
Faith or Idols

Luke 12:13-21

“More than a statue”

One day when the Sunday school teacher had given a lesson on idols, the eight-year-old Trent asked his father on the drive home, “Dad, do you know what an idol is?” His thoughts were interrupted by the question, and Dad replied without giving it much thought. He hadn’t planned on exploring the subject to any extent.

“Well, it is something that people worship or bow down in front of, like a carving, or a statue.” Dad answered. As with any child-like discourse, the next question followed logically, then what is worship?

“When you worship something, you care about it so much that you give it attention, honor, and respect. You think very much of it,” the father attempted to explain. This was a tough one. “An idol can be anything or anybody that takes the place of God, or of our highest loyalty. So when we worship it, we give all of our attention and honor to something that takes our loyalty, or the place of God.”

Trent thought for a moment, “Dad, Grandpa has an idol, doesn’t he? that old car that he keeps, so perfect and won’t let us touch—that’s his idol.”

Reflection

In the Scripture passage today we see a father and a boy. The father is scratching for all the faith he can pull together, and then he asks for more. There are two great issues we all face about our belief—intensity and object. Many of us are very intense in our commitment to a pet idol. We invest time, money, attention, practice and thought into the object of our loyalty. If our obsession with anything takes away from the intensity of our loyalty to God, we are practicing idolatry. God must be our focus. When God is number One in our loyalty and attention, then we have freedom to enjoy the things he gives us.

It doesn’t need to be a carved image; it might even have four sport wheels.

Accountability and Application

A clarifying question is: Do I own it, or does it own me? Think about that. Think about the things in your life that may be idols to you. Do they own you? Could you easily rid yourself of them? Make a note of those things, and describe the idolatry. Describe their control over you. Purpose to make a change.

PRAYER: God, I confess that I get ensnared by things. Sometimes I get so lured into my job and success that I begin to think I’m the center of it all. Let me see you as the center around which I order my life. Forgive my selfish preoccupation.

Luke 12:13-21 (NIV)

The Parable of the Rich Fool

¹³Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

¹⁴Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?”

¹⁵Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

¹⁶And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. ¹⁷He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’”

¹⁸“Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’”

²⁰“But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’”

²¹“This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.”