

Sermon Reflections

Exclusive Worship: No Imitations (Exodus 20: 4-6)

Summary: Don't settle for any imitations! Guard your heart from idols.

We are not so accustomed to seeing golden images intended for worship in our contemporary Western context, yet the second commandment remains relevant and convicting to us. It was John Calvin who wrote that "the human heart is a perpetual idol factory." We are constantly tempted to elevate lesser things, lesser people, lesser desires above God in the affections of our heart, and to serve them, even to the point of disobeying God in their pursuit.

v.18 To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him? v.25 "To whom then will you liken Me, Or [to whom] shall I be equal?" says the Holy One. {Isaiah 40:18, 25 NKJV}

1. Don't settle for imitations. v. 4

- Every created thing has limits that God does not have. "Who is like the Lord our God?" asks the Psalmist. No one. What representation could possibly be adequate to compare to Him?
- How did God choose to reveal Himself on Mount Sinai? See Deuteronomy 4:12-13. How does this, even today, point us to the primacy of His chosen method of revelation?

2. Don't share His worship. v. 5a

- What implications does this command have toward the discipline of our own imaginations in prayer and worship? How might we be tempted to substitute an artificial image from contemporary media for the truth of scripture? As you consider what is permissible in modern media about Jesus, how do you take pains to be "careful?"
- Jesus taught the woman at the well about appropriate worship. See John 4: 19-26. What can we learn from this passage that complements the second commandment? How must we worship Him?

3. Don't suppose His indifference. vv. 5b-6

- Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? {James 4:5 ESV} Read the rest of James 4:1-7. How does this passage illustrate our own current struggles with the kinds of idols WE erect in OUR hearts? The Lord desires our pure and unadulterated worship.
- What is the reward from God toward those who worship Him appropriately? Just how expansive and enduring is His reward? How will you worship Him today? See Romans 12:1-2

For further study: Reflect on the amazing gift God has given to us through the revelation of His Living Word: John 1: 1-18 and Hebrews 1: 1-3