

Being Free From The Image

Deut. 5:8-10

8 Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth:

9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me,

10 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

Introduction:

- Idol worship is always something that God has despised.
- We see this as one of the ten commandments that God has established.
- Our first response is, "Well, we don't do that today." We don't serve images.
- Really?

- What is an image?
 1. Man made
 2. The works of man's hands.
 3. Created by man
 4. In other words, it is something I make, or that is made by man, that I choose to worship.

When we worship something, we treat it as God. What is one of the qualities of God.

- We all know about love, mercy, grace, etc....
- But there is one in particular that I want you to notice.

Hebrews 13:8

8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

- In theological terms, it is called immutability. Unchangeableness.

- It is the basis for the “I AM” statements of God. The “I am that I am.” Always constantly in the present with no need to change.
- However, we see God at different stages DIFFERENTLY.
- Sometimes He is my Father, my savior, my king, whatever....
- He works in my life in different ways, and when God reveals Himself that way, we want to take a snapshot of God and make him STAY THAT WAY.

Exodus 6:1-3

6:1 Then the LORD said unto Moses, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land.

2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD:

3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them.

- But when we build an image, we restrict God. We want him to stay the same in our perception. We make him this much and no more.
- This is all there is of God and No More.
- You’ll never know EVERYTHING about GOD. You can’t know all things.

And the real kicker is that we know that we are supposed to be LIKE Him, and so what do we do? We set up a target, a goal, and work toward that image.

1 Corinthians 11:1

11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.

But it must be a moving target. I never get there and say “I’ve arrived”.

1 Corinthians 13:9-12

9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part,

10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

11 When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.

12 Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

We don't accomplish the end of this goal until after this life.

1 John 3:2-3

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

I. Three kinds of images that bind us if we worship them.

1. Our image of our self. (self-expectation)

- When we come to Christ, we all have expectations of what Christians act like.
- Any person on the street can tell you what a Christian should be like.
- We play roles all our lives.
- People on the street have no clue what a Christian should be like. Why? Because they have no idea of what Christ is really like.
- One of the temptations of Christ was "If you be the Son of God, then cast yourself off of this mount." If you're the Son of God, then act like it.
- Jesus didn't fall for it, neither should you.

2. Our image of others. (what we expect out of others)

- One of the greatest quotes I ever read, shortly before got married, was this, "When a man gets married, he starts acting like his father. When a woman gets married, she

starts acting like her mother. The problems arise because his father was never married to her mother.

- We place expectations upon others, and when they don't meet those expectations, we get angry.

3. The kind of image that others have of us. (what others expect out of us)

- It is called peer pressure, and it is what drives ninety percent of the world today.

1 Peter 1:13-15

13 Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.

14 As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

15 But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;

- **J.B. Phillips translates verse 13 as** "Don't let your character be molded by the desires of your ignorant days.
- In other words, don't act like you did when you were stupid.
- The world wants to give you an image of what is successful. What you have to achieve to be a success and we buy into it.
- Maybe we don't sacrifice our children in the valley of Gehenna unto Molech like they did in the Old Testament, but we sacrifice our children every day on the altars of what somebody else has decided will make us a success.

II. How images bind us.

Let's read a story together, and then we will pull some principles out of it.

2 Kings 7:1-5

7:1 Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.

2 Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the LORD would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

3 And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die?

4 If we say, We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die.

5 And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, there was no man there.

1. They render us unable to act because we are never able to attain unto the image.

- If they would've waited for an army to show up that looked like an army, they would have starved to death.
- There was an army available to fight, but it was afraid? Why? Because it didn't measure up to the image that they thought they had to be able to defeat the Assyrians.
- Some people never become Christians. Why? I can't live like that?
- Others because, "Nobody down there lives like a Christian." In other words, nobody else is worshiping the image that I'm worshiping, so I can't go there.
- Others because, "What would so and so think if I became a Christian?"
- God says unto all three, "Quit worshiping that image and worship me."
- 1. Just follow me.
- 2. Don't worry about what else is doing, just follow me.

- 3. Don't worry about what everybody else is thinking, just follow me.

2. We limit what God can do in our lives.

2 Kings 7:6-7

6 For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us.

7 Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, even the camp as it was, and fled for their life.

- God had the divine P.A. system ready the entire time, but he couldn't use it because nobody would move.

Matthew 13:54-58

54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

- Jesus couldn't even do miracles there because they couldn't quit seeing him as the carpenter's boy, Mary's son.

3. Images bind us by not being able to see what others can do for us.

2 Kings 7:9-14

9 Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some

mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.

10 So they came and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they were.

11 And he called the porters; and they told it to the king's house within.

12 And the king arose in the night, and said unto his servants, I will now show you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we be hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.

13 And one of his servants answered and said, Let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, I say, they are even as all the multitude of the Israelites that are consumed:) and let us send and see.

14 They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see.

- How could these guys help us, look at them. You mean to say that they are our deliverer?
- People can't help us. Why? Well I know more than they do. They don't even match my image. Look at them, they are lepers, not an army.

Matthew 7:1-5

7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

- Your right, we're lepers. Your right, we've got some stuff in our eyes.
- But your wrong in one sense, we can help, if we can introduce people to the savior.

Conclusion:

Let the image go. You're never going to be perfect. The people around you are never going to be perfect. And you're never going to measure up to the standards this world wants to put on you, quit worshipping the image and worship God.