TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Don Taylor / Opening Prayer by: Jerry Mallernee
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#647 Soldiers of Christ Arise
#650 Send the Light

Scripture Reading by: Pierce Balch
Communion Devotional by: Bobby Rader

#350 When My Love to Christ Grows Weak
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#648 Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus
Sermon "Living with Focus"
Philippians 1:12-18

#643 Sowing the Seed of the Kingdom
#639 Rescue the Perishing
Closing Prayer by: Owen

Our Small Groups will meet tonight.
Robert Ward's group will meet at the building at 5:00 p.m.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Feb. 4, 2024

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

The Difference Between Idols and False gods

This article was written by Wes McAdams and published on his blog, "Radically Christian," earlier this week. I thought it was timely on a couple of levels. For one, as we study through OT history in our Sunday morning Bible class, we encounter Israel making idols and worshipping false gods; this helps to clarify why even those graven images that ostensibly represented YHWH, like the golden bulls of Jeroboam, were forbidden. More importantly, for all of us, it gives practical guidance on what we might elevated to the position of gods in our own lives. It's worth your consideration (along with all the rest of his blog!). BP

Sometimes we use the terms "idols" and "false gods" interchangeably, but there is nuance to those words that might prove helpful. In fact, identifying our "idols" can sometimes help us recognize the "false gods" we didn't even realize we were worshiping. So, let's spend a few minutes thinking about the false gods and idols that are prevalent in our world (and perhaps, in our own hearts).

False gods vs. Idols
There is certainly quite a bit of overlap between "false gods" and "idols," but generally, an idol is something that can be seen. In other words, an idol is something visible. Idols in the Bible were often referred to as, "images."

In **Genesis 1:26**, God said, *Let us make man in our image…* The Hebrew word that is translated "image," in that verse, is "*selem."* The same word is used throughout the Old Testament to refer to idols. One example is **2 Kings 11:18**, *Then all the people of the land went to the house of Baal and tore it down; his altars and his images they broke in pieces…* The idols of the false god Baal are called, "images."

A false god, on the other hand, is typically thought to be invisible and transcendent. So, idols/images were made to represent and reflect the invisible god's presence. The pagan worshipers would direct their devotion to the image because it was thought to be a physical representation of their god.

The True Image of God
As was mentioned earlier, **Genesis 1:26** says the true and living God, YHWH, also commissioned images of himself. God's images (idols) are human beings. Each human—regardless of age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, mental capacity, physical capability, or life choices—is an image of God.

To be clear, "image of God" is not something you do, it is something you are. Before you were able to think, speak, or do anything else, you were an image of God. And if there comes a time when you can no longer do these things, you will still be an image of God.

This is the primary reason "graven images" were not to be made of YHWH. For instance, the golden calf that Aaron made in the wilderness was supposed to be an image of YHWH (see **Exodus 32:4-5**). This was wrong because YHWH has already made images, we are his images.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Ricky Lucas will be having surgery in February.

Gayle Coleman will be having in the future.

Jennifer Stelly, Patti Davis' daughter in law had surgery last week.

Bessie Warren is in Liberty Dayton Hospital with covid.

David Warren has covid.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen, Kelly McCain, Wayne Noonkester

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Deacons, Minister meeting Monday night at 6:30 p.m..

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, Feb. 6th at 8:00 a.m.

Ladies Brunch on Thursday, Feb. 8th from 9:30 –10:30 a.m. Come and enjoy brunch and fellowship in the fellowship room.

Valentine's Day Dinner

We will be having a Valentine's Day Dinner on Saturday, Feb. 10th from 6-8 p.m. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board or call the office to RSVP.
Youth are needed to help serve the meal. Please contact Brooks McKelroy. His number is 936-391-1270.
Please RSVP by Wednesday, Feb. 7th.

Sympathy

We extend our sympathy to Debra Faneros and her family on the death of her mother, Jeraldine Frazier. She passed away Thursday. Arrangements are pending.

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What Are Your Idols?
Now, it's time to look around your life and ask yourself, what are your idols? Spend a moment reflecting on these questions:

- What are the physical objects towards which you express devotion?
- Are there any inanimate objects you love so much you are tempted to speak (or even sing) to them?
- Are there any items you would fight someone to protect, because they represent something bigger, something intangible and transcendent?

I can think of a few examples, but I'm going to refrain from suggesting them, because I want us to examine our lives.

Choose one item that comes to mind with incredible sentimental value. Imagine someone desecrating that item, spitting on it, stomping on it, threatening to light it on fire. Does rage build up inside of you, to the point that you might want to hurt that person?

Do you see? We are ready to do harm to an actual image of God in order to protect a false image, an idol to a false god. I would argue that there is no object in the world that is worth harming an image of God (human being) in order to protect it. Humans are the true images of the true and living God.

What Are Your False gods?
This leaves the question, what are your false gods? If you can identify your idols, your objects of devotion—things you love, adore, praise, and protect—then you can probably discover the false gods behind those idols. Idols are the physical representations of false gods. So, ask yourself:

- Why do you love this particular object?
- What does it represent to you?
- Why does it fill your heart with certain emotions?
- What is the intangible idea behind this object to which you are devoted?

Many of us would like to convince ourselves we only have one God. However, it is very easy to become syncretic (combine two religions into one). Like ancient Israel and Judah, we often continue to worship the God of the Bible, but also take false gods into our hearts as well. We try to make God share his glory with others.

In other words, our loyalties often become divided. We are not pure of heart. We try to keep God, but also give our loyalty to ideologies, philosophies, and worldly pursuits. In his book, Counterfeit Gods, Tim Keller argues that when anything becomes "ultimate," it has become one of our gods. Concerning any important idea you hold, ask yourself, "Is this idea of such ultimate importance that I would destroy a true image of God in order to defend it?"

God is not interested in being our favorite God; he wants to be our only God. We must forsake our idols and renounce everything that rivals our loyalty to him. Devotion to God and love towards his images is the only path that leads to life.