

First River -- Idolatry

by Martin Knapp

The sermon warns against the sin of idolatry, which is loving anything more than God, and calls listeners to repentance and salvation through Jesus Christ.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6:14

Topics: "Idolatry", "Spiritual Destruction"

Description

Martin Knapp delivers a powerful sermon on idolatry, emphasizing that anything or anyone we love more than God becomes an idol in our hearts, leading us down a dangerous path towards spiritual destruction. He highlights various modern-day idols such as self-love, relationships, business, and worldly pleasures that can hinder our relationship with God and ultimately lead us away from His presence. Knapp shares cautionary tales of individuals who prioritized these idols over God, resulting in sorrow, suffering, and separation from Him.

Transcript

"Thou shalt have none other gods before Me." -- Ex. xx, 3.

Idolatry is the name of the first Stream that we will study which feeds the River of Death. Many think that all idolators are in heathen lands, and bow down to gods of wood and stone; but this is a mistake, for ALL ARE IDOLATORS WHO LOVE ANY ONE OR ANYTHING MORE THAN THEY LOVE GOD.

The following are some of the Idols which boys and girls frequently worship, and do not seem to realize their sin and danger:

1. The Love of Self. If you love Self more than you love Jesus, then Self has become your Idol. Do you spend more time thinking about Self, admiring Self, and looking at Self than you do in prayer? When Self is crossed, do you feel vexed? Does it make you jealous when your brother or sister or playmate receives favors or gifts and you do not? If so, then you are seeking the Kingdom of Self instead of seeking the Kingdom of God, and in the Death-boat of Self-idolatry you are drifting towards your doom.

2. You ought to love your father and mother, your brothers and sisters, your friends and your foes; but if you love any one more than you love Jesus, then that one becomes your Idol. People may become idolators by allowing infatuation to lead to marriage with the ungodly. The object of your affections thus becomes your Idol, for God forbids such marriages. See 2 Cor. vi, 14; also, my book on "Impressions".

A dear young girl, a junior in one of our large colleges, became infatuated with an unsaved young man. Friends tried to make a "match," and succeeded. She came to us for advice. We pleaded for her soul, and faithfully warned her of the consequences. They were married. In no sense were they congenial. She was educated and refined; he the opposite. She was pure; he was sensual. She tried to lift him up; he dragged her down until friends scarcely recognized her. Why? Because she was saved; he was unsaved. In one short year she wrote, "My married life has been brimful of sorrow, suffering, and anguish." Before three years had passed they had separated, a divorce asked for, and she now has a hard time to support her two children.

Do you take greater delight in pleasing your friends than in pleasing God? Does it rejoice you more to give to them than to give to the suffering cause of Jesus? If God takes your loved one to Himself, do you rebel and feel hard toward Him for so doing? If any of these things are true, then you have set up an idol in your heart, where Christ alone should reign.

Some years ago a father and mother with six children lived in a beautiful country home, so quiet and peaceful, away from the noise and bustle of the world. They had everything to make them happy. But one night, when all were asleep, mother was suddenly awakened by a peculiar gurgling in the room next to hers. Greatly frightened, she hurried to the bedside, and there lay the eldest, about sixteen, with burning head and hands, trying to breathe. In one hour later the physician said, gravely, "Diphtheria." With the gray light of morning she slipped away to be with Jesus, whom she so much loved.

In another week the sister who slept with her was laid, in the evening twilight, in the little hill cemetery beside her. By this time father and mother, who had professed to love Jesus, found themselves bitterly rebelling.

One month slipped away, and two more little graves were made; then one week more, and together, in one coffin, baby and little sister were laid away until the resurrection morning. No tongue can describe the heart-agony of father and mother. Their hair began turning white, but, above all, their hearts into stone; by hot rebellion against Him, they lost the joy and peace from their hearts, and missed the sweet, tender, comforting presence of Jesus to soothe and help them.

Today the home stands beautiful and still; but father and mother are far, far from God. They had, unconsciously, made idols of the children.

3. Business. Many grown people make this an idol which they worship. They give their lives to their own Business, and little or nothing to God's Business. They say their Business must be attended to, and so neglect their souls and the worship of God, who made them. This has proved to be one of the most alluring, successful boats on which Satan has shipped multitudes over the Fatal Falls. Beware, children, as you older grow, lest you enter in. Good Business is right, if done rightly and for God; but if its claims are pressed before His, it is a curse instead of a blessing.

4. Worldly Pleasure. God gives all His true children Pleasures for evermore. He makes their peace like a river, and fills them with the fullness of His joy. Satan has his sham Pleasures, which amuse for a little time, and then die out, and leave a fatal burn. One of the positive proofs that millions are drifting down this awful Stream is that they are "lovers of Pleasure more than lovers of God." Do you love your own Pleasure more than you love to please Jesus? Do you play when you should study or help papa or mamma? If so, look out! Many have floated down this Stream so far that they love to visit and go on excursions on the holy Sabbath-day instead of to the house of God. They love the theater, the dance, worldly songs, the circus,

playing cards, and other wicked amusements more than they love communion with God and the company of His people and songs of salvation. They are thoughtless, worldly, gay, and giddy, forgetful that they are drifting toward the Falls and that an awful Eternity is just before them. Like Belshazzar of old, their Pleasure is short and their eternal doom certain. Have you not read in the Bible how he sailed down this River in the Boat of Worldly Pleasure? How quickly it capsized and drifted over the Falls of Eternal Despair! All who sail in it, unless rescued by Saving Grace, will suffer similar wreckage. Many other gaily-painted Boats drift down this black Stream. Some love their Reputation more than God, and care more about what men think of them than what God thinks. All who do so, make that their Idol. Others give greater honor to their own views than they do to God and His Word. Such worship their own Opinions. If you have not given up all Sin, and yielded to Jesus and been converted, if you love some one or something more than God, you are drifting down this deceptive River. The awful wickedness of this Sin is seen from the following facts:

God has made us, redeemed us, keeps us every moment, and gives us every blessing which we have. Therefore we should love Him more and serve Him better than any one else.

He has made us for His own glory, and demands that we give Him our first and greatest love. To refuse to do this would be like plucking the sun from the heavens and leaving darkness in its place.

Did you ever think how badly it would make your parents feel if they should discover that you are loving their gifts more than you love them?

What would you think of a kingdom that would drive a kind, good king from the throne, and put a wicked person in his place, and obey and worship him? Yet all do this who are breaking the First Commandment and daring to sail down this black River of Idolatry, which bears all upon its bosom into the River of Death and over the Fatal Falls to eternal night.

If you break this Commandment, and love some one or something more than you love Him, you defy His love and authority; you lose His help; you discard His salvation, holiness, and heaven, and choose to drift down to Christless, endless, hopeless, awful night.

If you are in this River, will you not just now give up all Sin, submit to Jesus, trust Him to save you call earnestly to Him for help, and thus leap into the Life-boat? Then Jesus will enter your heart, and show you how to so die to every Idol and trust Him that He will cleanse your heart from all Sin and abide in it forever. Are you not ready to say:

"The dearest idol I have known,

Whate'er that idol be,

Just now I tear it from Thy throne,

And worship only Thee?"

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