

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Week three

Sermon notes // 10:30am

Exodus 20:4-6 // 'Commandment #2 - False Gods'

// THE GOD **WHO ISN'T THERE**

// THE GOD **WHO IS**

A LOOK AT THE NEW TESTAMENT

When you think about idols and idol-worship today, what comes to mind?

// Read 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

In what ways can knowledge (v1-2) be a good thing and a bad thing?

Why does Paul suggest that love is more important?

What two things do we learn about God the Father and the Lord, Jesus Christ?

How does knowing these things help us to worship only God?

Sacrificing food to idols was common practice in first-century Corinth. What is the reason that Paul gives to suggest that the practice of eating food that has been first offered to an idol is ok for a Christian to participate in? Why does Paul also indicate that it is not a great thing for Christians to do?

Phil Vischer, the creator of the children's series 'VeggieTales' says that anything that we are unwilling to let go of is an idol. This is a challenging but true statement. Think of ways that we can encourage each other to let go of our idols.

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WAY IN

Reflection: Sit for 2 minutes in silence asking God to help you focus on him and his word. You may need to confess, ask for courage, for joy or rest. Ask that God would refresh you as you study.

Whilst talking to a friend about your faith, your friend says to you “I like to think of God as...”, and then lists several characteristics about God they like - some of which you agree with, and some you’re not sure are that biblical! What do you say next?

A friend confides in you that they are struggling with guilt about an event in their past. They know that God forgives, but they still struggle to experience it. They show you a passage in the Old Testament that speaks of God’s anger at sin, and then asks you, “What do you think God is really like?” What do you say?

A LOOK AT EXODUS

// Read Exodus 20:4-6

What would verse 4 have meant for the Israelites? What does it mean for us today?

The reason why they shouldn’t have idols is because God is a ‘jealous God’. When you think of jealousy, what comes to mind? What surprises you and strikes you about the fact that God is a ‘jealous God’? How does this change the way you see God?

Compare his punishment and his love in verse 5-6. What encourages you and saddens you about these words?

// Read Psalm 115

On a piece of paper create two columns – one with ‘Idols’ written at the top and one with ‘God’ written at the top. Go through the Psalm and compare God with the idols that are mentioned. List everything that you see there. Having done this, why do you think people choose to worship idols instead of God?

What idols might we be tempted to worship today? Psalm 115:8 is a scary verse...what are the effects that our contemporary idols have on us?

// Read Isaiah 9:6-7

These verses are often read at Christmas, as they point forward to Jesus. Verse 7 says ‘The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this’. The word ‘zeal’ has a similar root as ‘jealousy’ in Hebrew. In other words, the reason that Jesus came is because God is jealous, as Exodus says. How does this impact how you see Jesus?

What effect does this have on your understanding of God’s attitude to your friends and neighbours who aren’t Christians? Are you able to think of practical ways to help them see what God thinks of them? (Pray for each other to be bold in sharing God’s love.)

QUOTE TO REFLECT ON

“In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship... If you worship money and things - if they are where you tap real meaning in life - then you will never have enough. Never feel you have enough. It’s the truth. Worship your own body and beauty and sexual allure and you will always feel ugly, and when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally plant you. Worship power - you will feel weak and afraid, and you will need ever more power over others to keep the fear at bay. Worship your intellect, being seen as smart — you will end up feeling stupid, a fraud, always on the verge of being found out. And so on.” (David Foster Wallace)

Is he right? How might this change the way you see God?