IDOLS OF THE HEART

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God bless you,

Oluwatobi S. Adewuyi

Coordinator

Topic:

IDOLS OF THE HEART

Key Text: Ezekiel 14:3

Teacher: Oluwatobi S. Adewuyi

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You for another moment such as this, we know that You are with us and will continue to keep us rooted in You, we pray that as we study Your word now that You shall help us to keep our focus on You the more, in Jesus Christ name I pray, Amen

Study

Ezekiel 14:3 NKJV "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?

If you read from verse one of this chapter, you will see that the elders of Israel came to Ezekiel and sat before him, they did not just wish to come and sit before him because they do not have chairs in their houses to sit on, neither was it that there is something special on Ezekiel's face that they needed to look at, but that they wanted to enquire of him what The Lord is saying. Although, what they wanted to ask The Lord through him was not said, but it is the duty of every of God's Prophets to make God's mind known to His people. So, this elders did not actually come to see Ezekiel but to meet God and before they could say anything, God spoke to Ezekiel the same way He usually does to previous prophets showing that He knows everything about us, deep down to what we think in our hearts.

The same way He spoke to Elisha who gave Naaman the instruction to go dip himself in Jordan seven times and will be healed without even seeing him to hear of his problems. 2 **Kings 5:10 KJV** And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying,

Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean. The Lord said "*son of man these men have set up their idols in their hearts*." God looks beyond we human looks, though they came to Him to know His mind, yet they have another thing in their hearts they give reverence to. An idol is simply any object of worship other than the only true and living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; The Lord Jesus Christ.

These elders were not said to have had idols in their homes or streets but in their hearts. In many occasions, we see The Lord rebuke Israel for idolatry and they often erect altars for Baal and Asheroth, but why would have The Lord been so concerned about here since there is no physical idol that is being worshipped. He said, idols in their hearts! He went further to say that they put this idols before them which made them to stumble, just the same way physical idols causes men to stumble, is in the same way that of the heart is. God hates all sins but the sin of idolatry is that which He detest so much and can destroy any man for. He said that He is a jealous God. **Exodus 20:5 KJV** Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me ; that is why He will never share His glory with any man or object whatsoever.

We should not forget that these elders came to enquire from God which meant that they recognised Him as God, yes! The Lord complained about the idols in their hearts. In other words The Lord is saying they had something in their hearts which they reverence so much more than Him.

In the heart of Man there is a place which is meant for God and should not be taken over by anyone or any other objects. God should take the first place in our hearts. So these elders had another thing that has taken God's place in their hearts which has been causing them to stumble. In the same way, we Christians are at most times guilty of this, many believers today have idols in their hearts, yet they know God and love Him, they are obeying His commandments, they seek Him, but like this elders they have placed someone or something else above God in their hearts. It is of a truth that they do not bow down to idols, in fact when they pray to God, God answers them but they are not careful to the matters of their hearts to see if there are any idols there, those who erect physical idols and

those who have idols in their hearts are all idolaters, and no idolater will enter into the kingdom of God.

Our hearts are the centerpiece of our bodies that prompts our actions and behaviours, that is why God must be number one on the scale of preference of our hearts. There are different ways that people have idols in their hearts today most especially Christians, though they don't bear grudges, lie, steal, lust etc. But these idols of the heart will make them to miss Heaven, some have made an idol of their jobs, these jobs takes the first position in their hearts, they choose to go to work than fellowship with God, they would rather not do things that pleases God that can make them lose their jobs. They have made an idol of that job and would do anything to keep it. When God looks at them, the first thing He sees in their hearts is those jobs which has now become their gods. Whereas, He said do not have any other god beside me, Jesus Christ said "if any man would follow Me, let him deny himself" putting every other thing behind Christ in our heart is part of our acts of denying ourselves. Paul said "I put all things behind that I might gain Christ". Many women have made idols of their husbands, their husband is number one in their hearts, nothing would they allow to contend with his place. So when their husbands give them instructions that contradicts God's Word, they would rather obey him and neglect what God says, because many of them have made their husbands idols in their heart, they give in to different pervasive sexual styles which the husband suggests to them on their matrimonial bed, all in the name of "I don't want to lose him to another woman outside", not knowing that it is God that keeps a marriage, not sex.

Some have made an idol of their houses and properties that they do not joke with these things, as much as you do not touch any of these things, they are fine but when you do, there will be war, though they are good Christians, The Lord Jesus Christ said where your treasure is, is where your heart will be also. **Luke 12:34 KJV** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. but since their possessions are their treasures, their hearts are always on these earthly things and not on heavenly things, some have made an idol of their education, they love it more than God, and it has taken the first position in their hearts, if it will take them deserting God for a season as they would call it, to read for exam or prepare for practicals in other to attain that level and get that degree, they will do so.

There are many ways many Christians have fallen victim of the idols of the heart which The Lord detest so much. What is the idol in your heart?

As we await the coming of The Lord Jesus Christ, we must constantly check our hearts if there are any idols there, no doubt that anyone who has an idol in his heart at the coming of The Lord, such would not be raptured. A times, we get obsessed with somethings gradually, to the point that we cannot do without them. Some people have made food an idol in their hearts, they live to eat and not eat to live, they don't joke with their stomachs as they would call it but it is because they have made an idol of food, so fasting and praying has become difficult for them.

In the real sense, many of the things we Christians place as idols in our hearts are not really evil or bad but because we have placed them above God and we can no longer do without them, if some people are asked why they did not come to church, they will say it is because of their children, they have placed the child above God. Here's the story of a man of God whose child died overnight and was to be in church to preach The Word of God, he locked the child up in the house dead. Went to church and preached without anyone knowing what had happened, thinking in his heart that when he comes back from church, they will do something about the dead body. He placed God as number one and at his arrival back in the house, he heard the voice of the child crying, as his neighbours were saying how would he lock a child up in the house to go to church

Assuming this man has stayed home to mourn, forsaking his duty to God, he would have buried that child. We ought to always check our hearts to know if something or someone else has taken God's place in our hearts.

There are dangers attached to having idols in our hearts if we do not quicklyexamine ourselves. Everyone needs to sit down and ruminate on this if we truly know and love God, because no one knows the contents and intents of our hearts than us

Dangers of having idols in the heart

There are many dangers in it but we will talk about some of them as The Holy Spirit widens it.

1. **It causes one to stumble: Ezekiel 14:3 KJV** Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them? The Lord said it categorically that the idols of the heart causes men to stumble into iniquity, iniquity is sin at its peak, as such, anyone who has an idol in his heart is sure to constantly fall into grave sins.

If it is phone that you have made an idol in your heart, it can lead you to do things you should not do on a number ground such as discussing unnecessary things, watching pornography, focusing on funny videos, playing games, getting interest in seeing the pictures of ladies and Men, it can also lead to reading erotic posts etc.

2 **It makes one an idolater: T**he scripture says in **Exodus 20:3 KJV that** Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Once there is an idol in one's heart, it means one now has something that competes with God in his life and this makes one an idolater. At times, we Christians do view those who worship images as idolaters not knowing that we ourselves are like them because our hearts are not well positioned before God too.

God does not delight in idolaters, hence, we must check ourselves well; whether we have physical things we bow to or not, in as much as anything is lifted above God in our hearts, we need to repent of the sin of idolatry.

3. **It hinders God's direction: Ezekiel 14:4 KJV** Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God ; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols; The Lord said He would answer the multitude of those who enquire of Him according to the idols in their hearts.

Have you observed that you lack direction from God when it comes to some aspect of your life? it might be as result of the idols you have placed in your heart. This is mostly common to those who are seeking for spouses, that have different people who have come to them and those they have met, then they go to God and pray, saying who should they pick, meanwhile they already know whom

they want to pick, and if God says otherwise, they would not obey. Therefore The Lord said He would answer them according to the idols in their hearts.

It is a dangerous thing not to be able to receive directions from God. In choosing jobs or school to attend,many have already chosen what they want yet they want to enquire from God, even when they know that if He says otherwise, they will not obey. Note: this does not mean that there are no things we should admire or want, but they should not take God's place, we must be bent on let God's will be done in all things no matter what.

4. **It can make one miss heaven**: The Lord says in **Matthew 6:33 KJV** But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. He said we should seek the kingdom of God first, the moment we set an idol in our hearts, it means our focus has been shifted, as such, missing Heaven is guaranteed. In short, all those who have set idols in their hearts will not make Heaven because the scripture is clear about idolatry that no idolater will inherit the kingdom of God. **1 Corinthians 6:9-10 KJV** Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, NOR IDOLATERS, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind**, [10]** Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

This matter is a serious one which we must not joke with. If money is the idol in your heart and everything you know and do is based on money! money!! money!!! then you have also given way to the spirit of mammon which has led many astray**. 2 Peter 2:15 KJV** Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; It is a pity that many ministers of God today who are gifted in ministry, charge people whenever they're invited to minister, some would even tell them the kind of accommodation that must be prepared for them. If some people are not paid to render service in the church, they will not do service. These set of people have already placed idols in their hearts, idols of the love of money. They have commercialized the gifts of God.

Making heaven is not child's play, it is high time we began dethroning the idols in our hearts so that we do not miss Heaven. Everything that can stop us should be

removed, has your jewelries and beautification products not formed an idol in your heart that you cannot leave them for any reason? This is the idol you have placed in your heart which will stop you from making Heaven.

How to dethrone the idols of the heart

1**. Repent from idolatry**: The Lord commanded the house of Israel saying they should repent**. Ezekiel 14:6 KJV** Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God ; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations. Repentance means changing one's mind and then taking a step in line with the direction of such change. You must turn away from these idols, your focus now should be on God, confess to God that you are an idolater.

Many would not want to say this because of pride, they see themselves as pure, though having idols in their hearts. Mention that thing you know is an idol in your heart and tell The Lord to forgive you of placing it above Him, and repent genuinely

2**. Dethrone every idol from your hear**t: This is very important, use the blood of Jesus Christ to wash your heart, purge it clean with the blood of Jesus, command that idol to leave your heart through prayers to God, tell The Lord to fill the place up, that you put every other thing behind Him. Don't forget to mention those idols by their names, saying, I dethrone you idol of (e.g fashion) in Jesus Christ name.

3**. Separate yourself:** There are some idols of the heart that one has to separate from totally, such as unclean things in form of jewelries, earrings, ungodly hairstyle, makeup, attachments in all forms including wool, and rubber, all seductive attires and wigs. The scripture says that separate yourself and touch not unclean thing**s. 2 Corinthians 6:17 KJV** Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, if you still find it hard to separate yourself from these defiling things, it means you prefer the idols of your heart above God and you are not ready to make Heaven.

Separating yourself also means giving yourself totally over to God, making Him the centerpiece of your life and shun anything that would not want you to obey

The Lord, if friends, separate from them, choose God above every other thing and people.

4. **Resolute to place God as priority no matter the consequence that pose at you**: when The Lord becomes someone's priority, one will not fear what man can do to him, the names people would call you wouldn't matter but what God says. We must be determined to stand with Christ come what may. Make a firm stand not to go back into idolatry!

Benefits of not having an idol in the heart

1. It brings peace with God.

2. It makes one God's delight.

3. It portrays one as heaven's candidate.

4. It proves our love for God.

5. It makes us effective Christians.

6. Satan trembles before us.

7. We carry God's glory about and He tells others about us that we are is.

8. We are well protected.

9. Others can be saved from harm because of us.

10. We get easy and fast directions from God.

11. Our ways becomes prosperous.

12. We will always be joyful.

13. We will become the envy of others.

Prayer points

1. Lord Jesus Christ, dethrone every idol in my heart by your blood in Jesus name.

2. I confess that I am an idolater, forgive me of the sin of idolatry in Jesus Christ name.

3. I repent from the sin of idolatry.

4. Help me to separate myself from the idols of the heart which has taken your place in my heart (mention them).

5. Take the central position of my heart Lord Jesus Christ.

6. May I not remain stubborn to Your Word to lose my soul at last in Jesus Christ name.

7. Help me to always examine my heart so as not to put any idol in it.

This is where we'd end this study, may we not be found wanting in God's kingdom in Jesus Christ name. Amen.

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Contacts:

+2347067511039

+2349028350180

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Edited by

Goodness Wande-Oloro

Compiled by

Rex Purity Esther

(Media & Publicity Director)

Media Team

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