

SERMON NOTES TEMPLATE:

Date:13/10/2024

Preacher: Sam Toms

Sermon Title: - Pilgrimage " **Sermon Brief Outline: Ephesians – Idols in our way**

Bible Reading: Acts 19

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Theme: Confronting Idolatry and Embracing Identity in Christ

Introduction:

- **Context of Ephesus:** A significant city in the Roman world, known for its worship of Artemis and magical incantations (Acts 19:23-34). Ephesus was like the spiritual hub of its time, similar to modern-day major cities.
- **Parallel to Today:** Like Ephesus, our world is filled with idolatry, but Jesus confronts and dethrones these false gods, calling us into exclusive relationship with Him (John 14:6).

Main Points:

1. **The Nature of Idolatry:**
 - **What is an idol?** Anything we give God's rightful place to—functional saviors like money, security, relationships (Louie Giglio's term).
 - **Problem:** Idolatry is incompatible with the exclusive relationship we are called to have with God (Exodus 20:3). Like ticks, idols hide and grow in the shadows of our lives.
2. **Identifying Functional Saviors:**
 - **Subtle Idols:** Often, idols aren't massive or obvious but are things like money, comfort, technology, or even relationships (Matthew 11:28-30).
 - **Self-Examination:** Where is self-control least evident in your life? What areas do you avoid inviting God into?
3. **Dethroning Idols:**
 - **Removing the Idol:** Like pulling out a tick, idols need to be identified and removed. This involves confession and repentance (Ephesians 5:8, James 5:16).
 - **Replacing the Idol with God:** Trusting God in all areas of life, like finances or relationships, to replace idolatry with worship (1 John 2:15-17).
4. **Guarding Your Heart:**
 - **Ongoing Battle:** Idols are always trying to creep back in. We must create a culture in our hearts and communities where idols can't survive (Rev 2:3).

Conclusion:

- **Radical Surrender:** God isn't interested in co-leading our lives. We must surrender fully to Him and allow His grace to work in our lives step by step.
 - **Application:** Challenge the congregation to evaluate their lives for any hidden idols and trust God to dethrone them for true freedom and intimacy with Christ.
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Life Group Study Guide: Ephesians – Confronting Idolatry and Embracing Christ

Opening Discussion:

- What comes to mind when you hear the word “idol”? Can idols still exist today in subtle ways?

Scripture Reading: Acts 19:23-34

Discussion Questions:

- 1. Understanding the Context:**
 - What stood out to you in the story of Demetrius and the silversmiths? How did Paul’s message about Jesus threaten their way of life?
 - How does this conflict in Ephesus mirror the spiritual battles we face in our world today?
- 2. Identifying Modern Idols:**
 - Based on the sermon, what are some examples of “functional saviors” that people tend to rely on instead of God (e.g., money, relationships, technology)?
 - How can these things be subtle and hard to identify, like ticks hiding in our lives?
- 3. Self-Examination:**
 - Reflect on your own life: where do you feel most tempted to place your trust and security outside of God? What functional saviors might you need to address?
 - What areas of your life are you least likely to invite God into? Why is this, and what steps can you take to change that?
- 4. Dethroning the Idols:**
 - Once you’ve identified idols, what does it look like to dethrone them in your life? What practical steps can you take to trust God in these areas?
 - Read Ephesians 5:8 and James 5:16. How do confession and community play a role in overcoming idolatry?
- 5. Building a Culture Free of Idolatry:**
 - How can we, as a life group and church, create a culture where idols can’t thrive? What habits or practices would help us guard our hearts?
 - What does it mean to radically surrender to God, and how can we encourage each other to live fully for Him?

Application:

- This week, ask God to reveal any idols in your life. Write them down and pray for His grace to help you remove them and replace them with a deeper trust in Him.

Prayer:

- Pray for each other to have courage and discernment to confront any idols and to embrace full trust and intimacy with Christ.