

Disruption: Week 2

Challenging the Status Quo

In this sermon series we'll be studying the Prophets of the Old Testament. Each week, we'll focus on a new theme. This week's theme is:
Idolatry- Worshiping Other Gods.

Jeremiah 2: Worthless Idols

Jeremiah 2:1-8

The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem: " 'I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown. 3 Israel was holy to the LORD, the firstfruits of his harvest; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them,' " declares the LORD. 4 Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob, all you clans of the house of Israel. 5 This is what the LORD says: "What fault did your fathers find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves. 6 They did not ask, 'Where is the LORD, who brought us up out of Egypt and led us through the barren wilderness, through a land of deserts and rifts, a land of drought and darkness, a land where no one travels and no one lives?' 7 I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable. 8 The priests did not ask, 'Where is the LORD?' Those who deal with the law did not know me; the leaders rebelled against me. The prophets prophesied by Baal, following worthless idols.

What emotion is God showing? Does this surprise you?

How does seeking worthless idols change us?

What idols do you see in your life?

The Three Part Message of the Prophets

- Israel has broken the **covenant** they made with God
- If they don't **repent**, God will send judgement and **exile**
- Even if God sends judgment, there is hope. He will **redeem** them and bring them back into the land

memory/meditation verse

Jeremiah 2:13
"My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

Monday

A Relationship Restored:

Hosea 1-3

This is an uncomfortable story. How do the characters (Hosea, Gomer and their children) play into this allegory of Israel's faith?

How does Hosea use emotion to convey his message?
Do you think it is effective?

What is Israel guilty of?

Do you think Hosea's message is still applicable today?

Below can you modernize the story of Hosea? Where would it take place? How is the church in La Crescenta/America guilty of "cheating on God"? How could you tell the story so people could see it clearly?

Definitions

- **Idolatry**- devotion to any thing that conflicts with our loyalty to God.
- **Syncretism**- Blending our worship of God with other things. In 1 Kings 12:27-30, Jeroboam mixed the worship of YHWH with pagan worship.
- **YHWH**- The four Hebrew letters that spell God's covenant name. Jewish people to this day still do not pronounce this name. It is usually rendered LORD in English translations (as opposed to Lord).

Compare with Jeremiah 2

Wednesday

Mixing Oil and Water: Syncretism

Read 1 Kings 12:26-30. What is Jeroboam doing that is so blasphemous? Are there any other stories like this from the Old Testament?

Read Exodus 20:1-6. How does Jeroboam violate the first 2 commandments?

What elements in modern America do we "mix" with Christianity? It could be ideological, material, or political.

Why did Israel mix these things up? Why do we? Why do you?

Very often the things we "mix" up with our faith are invisible to us (cultural). It may take some reflection and listening to others.

Is there something you should confess and root out of your life? Describe the difficulty of removing this idol from your life. What would have to change? How would certain relationships be altered?

How to read the stories in the Bible

- Read slowly, carefully, and in context (keep the individual stories a part of the larger stories)
- What role does God play? Where is He mentioned? Does He start the action or is He "behind the scenes"
- Are the characters modeling good behavior or bad? How do you know?
- How does this story fit into the "big" story of the Bible

A Great Resource
*The Message of the
Prophets*
by
J. Daniel Hays

Friday

Serving God and Mammon:

Matthew 6:19-24

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

How does Jesus talk about things that "master" us?

Do you think he is talking about idolatry?

How can you know if you are storing up your treasures on Earth or in Heaven?

Returning to Your First Love

- Reflect on the things that you value most. What are they?
- Reflect on the "invisible" aspects of culture: like where you were born, your "social status" (middle class, "blue collar", etc.)
- Are there parts of the scripture that offend your ideological, political, or social sensibilities? This may be a clue to where you value other things above God.

Tying it together:

It's easy to think of God as a non-feeling divine being that simply waits for us to get out of line so He can punish us, but the prophets portray Him as a lover whose heart is broken when His bride is unfaithful.

Does that change the way you view God?

Does that change the way you live?