

Jesus the One and Only: Idols In the Heart

**Ezekiel 8- Still greater abominations: Idol of jealousy at altar gate, 70 Elders of Israel with priest in dark room carved with abominations, women weeping for Tammuz (thou shalt be shriveled up), and 25 men backs to temple facing east**  
**Acts 17:16, 22-23** <sup>16</sup> Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols.

<sup>22</sup> So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. <sup>23</sup> For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.

What Paul observed in them- and commended- was their desire to be thorough in their worship. "And just in case we missed anybody, we will have an altar to the God we forgot"

Paul proclaimed to them the all-sufficient One God, who made all, needs nothing, gives life to all, rules over everything, and in whose presence we all exist and live.

**Colossians 2:8-10** <sup>8</sup> See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, <sup>10</sup> and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority

If we have Him, we have everything! No need to worship anything or anyone else.

Notice this: The people had a devout religious nature, but it did not lead them to God, but to idolatry instead. IDOLATRY= ASSIGNING OMNIPOTENCE TO LIMITED THINGS.

Our religious nature- the innate desire to worship something- has been corrupted by the sinful flesh. For this reason, to be a Christian living for Jesus is best described as becoming SPIRITUAL- not religious.

Religion is a substitute for authentic spiritual life. The more religious we become, the more we anchor to material things and the less we walk by faith.

**Thomas' statement was religious- spiritual believes without seeing**

Our religious nature is always seeking to make an idol of something that is not Jesus. So Jesus comes along saying...

**Luke 14:25-27** <sup>25</sup> Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them, <sup>26</sup> "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. <sup>27</sup> Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

Jesus warns His followers to be cautious with GOOD THINGS that the heart would readily make idols of.

This is the great irony of being a child of God: we get sidetracked from loving God because He gives us such good things!

Jesus is very clear: we cannot be His disciples without everything in its proper place and Jesus at the head.

**Colossians 1:18b** ...so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.

How can we know if we have elevated good things into the place that belongs to Jesus? The answer is in the expression of your faith: Have you experienced a kind of withering in your spiritual walk?

**Psalm 115:2-8** <sup>2</sup>Why should the nations say, “Where, now, is their God?” <sup>3</sup>But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases. <sup>4</sup>Their idols are silver and gold, The work of man’s hands. <sup>5</sup>They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see; <sup>6</sup>They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell; <sup>7</sup>They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat. <sup>8</sup>Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them.

A general truth stands out right away- Idolatry leads to a kind of spiritual neuropathy: a loss of spiritual sensitivity in the members of the Body.

**(one slide each below)**

Have we lost our voice, the ability to speak for God with the help of His Spirit?

Have we lost spiritual sight, so that the truth seems cloudy, and the Bible seems cold and lifeless?

Have we lost spiritual ears, the ability to hear with understanding the precious words of God?

Have we lost our spiritual sense of smell? Have we lost the sense of the “pleasing aromas”, those words and deeds which rise into God’s presence and bring Him such delight?

Have we lost the feeling in our spiritual hands, which is the power of the Spirit in our service to God?

Have we lost the use of our spiritual feet, the ability to go where He sends us and to respond when He calls?

Have we lost the voice in our throat? When we try to praise, is there no song, no words for God waiting within us?

If yes to some or all, then something idolatrous is interfering with our relationship with God. Will we agree with Him?

**Isaiah 1:18-20** <sup>18</sup>“Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the Lord, “Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool.

<sup>19</sup>“If you consent and obey, You will eat the best of the land; <sup>20</sup>“But if you refuse and rebel, You will be devoured by the sword.” Truly, the mouth of the Lord has spoken.