

SERMON NOTES

SERIES: Exodus: Set Free, Live Free

TITLE: Idol Factories

SCRIPTURE: Exodus 32

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We are in a series on the Book of Exodus from the Old Testament. Why study this book? Exodus is the Old Testament story of the salvation of God's people that points forward to the great salvation that comes to us by faith in Jesus.

Lead in — Buried in the heart of the story of "the golden calf" in Exodus 32, is a story about your heart and mine. In this story, we'll learn something about why we are the way we are, why we do the things we do, and why we have many of the problems we do. The question is: How can an ancient story about God's people worshipping a golden calf have anything to say to us today?

Passage Summary — While Moses is up on Mt. Sinai receiving detailed laws for worship, mercy, and justice as well as detailed blueprints for how to build God's "tent of meeting," at the foot of the mountain, God's people have gotten themselves into serious trouble. Israel's impatience with waiting on God causes them to take matters into their own hands and they "make for themselves" a golden cow idol to "go before them" to the land God has promised, and as a result, they bring God's judgment on themselves.

READ Exodus 32:1-7 —

Four Observations about Idolatry from this Passage

1. Too often, we see God's delays as God not doing anything.
2. We are always generous toward the things we want most.
3. The way we see what we are doing and the way God sees what we are doing can be miles apart. *Two degrees off track is way off.* Two things show us this in this story: first, the drunken orgy and second, God's punishment for their sin.
4. We make idols out of the things we want most. Idolatry isn't about bowing before some physical idol. No, idolatry is bowing our hearts before something we want more than God.
 - The Bible teaches that everybody needs to worship something. It's how God created us. The need beneath every need is to worship something.
 - The Bible teaches that everyone uses that capacity to worship things other than God. (CF 1 John 5:21)
 - The Bible teaches that all our misery and brokenness comes from making idols out of the things we think we need most.
 - The motive behind why we make idols for ourselves is that we want greater control over our lives.

- Our idols are usually “good things that become god things.” In fact, there’s a *delusional* nature to idolatry because it doesn’t make sense that good things could be bad things? When you idealise, you idolize.
- There should be nothing more frightening to us than making an idol out of something you want more than God and putting God’s name on it.

How do we destroy the idols of our hearts?

1. Look beneath your problems and the things you think you need most. Usually, there’s an idol lurking down there. Repent.
2. Name the idols, unmask them, and grind them to powder with the Gospel.

For Discussion —

1. How do you deal with God’s delays in your life?
2. Give an example of how we give generously toward the things we want most.
3. In this story, how is it that the Israelites end up so far from God when they most likely thought they were still following Yahweh?
4. Have someone explain how “two degrees off course is way off course.”
5. How do modern people “make idols for themselves?”
6. Did God reveal any idols to you through this study?