

Today's Message Outline: "Baking Bricks Into Idols"

Nehemiah 13:10-31 (see also Nehemiah 10:28-32)

Disobedience is the willful and even rebellious acting against the ways of God by those who have knowledge and understanding.

We never break the laws of God or His design for our lives without first being idolatrous.

- Financial idolatry = Thinking and acting as if we can provide for ourselves, forgetting that we are stewards of what God has entrusted to us.
- Sabbath idolatry = Thinking and acting as if we don't need rest, never ceasing to produce and consume; operating with the arrogance that comes from believing that we are so indispensable that the world cannot go on without us working and doing 24/7.
- Marital idolatry = Thinking and acting as if God's design for marriage is only a suggestion.

(see Exodus 20:3, Genesis 11:3-4, Romans 1:23-25)

Idolatry = Exchanging the life God gave us with a life we make with our own hands, manipulating this world for our own purposes and creating for ourselves a life without God.

The only prevention to idolatry is cultural criticism; being provoked to identify the idols in our city and our lives, seeing both the lie and the truth. (see Acts 17:16)

The only remedy for idolatry is another exchange.

Small Group or Personal Reflection Questions

1. Read Neh.10:28-32 and 13:10-31. What surprises you about Nehemiah's reaction? How can he justify his extreme response to the people?
2. Is there a contemporary issue that jumps to mind where you see idolatry playing itself out in our world? What do you think is the Biblical response if you see that issue in the life of a Christian? How would your response differ if you see that issue in the life of a non-Christian?
3. Pastor Doug talked about how good cultural criticism leads us to ask difficult questions like these. Take some time to answer these and see if you can identify an idol in your life:
What do you really want and expect out of life? What would really make you happy? What would make you an acceptable person? Where do you look for power and success? What would crush you if it was misplaced or lost?
4. Read the descriptions of the 3 idolatries that Nehemiah confronted (Marital, Sabbath, Financial). Which one(s) of those are present in your life? Are there any steps that you need to take to remove that idolatry from your life?