

Man Made God's

by Chuck Smith

The sermon highlights the problem of man-made gods and the consequences of idolatry, emphasizing the importance of worshiping the true and living God to become like Him.

Duration: 31:00

Scripture: Psalm 115:1-2, Psalm 115:4-15, 1 John 3:1-10

Topics: "Idol Worship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the tragic truth that many people are caught up in idol worship, specifically idols made of silver and gold. He references the book of Deuteronomy, which warns against worshiping the sun, moon, and stars. The preacher also mentions the basic drives that all humans have, such as the drive for air, thirst, and hunger. He emphasizes the importance of examining our own lives and determining what is truly controlling us. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God to help conform us into the image of Jesus Christ.

Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles for our scripture reading to Psalm, no, we want to turn to 1 John chapter 3, first 10 verses of chapter 3 for the scripture reading. I'll read the first, the odd-numbered verses, we ask you to join in reading the even-numbered verses, 1 John 3, 1 to 10. Shall we stand as we read the Word of God? Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Whosoever commiteth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not.

Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you. He that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

He that commiteth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God does not practice sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot practice sin, because he is born of God.

In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. Let's pray.

Father we thank you for this glorious promise that we have here in 1st John concerning that we are now the sons of God, yet not known what we're going to be, but we know that when you appear we're going to be like you, for we shall see you as you are. And Lord how we long for that day when you come for us, and the work of your Spirit within our lives as you actually conform us into the image of Jesus Christ. Help us Lord we pray that each day our lives might be a reflection of your love, your beauty, your compassion for others.

And we just give thanks to you now in the name of Jesus. Amen. You may be seated.

Well tonight we're going to be taking Psalms 113 through 118. We got, well we just ran out of time last Sunday night, so we had to put some of the Psalms over till tonight. And we're not going to try 119, that's too long.

We're going to take that in just, next Sunday we'll take Psalm 119. But when you look at Psalm 119, it is an interesting psalm because it is a psalm that is sort of taking the Hebrew alphabet. And the first stanza all begins with Aleph, the A, the second with Beth, and then each letter of the Hebrew alphabet in a consecutive or consecutive order.

And as you read Psalm 119, if you were a little child in a Hebrew home in Israel, this is the way you would learn the alphabet. And so it's an interesting psalm. And most of the verses, I think with the exception of maybe five, all have in it the Word or the precepts or thy commandments and thy law.

And they all of them are referring back to the Word of God. And thus when a child would memorize the 119th Psalm, they knew the value of God's Word. And so we're not going to require that you memorize it, but do read it and then join with us and we'll go through.

And it has interesting throughs in Psalm 119, but that's for next week. So just through Psalm 118 tonight. But this morning, we'd like to look at Psalm 115, where the psalmist declares, not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and thy truth's sake.

Why should the heathen say, where is now their God? You know, there are many people that do worship man made gods. And that's what the psalmist is going to talk about here in Psalm 115, the gods that men have made and they worship. And when a man makes a God, how he makes it like himself.

If I were God, this is what I would be like. This is what I would do. And of course, it's interesting how that so many times people come up and they say, Pastor Smith, I don't understand why God would do it like that.

And what they're basically saying is, if I were God, I wouldn't have done it like that. This is how I would have done it. And many people would like to make their own gods.

And when they do, they usually make the gods like themselves. This is what I would do. This is what I would be.

But Greece was filled with many different gods, worshipped many different gods. In fact, the Greeks sort of made a God out of their emotions. And so they had the God of love, the God of hate, and the God of

kindness, and the God of power, and all of these things.

Everything they could think of, they made it a God. They had an idol for it. And thus, when Paul had gone to Athens, after he had left writing to them, he said, as I was in your streets, I saw all of the little idols and all of the little altars that were made to the different gods.

And I saw one altar there that was inscribed to the unknown God. What had happened is that they made a God of everything they could think of, but then someone said, but maybe we have left one out. And maybe he would be angry because, you know, we didn't make room for him to be worshipped.

And so they made this little image and shrine to the unknown God. Paul said, I'd like to tell you about this God. He is the God that made the heavens and the earth and everything that is in them.

And in him we live and we move and we have our existence. And so Paul wrote to them about what was to them the unknown God. But notice the heathen oftentimes say, where now is your God? And usually they say that because of some difficulty that we're going through, maybe some tragedy in our lives.

And do you know that your believing in God really does bug some people? They just don't like it that you believe in God. And so they like to take advantage of anything that goes wrong in your life to sort of, you know, just sort of say, well, where's your God now, you know, and just to make fun of your faith in God. The Bible says the fool has said in his heart, there is no God.

And they say, I don't believe in God. I am an atheist. The word atheist, of course, is no God.

Theism is God or theist God. And then in Greek, a is a negative prefix. And so atheist or atheist and no God.

And so they say, I am an atheist. But did you know, there are no true atheists? The Bible says that everybody has a God. And even those that say, I don't believe in God, usually what they're saying is, I don't believe in the God that is revealed in the Bible.

And but yet they have a God. And so he speaks now here, you know, he said, our God is in the heavens. He's sovereign.

He's done what he wants. But he said, their idols, in other words, they have their gods. They are silver and gold.

And they are the work of men's hands. And so they have man made gods. They carve an idol to represent the master passion of their life.

And as we said, the word God is really a title, it isn't a name. And it is the title of what is the master passion of your life? What is more important to you than anything and everything else? The numero uno in your life is your God. Whatever takes precedence over everything else, that is your God.

And so their gods are their idols. They are silver and gold. They are the work of men's hands.

They have mouths, but they don't speak. They have eyes, but they can't see. They have ears, but they can't hear.

They have noses, but they can't smell. They have hands, but they can't handle. And they have feet, but they can't walk.

And neither do they speak through their throat. And so he observes that everybody has a God. And often they are man made gods.

They are the gods that people have made with their own hands. Now, the people of those days were much more honest than the people of the present days. There is so much hypocrisy in the world today.

And people are deceived because of the hypocrisy. They say, well, I don't believe in God. Well, yes, you do.

You do have a God that you worship. And that's what the scripture is telling us here. Everybody has some master passion that controls their life.

Something that is more important to you than anything and everything else. And whatever that is, if you can put your finger on it, you will discover who your God is. And in the days of the writing of the New Testament, actually they had their gods.

And there were many who worshipped the God of sex. And that was the master passion of their life, sexual encounters. And it was recognized to be the God of their lives.

Now, they were willing to admit it. They would have a little idol of Aphrodite, a multi-breasted little idol. And it would have a prominent place, a shrine in their home, with this little idol of Aphrodite, or for the Greeks, the Diana.

And it was an acknowledgement, I really am into sex. And sex is my thing. And they would recognize it as that's what I'm worshipping.

And that's what my life is all about. There were others who had idols for Molech. And Molech was the God of pleasure.

And they would, you know, pleasure is my thing. And, you know, I'm just looking for excitement and pleasures. And it was an acknowledgement that that is the thing that is the master passion of my life.

There were others who were worshipping Mammon. And Mammon was the God of power. And represented by money, because money is the closest thing to power that we possess.

And thus, they had these little gods of Mammon, and shrines to Mammon. And it was just an acknowledgement. Money is the thing that I am after.

It's more important to me than anything else. Now, today, people worship the same gods. Only the difference is, you don't make an image, you don't make an idol, you don't have a shrine.

And thus, in your mind, you say, well, I am an atheist. I don't believe in God. But that isn't true.

There is a God that is the master passion of your life. And you can't really deny it. It's there.

Everybody has that which is more important to them than anything else. And that is your God. The interesting thing about those that say, make money their God.

Power, the money that I might control others, and might control the things of my own life. The power to have, the power to possess. And people who have that as their God.

How did they end up? I want to rule, I want the power. They often end up as slaves. I think of the story of Hattie Green.

She was the nemesis of Wall Street. She was the wealthiest woman in the United States during her day. Money was her God.

And so much so that she had this huge mansion in New York, but she had it all boarded up except for one room so she could save on her electric and utility bills. And so just lived in the one room of this huge home. And ultimately found a \$12 room and board house and moved out of her mansion and into this \$12 a week room and board house because it was cheaper.

She would buy the New York Times for a nickel at that time and she would read the financial page and then she would fold it up carefully and give it to her son and send him out to the street to resell the paper so she could get her nickel back. I mean, that's how tight she was. One day when he was out trying to sell the paper, it was a winter day, icy sidewalk, he fell and he cut his leg and so she took him to the free hospital in New York.

But a doctor recognized her and refused to treat her son for free. And so she, in anger, took him out. Gangrene set in and ultimately his leg had to be amputated.

And he was so bitter when she died and left the fortune to him, he went out and blew it within a year, just so upset with his mother's penury. And she was a slave though. I mean, power was her God, but yet it turned her into a slave.

She couldn't spend the money that she had. She just found that it was, she just couldn't spend it. And so, how tragic.

People that make sex, they're God. How did they end up? Usually with lust, an insatiable desire. And, you know, they just go around and everything is just, they lust after things because it's just a hunger that they can't seem to fulfill.

So, each man has his God and the God is like himself because when he carves it out, he puts eyes on it. Why? Because he has eyes. He carves hands.

Why? Because he has hands. He carves a nose. Why? Because he has a nose.

And thus he makes a God like himself. But as the psalmist observes, though he has made a God like himself, he has made the God less than himself. Because though he has carved eyes on the little idol, the eyes can't see.

Though he has carved feet, they can't walk. And thus he has made the God less than himself. But then he brings out this awesome truth.

And it is almost, you might say, a damnable truth. They that have made them have become like the gods that they have made. The truth is this.

A man becomes like his God. Whoever your God is or whatever your God is, you are becoming like your God. If your God is false, you're becoming false.

If your God is a phony, you're becoming phony. If your God is a dummy, you're becoming a dummy. Because you are like, you become like your gods.

Every man becomes like his God. But if your God is false, you're becoming false. And if your God is insensate, if it can't see, feel, touch, and so forth, you become like your God.

You become insensate. And thus a man who is worshiping a false God, becoming like his God, he is on the road down. It is a, you might, it's not evolution, it's devolution that you're experiencing because you're going downhill, becoming like your God.

Tragic. A tragic truth. And many people are caught up in that truth.

Now, their idols are silver and gold, the work of man's hands. And they are now worshiping their God. Becoming like their God.

In the book of Deuteronomy, it says that when you look up into the heavens, and you look at the sun and the moon and the stars, and you are driven to worship them. You see, there are basic drives that we all have. And the psychologists have listed these drives.

And they recognize that everyone has these basic drives. They call them the hemiastasis. And so listing them in their declining order, they say that the strongest drive that we have is our air drive.

And if you doubt that, put your head in a bucket of water and see how long before you just, you know, pull it out as fast as you can to get that gasp of air. Because it is the strongest drive that we have. Next to the air drive comes the thirst drive.

Next to the thirst drive, the hunger drive. And these are all essential for, you know, life to continue. After the hunger drive, the bowel and bladder drive.

And then after that comes the sex drive. And some of you felt that that was the strongest drive. No, it isn't.

It may be something that is a problem in your life, but you can live without it. But you can't live without air or water or food and without going to the bathroom. So, you know, these are drives that we all have.

Now, there is a very strong drive that people have, but I've never seen it listed in any of the lists that the psychologists have made of the human drives. And that is the worship drive. There is something within us that forces us to worship.

As Bob Dylan sang that song, you've got to serve somebody. You've got to worship something. And everybody does worship something.

And that which you worship is the God that you are serving. And whether it be, you know, is the ancient gods of Molech or Mammon or Aphrodite or Baal, everybody has the God that they serve and worship. Now, making a God out of your own image and yet less than you, becoming like your God, you're on the path down.

And so, now let's reverse it. As we read in 1st John this morning, Beloved, now are we the sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we're going to be, but we know that when he appears, we're going to be like him, for we will see him as he is.

The Bible tells us that we, as we with unveiled faces are beholding the glory of the Lord, we are being changed from image unto image into the likeness of the Lord. If you are serving the true and the living God, if you are serving Jesus Christ, then you are becoming like the God that you serve or the God that you worship. And that is why it is so important that we do worship the true and the living God, because then we're becoming true and we're becoming really alive unto the things of God.

Worshipping a loving God, I'm becoming more loving all the time. Worshipping the true God, I'm becoming true and honest. Worshipping the living God, I'm becoming spiritually alive.

Worshipping a holy God, I am becoming holy. And the fact that man becomes like his God can be a great curse or it can be a great blessing. It all depends on the God that you are worshiping and serving, because you're becoming like that God.

It's interesting to observe people to seek to determine just who their God is. And you know, with kids, it's hard to tell because they're young, it hasn't really made that really impression upon them yet. But the older a person gets, the more obvious it becomes who their God actually is.

And it makes lines on their faces, it leaves its identity on them. And all you have to do is just observe them for a while, and you'll realize just who their God actually is. It means it's very important for us to take an honest inventory of ourselves and ask the question, just what God am I serving? What God do I worship? And knowing that it is important because that's what I'm going to become like, the God that I serve and the God that I worship.

And I want to make sure that I'm worshipping and serving the true and the living God, that I might become a true and living representative of Him. Father, we thank you for these truths. And help us now, Lord, to take serious consideration, looking at ourselves and seeking to determine the God that I serve, the master passion of my life, that which is more important to me than all else or anything else.

And Lord, if it's anything other than you, help us, Lord, this day, that we might turn from our own passions, from our own ambitions and desires. And Lord, that we might turn and work and serve you. And we thank you, Lord, for this wonderful truth.

As we with open face behold you, the glory of our Lord, that we will be changed from glory to glory into the same image. And we thank you, Lord, for that work of your Spirit that is conforming us into the image of Jesus Christ, even this day. Lord, work in us your work of love and grace, making us loving and graceful people.

In Jesus' name we ask, Amen. Shall we stand? Pastors are down here at the front. They're here to pray for you today.

It may be that as you took inventory, maybe you didn't like the result. As you were honest and you realized, you know, this is the thing that is really controlling my life. Do I want to be conformed into this image? Do I want to, you know, follow this? Or do I want to serve and be like Jesus? And of course, we used to sing, to be like Jesus, to be like Jesus, all I ask to be like Him.

All through life's journey, from earth to glory, all I ask to be like Him. And may that be the song of our hearts as we leave today. Lord, let me become more like you.

And that just is an automatic thing, as he becomes truly the Lord of your life. May the Lord be with you. May the Lord watch over you.

And mothers, great to have you here today. God bless you. And we just thank the Lord for the privilege of knowing Him and serving Him together with you.

And may the Lord just really give you a very blessed day with the family and the honor that is due to you as a mother. And surely it is significant and important that we set aside at least one day out of the year where we recognize and honor you for what you are and for what you have done. And just give thanks for the goodness that we know from our mothers and the influence that they've had on our lives through the years.

The Lord bless thee. The Lord bless thee. And keep thee.

And keep thee. The Lord make His face to shine upon thee. And be gracious unto thee.

And be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up. The Lord lift up.

His countenance. His countenance. Upon thee.

And give thee peace. God bless you.

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