

Worship
Tear Down Every Idol (Part 1)
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It's our joy this morning to begin a new series on the issue of worship. Nothing is more foundational, nothing more crucial, nothing more vital to the Christian life and experience than worship. It is absolutely right that we as a church would take the next number of weeks to study this issue together. And this morning as we begin this series, I think it's good at the very start to lay down three foundational principles. This will be the foundation on which everything we have to say in the next number of weeks will be built: three very basic foundational principles.

Number 1, the end for which God made the world, the end for which God made the world was His own glory. This really deserves a message all of its own and I'm sure at some point I will do just that. This morning instead let me just touch on it as one of these foundational principles. I think most of us understand this even intuitively as believers. We understand what Jonathan Edwards said in his little tract called, "The End for Which God Created the World." He says, "All that is ever spoken of in the Scripture as an ultimate end of God's works is included in that one phrase the Glory of God."

Robert Raymond put it this way, "the Christian who gives the Bible its due will learn that just as the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever, so also the impulse that drives God and the thing He pursues in everything He does, is His own glory." You can see that of course, especially in God's great acts. I've reminded you of this before. There are a number of passages that deal with God's glory, but just think for a moment about the greatest acts of God. If those were for His glory, then certainly it's a demonstration that everything God does is for His glory.

Think for a moment about creation. Why is it that God created this ball flung out in the vast reaches of space? Why did He create the universe in which we dwell? Psalm 19:1 reminds us that the heavens declare, they preach the glory of God. Romans 1 reminds us that God put His glory on display in the created world, even His invisible power and His deity. What about providence? What about God's ordering the affairs of the world to accomplish His ends? Well in Isaiah 48, Isaiah 48:11, God reminds us about His work of providence and why it is that He does what He does. Isaiah 48:11, He's been talking about what He's doing with Israel, and in

what follows He declares His work with Israel and all that He's going to do. In the middle of that context of God's providence with His people, He says this, verse 11, "For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can *My name* be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another." [God says, I'm going to so order the affairs of the nation Israel for this reason and for this purpose, to accomplish My glory.]

What about the great work of salvation? If you look at John 12, in fact turn there with me for a moment, John 12, Jesus has just spoken with the Greeks that came seeking Him the week before His crucifixion. He foretells His death, and notice in John 12:27, Jesus anticipating all that was coming in the week that lay ahead of Him and He says,

"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour." [He's talking about His crucifixion, the bearing of God's wrath on behalf of sinners. And in that context, He says,] "Father glorify Your name." [God in the midst of suffering, in the midst of my sin bearing, in the midst of my enduring Your divine wrath against sin, be glorified.] And if there's any doubt about it, notice the Father's response verse 28,] "Then a voice came out of heaven: "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

God said that's exactly right, that's what Your work at the cross is all about, it's to bring glory to My name. And of course, the personal application of salvation, that same point is made in Ephesians 1 where we're told that we are chosen by God, we are saved, we are rescued for the praise of the glory of His grace. Again, this deserves an entire message, and it will get it at some point, but I hope you see just in those few verses that it is clear that God acts for His own glory. And that is absolutely foundational to an understanding of worship.

The second foundational principle that builds on that one that we need to just have as a basic presupposition to our study. Because the end for which God made the world was His own glory, number two the chief end of man therefore is to glorify God. The chief end of man is to glorify God. Of course, you remember, those of you who grew up with any form of the catechism, either the Presbyterian form or the Baptist form, you're familiar with the great reality what is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Why is that the answer? Well, it's taught throughout the Scripture, but my favorite is in Romans 1. Turn there with me for a moment. Romans 1, here we see it negatively, in verse 18 of Romans 1 we find that God's wrath is revealed from heaven against those who hold down the truth. What truth? The truth about

God, notice he goes on in verse 19 to say, "... that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident..."

Listen there isn't a single person in the universe who will ever be able to stand before God on the day of judgment and be able to say, I didn't know. God made it evident. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power, and divine nature have been clearly seen being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. Now watch, verse 21, they failed to respond to the revelation of God, the truth about God. How should they have responded? "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God..." Literally they did not glorify Him as God.

You understand that that is the chief sin of mankind. From God's perspective man's chief end is to give Him glory, and to fail to do that is the greatest sin. As an intelligent being, made in the very image of God according to the Scripture, the primary way that man brings glory to God is by worshiping Him. Worship is the ultimate priority of every person.

Or let me put it in the form of a third foundational principle. Not only is the end for which God made the world His own glory, not only is the chief end of man therefore to glorify God, but the third foundational principle would be this: you were made to worship. You were made to worship. In the coming weeks, we'll study this at great length, but let me just sort of, introduce to you a passage we'll study in a couple of weeks.

Turn to John 4, John 4, you remember Jesus' interchange with the Samaritan woman? And as soon as things become uncomfortable, as soon as the Lord puts His finger on the sin in her life, she changes the subject, as unregenerate people love to do. You've encountered this at work or in talking with your family. When it gets hot, when it gets uncomfortable, when the issue becomes their own personal sin, let's talk about something else. How about those Bears? In this case she changes it to the issue of worship, where exactly should we worship, verse 20;

"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus said to her, Woman believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father." [Now watch verse 22,] "You worship what you do not know;" [you don't even know the true God, and yet you're still worshipping.] "we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers” [now what’s implied by the phrase true worshipers, that there are false worshipers. Here’s this woman worshipping something she doesn’t even know. It’s not the true God who’s revealed Himself to Israel. But she’s a worshiper.] “... when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth...”
Now watch the end of verse 23, “for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.”

You understand that Jesus here is identifying the entire reason God set out on a program of redemption. It was to bring around Himself and His Son true worshipers. This was the divine mission. People have within themselves, they were made by God to worship and they will worship, like this woman, they will worship something even if it’s not the true God. John Calvin put it this way, “since there never has been from the very first, any quarter of the globe, any city, any household even without religion, this amounts to a passive confession that a sense of deity is inscribed on every heart.”

But fast forward for a moment, if you don’t believe what I’ve said so far, fast forward to heaven. What occupies redeemed humanity in the presence of God both now and forever? What is it that mankind regenerated, made to be like he ought to be, what will he be doing forever? Turn to Revelation 4, Revelation 4:10, the twenty-four elders, representative of the church here in Revelation,

“... will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying,
Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for
You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

Chapter 5:14, “... the four living creatures kept saying, ‘Amen,’” [to this peon of praise about creation and redemption,] And the elders fell down and worshiped.”

We’ll look at this in a number of weeks when we come to the essence of worship. How better to learn worship than to look at how it’s done in heaven? But what I want you to see is that what redeemed humanity, made right with God and now in His presence what they are doing today, what you will do when God takes you from this world, what I will do both now and forever, is worship because we were made to worship. You know this is such a sad reality isn’t it, because people spend their whole lives looking for purpose and meaning. Looking for their place in the cosmos, and here it is. You were made in time and eternity to worship.

This year I finally gave in to my wife and children and decided to add another member to our family. After stalling as long as I could, I finally got a puppy. I don't know if I was on cold medicine at the time, or perhaps it was the beginning of senility, but in August we drove to Weatherford and picked up Dickens, and he is, a little Shih Tzu. For the first few months both his existence and mine were at times seriously in jeopardy. But while I'll never be the dog whisperer, he and I have reached an understanding. I am, and always will be, the big dog. And as long as he understands that, we'll get along just fine. But before we decided exactly what kind of breed of dog to get, as is typical for me, I did a lot of research. And that research was very helpful. In my research I discovered a number of breeds that I didn't want for a number of reasons. A lot of times it was because of why they were bred in the first place.

Now at the risk of alienating several of you who are part of the church, I discovered for example that we did not want any kind of Terrier. Terriers are cute little dogs. If you have one I'm thrilled for you, but they were originally bred to hunt and kill small rodents. Now, that in and of itself ought to raise some concerns just right out of the gate. And since most small rodents live or hide in the ground, Terriers have to dig to get to those rodents. In fact, they love digging so much that they'll do it when there's not a small rodent to be seen for miles. Terriers are hard-wired to hunt for small rodents. You can dress them up in pink sweaters, you can put bows in their hair, you can teach them semi-polite behavior, but what you can never do is change what that dog was hard-wired to do.

And the same thing is true about man. He was made by God to worship. He can deny that, he can stay away from organized religion, he can even claim to be an agnostic, or an atheist, but what he can never do is change what he was hard-wired to do, and that is to worship his Creator. You say but most people don't worship, or at least don't worship the true God. So, let me ask you this question. What happens when a creature made by God to worship refuses to worship the true God? Make sure you understand this because this is absolutely foundational, this is key. He does not cease to worship. He's hard-wired to worship, he will worship, he is worshiping, every human being in the world today is worshiping. You are worshiping. The question isn't: is he or she worshiping? The question is: who or what?

Let me make it very personal, you are worshiping someone or something today. If it is not true biblical worship solely, and that's the key word, solely offered to the true God then you are engaged in what the Bible calls idolatry. Before we come to the true worship of the true God I want us to take a couple of weeks to see what we will worship if we refuse to worship God and Him alone.

Now you may be thinking, why, I mean is this really important? We don't worship who worships idols today? Living in twenty first century America, we tend to think of idolatry as the disgusting practices of ancient cultures. It just simply isn't a problem in today's world. Really, well why is it the *World Almanac* says that there are some 362 million people in our world who are Buddhists. 388 million are Chinese folk religionists, 820 million are Hindus, 1.2 billion are Muslims. Do you realize that only 17 percent of the worlds population would call themselves non-religious? Are they all worshipping the true God? Absolutely not. And what about that 17 percent, are they simply not worshipping, not on your life, because they are hard-wired by God to worship.

You say okay, but that's the world, yeah, I understand that, but we don't worship idols in America. Well, first of all, you need to get in touch with reality because when I was at Grace Church, for example, I remember our very first Sunday, back in 1987 out in Los Angeles. We're coming down the freeway, and we pull off the freeway, and we knew the church was near by and sitting right there was this large attractive building. And I looked at Sheila, and I said, this is wonderful, just down the street from Grace Church is a great Chinese restaurant. Well in fact, it happens to be the largest Buddhist temple in the western hemisphere. So, even that kind of idolatry happens here.

Some people however think, well you know the real problem with our culture is not that we are superstitiously religious, that we worship idols, but that we're just too secular. That's our real problem; we're just a secular country. Listen, at the same time that our modern world congratulates itself on its criticism of the gods of wood and stone, it creates its own pantheon of idols just as prolifically. Understand this; idolatry is as great a problem today in America here in this city and even here in this church, as it has ever been. By the time we're done over the next few Sundays, I think you will see your Bible and our culture in a whole new light.

Now today, in the time that we have remaining, I just want to give you the biblical history of idolatry, the biblical history of idolatry. I want to briefly trace its history through human history. Now this just isn't just to give you information or facts. Stay with me, there's a very important reason with immense ramifications. So, stick with me for the next few moments, and we'll pull it together at the end.

There was probably idolatry in the world that perished with the flood, but we're not told of it. We're told that ever imagination of the hearts of men was only on evil continually. And in Galatians 5, Paul tells us that idolatry is part of the work of the flesh. Certainly, that world that

perished was guilty of that, and so we have every reason to believe there was idolatry then but we have no record of it in Scripture. We do know that the ancient world after the flood was primarily polytheistic. You learned in your history classes about the Samaritans. What many scholars believe was the very first civilization. About the mid-fourth century B.C. the Samaritans had hundreds of deities in their pantheon of idolatry, they were polytheists. What about the Mesopotamians there in the fertile crescent, that area of the world that birthed humanity, where undoubtedly the Garden of Eden was? They too were polytheistic. The Egyptians: polytheistic. Now how could this be so shortly after the flood, so shortly after God started over? Well next week, Lord willing, we'll talk about the source of idolatry, why all these cultures so soon after creation were idolaters.

But when we turn to the pages of Scripture our first biblical encounter from a chronological time frame with idolatry is with Abraham and his family. Turn back to Genesis 11, Genesis 11 the end of the chapter verse 31 we read, Sarah took Abram his son, excuse me, "Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran, his grandson, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went out together from Ur of the Chaldeans in order to enter the land of Canaan;" verse 1 of chapter 12 gives us God's command to them, "Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you;"

Now here in Genesis we're not told about Abram's spiritual background, but elsewhere we learned that before his conversion his life was filled with idolatry. In Joshua 24:2, "Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, "From ancient times your fathers lived beyond the River, *namely*, Terah, the father of Abraham ... and they served other gods.'"

There were some 1500 gods in the Mesopotamian pantheon, where Ur was. Abraham's family probably worshiped the Mesopotamian moon god, sin. God in His marvelous sovereign grace reaches down and in the midst of that pagan idolatry and saves Abraham, set's him apart for Himself. And although Abram put away his idols and worshiped the true God, his family brought its idolatry with it. Idolatry is first mentioned after Abraham's call in Genesis 31:19, when Rachel steals the household gods. Now it may be that she had an affinity for the gods of her childhood, or it may be, as some believe, that these gods were tied to fertility and she worshiped that her entire life, as you know, in the biblical account. Or it may be, as some think, that these gods were all about financial prosperity, because whoever owned them, whoever had them upon the father's death was the main inheritant. Regardless it doesn't matter, they were there, they were present in the family. In fact, when Jacob returns to Canaan 8 to 10 years after

he returns to Canaan fleeing from his brother, Jacob, in Genesis 35, has to urge members of his household to put away their idols.

But without question it was during the 400 years in Egypt that Israel became most tainted with idolatry. Jacob, you remember was 70, goes down into Egypt: they leave, 2 million people and they took their idols with them. They brought it with them out of Egypt, Joshua 24:14, Joshua says, "... put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD."

In Ezekiel, in fact turn back to Ezekiel. Ezekiel reminds the people that they never got away from Egyptian idolatry. Ezekiel 20:7, God says,

"I said to them," [that is to those who left Egypt,] 'Cast away, each of you, the detestable things of his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt; I am the LORD your God.' "But they rebelled against Me and were not willing to listen to Me; they did not cast away the detestable things of their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt."

So, you can see that God's people continued to collect idols. They brought them from Ur. Now they collect them in Egypt and bring them with them. You see it of course in Exodus 32 where they erect the golden calf, which we'll look at in closer detail over the next couple of weeks. Even after 40 years of wilderness wandering, even after all of those 21 and older died, and a new generation came along, just before they entered the promised land, the people of Israel joined the Moabites in worshiping Baal. You can see it in Numbers 25. But without question when you look at the idolatry of Israel, the primary influence in Israel toward idolatry came when they entered the promised land from a group of people called the Canaanites. You're familiar, if you're a Bible student at all, with the Canaanites. Their worship is called Baal worship, after their primary god. But god or lord, Baal means "lord of the storm and the rain".

Now when you look at the Canaanite religion, and I think it's important that we do for a moment, because you need to understand the context in which these people lived. The places of worship for Baal were elaborate temples, but there was no central sanctuary, so alters could be set up to Baal on virtually every hill. These places came to be known as the high places. High places were simply alters that were originally located on or near the summit of hills in order to be closer to the gods. Later they were even built in valleys and in towns, according to Jeremiah 7:31.

They would be marked with a pole or a pillar or some other symbol that indicated this was an acceptable spot on which to worship Baal.

The worship of Baal was sexually centered and particularly exhibitionist. Baal and Asherah were regarded as voyeur deities whose own libidos were excited by viewing orgiastic rights or sacrificial acts of special brutality and blood letting. The raised platform on a hill was intended to let the gods see more clearly. Prescribed worship involved several things. It involved sacrifices, animal or grain offerings usually. It involved religious prostitution always. Ritual prostitution of both sexes was common in the worship of Baal. They even had a recognized homosexual guild in their temples. Why was this so much a part of their worship? Because Canaanite religion at its heart was a reflection of its gods. And the gods were grossly sensual and perverse, and their activity centered in sexual activity. Baal impregnated Asherah in their midst, and the rainfall that comes down upon the earth was attributed to Baal, and it was thought to represent his semen falling to earth to fertilize and impregnate the earth. The cultic prostitutes were merely helping the worshipers act out the drama.

The worship of Baal occasionally involved child sacrifice. In Jeremiah 19:4 and 5 we learn of that. We don't know why they sacrificed their children, there are two probabilities. One of them is out of sheer superstition, like the couple I mentioned last week in India who were arrested for sacrificing their children, their 9 and 7-year-old boys in order to please their gods. So sometimes it's just superstition. But other times, I'm convinced, it was for convenience. It served in a sense the same purpose that abortion serves today. We don't need another kid, it's only going to be in the way, and here's a way that we can legitimately dispose of it. Amazingly there are still Baal aficionados even today, there's even a website, for Baal. So, this was the primary temptation to idolatry to the people of God in the Old Testament, and it continues through the rest of the Old Testament. It was through the period of Judges, which I won't take time to show you. During David's reign there is very little record of idolatry, but after his death the influence of idolatry, and particularly of Baal, grew dramatically. Turn to 1 Kings, 1 Kings 11:5, let's start at verse 4,

For when Solomon was old, his wives turned his heart away after other gods; and his heart was not wholly devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father *had been*. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians and after Milcom, [another name for Molech] the detestable idol of the Ammonites. Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not follow the LORD fully, as David his father had done. Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable idol of Moab, on the mountain which is east of

Jerusalem, and for Molech the detestable idol of the sons of Ammon. Thus also he did for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

Incredible, the son of David, a man after God's own heart. Upon Solomon's death, as you know, the kingdom of Israel was divided. In the northern part of Israel, in the northern ten tribes, Jeroboam, the first king of the north, set up golden calves at Dan and Bethel. It was an effort to keep the northern 10 tribes from going to Jerusalem and therefore consolidate his power. These golden calves were either images of the Canaanite deities, or possibly symbols of their presence, in much the same way that the Ark of the Covenant was a symbol of God's presence. But let's think for a moment about the southern kingdom. In the southern kingdom of Judah, under Solomon's son Rehoboam, it was no better. Look at 1 Kings 14, 1 Kings 14:21,

Now Rehoboam the son Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years.... [verse 22,] "Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord, and they provoked Him to jealousy more than all that their fathers had done, with the sins which they committed. For they also built for themselves high places and *sacred* pillars and Asherim on every high hill and beneath every luxuriant tree. There were also male cult prostitutes in the land. They did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord had dispossessed from before ... [them].

Incredible, this is David's grandson. If you really want to see how it had permeated the land of Judah, turn to 2 Kings for a moment. Second Kings 23, here's how bad it got. Second Kings 23:4, under Josiah a revival takes place, but notice what Josiah had to deal with. Notice what had happened in Judah. "... the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest" [this is verse 4 of 2 Kings 23] "and the priests of the second order and the doorkeepers, to bring out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; and he burns them outside Jerusalem...."

He did away with the idolatress priests whom the kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, even the area surrounding Jerusalem. They burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the constellations and all the hosts of heaven; he brought out the Asherah from the house of the LORD. Verse 7, "He also broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes which *were* in the house of the LORD;" Look at verse 10,

He also defiled Topheth which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire for Molech. [In other words, child sacrifice was happening in Israel.] He did away with the horses which the kings of Judah had given to the sun at the entrance of the house of the Lord. [Verse 12,] The altars which were on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, he broke down; . . .

You get the idea; idolatry by this time had absolutely permeated the people of God. All of Israel's prophets spoke against the idolatry, and in the end it was primarily Israel's idolatry that led to her downfall at the hands of God. The northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians in 722 B.C. Why? Read 1 Kings 17:7 and following, it was because of idolatry. The southern kingdom, Judah, fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Again, the primary reason given is her idolatry. Second Kings 23:26 and 27, it was only after 70 years of Babylonian captivity that Judah was permanently broken of her desire for Baal.

But that isn't where the story of idolatry ends in Scripture. Because of course, the Greeks, and the Romans, and the cultures throughout the rest of human history have continued to be drunk with idolatry. And in New Testament times the Greeks and the Romans, who came to faith in Christ, were easily tempted to be drawn back into the idolatry that they had known before Christ and which permeated their cultures.

Now, why do I take the time to show you all of that? And there's so much more obviously that could be shown, that's a brief sketch of the history of idolatry among the people of God. You understand why this is so crucial? If the Old Testament people of God were so easily influenced by the gods around them, and if New Testament believers, living among pagan idolaters were drawn toward that worship, then what kind of arrogance would lead us to conclude that we are immune from the gods of our culture.

Some Christians are tempted to say okay, so idolatry is an issue in the world at large, and perhaps even here in America, but you can't be saying that people who claim to be Christians worship idols, can you? Listen, the biblical data makes it clear that idolatry is not just a problem out there beyond the doors of the church. In fact, almost all of the passages about idolatry I just showed you, and many, many others, almost all of the passages about idolatry in the Scripture address their influence on the people of God. In his excellent book, *No God But God*, Oz Guinness writes,

in both the Old and New Testaments idolatry is clearly the supreme threat to faith because it grows from the deepest desires and motivations of the human heart, and thus is a barrier to repentance, lordship, and the first and greatest commandment, to love the Lord our God, and tolerate no third party or rival allegiance in our hearts.

Do you understand that there is a serious danger of God's people embracing idols? There is a serious danger of you and of me embracing idols. You see the idolatry the Scripture addresses as we will see in the coming weeks is not merely that of people falling down in front of a carved piece of wood or metal, it takes a lot of different forms. And the real problem with idolatry are those much more insidious forms, those much more cultured and educated than obvious forms.

Turn to 1 John 5. If you doubt me, listen to the Apostle John, listen to how he concludes his first epistle. After this wonderful letter, meant to give the people of God confidence in their faith in Christ. He says in 1 John 5:21, he's just said, let's go back to verse 20,

And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, [it's a term of endearment, he's saying listen you whom I love, you who have confessed Christ as Savior and Lord,] Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

The problem is not stuck in the ancient past. The problem is here in America, in our world, in our city, in our church, and in our hearts. Paul said the same thing to the Corinthians. Turn to 1 Corinthians 10, as he talks about the issues of spiritual, or excuse me of Christian liberty and he warns them to avoid Israel's mistakes and the wilderness wanderings, not to run their liberty out to the edge, not to flirt with disaster. He mentions idolatry, and then he turns to that subject in verse 14, of 1 Corinthians 10, "Therefore my beloved, flee (run) from idolatry."

Next week if the Lord wills we'll look at the many different forms idolatry takes, and you will see why this is an a very apt and appropriate warning. While you and I may never, I hope in God's goodness and grace, we'll never fall down before some piece of wood or some block of stone, we are every bit as susceptible to idolatry as anyone who has ever lived, because our hearts, as John Calvin said, are factories of idols.

Let's pray together.

Our Father, forgive us for our arrogance to imagine that we are above idolatry, that we are above being influenced by the culture around us and the idols that our culture worships.

Father, teach us in the coming weeks how to recognize those idols and how to rip them from their places in our lives and in our hearts. Teach us to tear down every idol so that we may worship You alone, so that we may have no god, but God.

We pray it in Jesus name and for His glory, Amen.