



Here are your Idols Control & Plans

Series Summary: Idolatry is a sin that the nation of Israel dealt with time and time again as they worshiped false gods such as Baal. It is easy for us today to assume that because we do not worship false gods in temples that idolatry is a thing of the past. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, idolatry is alive today because just like Israel we worship things other than God. The question is what are they?

Big Idea/Question: If we have to be in control to have peace in our lives our plans and control are our idols. The worst part is that the idol of control will fail us as soon as the crisis hits.

GET THEM TALKING

How do you know something is an idol in your life?

Leader note: There are a couple of very good and valid ways to answer this question above. But the answer that we are going to focus on tonight is that whatever brings us peace and comfort is our idol. In other words, if we fill in the blank of “because I have _____ everything is okay now and I am at peace” with something other than Christ we have an idol. Because whatever we fill that blank in with is the one thing we can not go without.

What are some ways that we fill this blank in that are not good and God-honoring?
“Because I have _____ everything is okay now and I am at peace.”

Leader Note (Transition): For so many people that blank is filled in with control. “Because I have control over my own life everything is okay.” The goal of the night is to help students see that control is a dangerous idol because it fails us the most in our moments of crisis when our plans fail and we lose control.

GROUP DISCUSSION

(what is wrong with control?)

What makes control such a dangerous idol to have?

How do you know if you having control is an idol in your own life? What are the warning signs?

Transition - one of the ways we find out we idolize control is when our plans are drastically changed and crisis hits. We see a clear example of this happening in the Apostle Peter’s life when Jesus revealed his plans to go to the cross.

Mathew 16:21-23 From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. **22** Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!” **23** Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

What did Peter do wrong? What was his mistake?

Leader Note (answer): Peter quite literally told God his plans. Peter essentially said “no Jesus God’s plans for you are not okay with me.” Peter was not interested in Jesus’ (God’s) plans because he already had his own. Peter surely had planned on spending a long time with Jesus and watching the ministry grow. Peter had in his own mind what a successful ministry for Jesus and himself looked like and it did not involve a cross.

Vs 23 - Why did Jesus respond to Peter so harshly?

Leader Note (answer): “Stand behind me Satan” were pretty strong words. But they were necessary because Peter was actively trying to undermine Jesus’ redemptive work on the cross. Jesus was trying to help Peter see that His plan was better. But first Peter had to let go of the lie that he was in control of everything and that he knew best.

VIDEO TEACHING

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

Context of when he said this

Jeremiah 29:10-14

How could that be true? How could God's plan include so much hardship for His people?

Truth: Because our own comforts and control is now what we ultimately need. What we truly need is to trust God in all circumstances. When we do this we truly worship Him alone.

Action: Even when we are not in control God always is

Transition - Here is Jesus' wisdom for how to have a mindset that can handle not being in control and can handle chaos

GROUP DISCUSSION

(Jesus' plan > our plan)

Context: It is important to remember that Jesus' words in Matthew 16:24-28 came right after his rebuke of Peter. Jesus' words address, the mindset of Peter and the other disciples who felt like their way, their plan, and their control over their own life was best.

Matthew 16:24-27 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. **25** For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. **26** What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? **27** For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

Vs 24 - What did Jesus mean when he said “whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me”?

Leader Note (answer): To follow Jesus we have to die to our own selfish interest, pride and obsession with being in control. Only when we do this will we be willing to truly pick up our cross and follow Jesus where he may lead us.

Can we follow Jesus and still have plans?

Leader Note (Answer): Yes we can have plans. God is not anti plans. But God is against our plans taking his place as God. We have to ask the question: what do we love more, our plans or God and his will? Some day you may have to choose between the two.

Introspective question: If you knew that God was calling you to a new and radically different path in life that took you out of your comfort zone would you obey?

Based on what we talked about tonight, what is the right way to view our plans?