mind is that although God hasn’t given us a script detailing how our lives will play out, outlining the things to say and do, he has promised to be with us ([Matt. 28:20](#)), to bless us ([Jerimiah 29:11](#)), and to care for us ([Matt. 6:25-34](#); [Heb. 10:5-9](#)); if only we abide in him ([John 15:4-6](#)) and trust Him ([Heb. 11:6](#)).

They forgot the grace of God, thus failed to use their gifts for His glory

The people were instructed to remove their jewelry to use as material for the golden calf. Recall that the gold and jewelry that they had were given to them by God. It came to them from the plundering of Egypt. A provision that was put in place for them even before Moses went back to Egypt ([Ex. 3:20-22](#)). The gold came from God’s grace and it was offered to an idol instead of being used in a manner that would glorify God. We should enjoy Gods gifts, be thankful for his gifts, and use His gifts for the sake of the kingdom, not for idolatrous devotion.

Suggestions Till Next Time

Read Exodus 19 – 32

- Try to count how many time Moses journeys up and down mount Sinai

Finally [...] whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. (Philippians 4:8)

