



# **BEHOLD YOUR GOD - WEEK 10**

## **Beholding Lesser Gods**

**Opening prayer**

**Prayer for the persecuted church:**

## **Prayer for a local church:**

This morning we pray for our brother Erick Cobb and Covenant Grace Church.

## **Closing prayer**

### **INTRO: The Purpose**

How many of you have ever seen someone healed? How many of you have known someone who has been healed? How many of you have been used by God to bring someone to faith in Christ? How many of you have known someone before they came to Christ

and after they came to Christ? And seen their transformation? How many of you have seen God answer a prayer in an undeniably direct way?

**OUR PROBLEM IS THIS: WHEN WE DON'T BELIEVE GOD STILL INVADES LIFE, WE TURN TO IDOLS.**

The purpose of this series has been to get us to reevaluate how we think about God. Are we engaging God as He's revealed Himself? Are we engaging the God of the Bible or are we

engaging a god of our own imaginations? A lesser god. But not just a lesser god. A god of our imaginations is an idol and an idol doesn't receive worship or hear prayers or speak. The church becomes ineffective when it worships lesser gods.

Our subject to is "Beholding Lesser Gods."

My wife sent me a text this last week which said, "God is not who you think He is. He is what He says He is."

**In any given situation, what matters is not what is true of you, but what is true of Him.**

**“Idols are ideas of God that don’t exist.” (John Snyder) When we have wrong ideas about God, we end up praying to a wrong idea, not to God Himself.**

**It’s amazing how many people in our culture think it’s completely acceptable to think whatever they want about God. It doesn’t even cross their minds that this kind of**

thinking is not even philosophically acceptable. Even from a human standpoint, you would be upset if I said I could define you however I wanted. You would protest, “You can’t define me.” And you would be right. Likewise, you can’t define God however you want. No one gets to do that. Only God gets to define Himself.

“An idol of the mind is as offensive to God as an idol of the hand.” (A.W. Tozer)

Clearly today, we don't have idols of the hand, idols we hold, for the most part, but we have idols of the mind aplenty. When a person thinks they can define God however they want, that is an idol of the mind.

**BIG IDEA: When we don't believe God still invades life, we turn to idols.**

I mentioned last week that we engage in horrible behavior when we're full of unbelief.

**We behave badly, in the most outlandish ways, when we are guilty of unbelief.**

**When we don't believe God still invades life, we turn to idols.**

**Today, we're going to look at three idols of our age and how to tell if you're worshipping at their altars.**

**“Vain were the idols of the ancient world, Baal and Jupiter; as vain are those of modern**

times, Pleasure, Honor and Profit.” (George Horne)

Today, we’re going to looking at two of those because they are not only prominent in our surrounding culture, but often in the church herself.

## **1. The Idol of Pleasure**

What gives you pleasure?

Not let's make this much clear — pleasure is not a sin.

## **Psalm 16:11**

**<sup>11</sup> You make known to me the path of life;  
in your presence there is fullness of joy;  
at your right hand are pleasures  
forevermore.**

This speaking of both the present life and the future life.

**Now, misdirected pleasure is a sin. What we find pleasure in tells us something about our heart. If you find pleasure in wickedness, it tells you something about your soul. If you find pleasure in goodness, it tells you something about your soul.**

**So, pleasure isn't wrong. The issue is seeking pleasure from the wrong things, the wrong sources and for the wrong reasons.**

Now, in our culture, amusement is one of the greatest idols of our day. “Everybody’s working for the weekend.” They’re working strictly so they can enjoy themselves two days a week. It is a mindless seeking of pleasure. And by mindless, all I mean is they don’t really examine their lives or why they do what they do.

Israel adopted the idols of their time, of their surrounding culture. It’s the same for us. We adopt the idols of our time and bring them

into the church, the same way that Israel brought the idols of her day into the worship of God. We'll look at that in more detail when we get to idol number two today.

The idol we've brought into the church is pleasure. As a matter of fact, many people evaluate church by how much they enjoy it. And by this, I don't mean they enjoyed it because they were able to participate in corporate worship and prayer and listening, but I mean they measure how much

enjoyment they took away from it, the same way they might measure how much they enjoyed a movie or a meal or anything else they consume.

## **Matthew 23:25**

**<sup>25</sup> “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.**

**Self-indulgence is the type of misdirected pleasure I'm speaking about in this segment. How has this idol been smuggled into the Christian mindset?**

- **The Death of the Prayer Meeting and the Rise of Christian Entertainment**
- **Ravenhill Prayer Meeting | “in your presence there is fullness of joy” | a temporary pleasure that evaporates and a pleasure that stays with you**
- **Example from study guide**

**That's the type of pleasure the church is largely unfamiliar with today.**

**“A prayerless soul is a Christless soul.” (Spurgeon)**

**Is your soul being eaten alive by the things of this world?**

I pray that we are not so distracted by the idols of this age that we don't enjoy spending time with God.

## **2. The Idol of Accomodation**

Are you adjusting your views to God or do you have God adjusting to your views?

The church finds itself in the throes of accomodation when it combines evangelical Christianity with this cultural idea that God is whoever we think He is.

## **Exodus 32:1 (NKJV)**

**32 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, “Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”**

We want you to lead us and we want to you lead us in the way that we want to be led. Don't tell us what God says about Himself, tell us what we want to hear.

## **2 Timothy 4:3 (ESV)**

**3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions,**

## **Exodus 32:2-6 (NKJV)**

**<sup>2</sup> And Aaron said to them, “Break off the golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me.”**

This was an all-church campaign — Gather Your Gold campaign. You see, even today we think if a church has organized something and everyone is working in unionson toward this common goal that God is pleased. Well, He is

not always pleased. He will not respond to anything that is not directed toward Him.

**<sup>3</sup> So all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron. <sup>4</sup> And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf.**

The people demanded it, the pastor accomodated them.

**Then they said, “This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!”**

Notice what they’re doing here. They’re conflating the common idol worship of their day with the truth of the God who brought them out of Egypt. So, they have a little bit of biblical truth with a little bit of idol worship.

When we conform God to our ideas and desires it is idolatry. This happens when we want to reduce God to manageable terms.

Idols allow us to maintain a religious life while staying in control. Any version of Christianity where Jesus is centered around you, that he's there for you when you need him, and it appears He's all about you and your needs, is almost certainly a false image of Jesus.

**<sup>5</sup> So when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow *is* a feast to the Lord.” <sup>6</sup> Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt**

**offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.**

We have to accomodate for the sake of our idol pleasure, not because pleasure is sinful, but because we get our pleasure from the wrong source.

### **3. The Idol of Honor**

What do you seek honor from?

The greatest temptation today is craving the honor bestowed upon you by the culture at large when you agree with the moral revolutions of the day.

- Little girls shamed for playing with dolls

## **Luke 6:22-23**

**22 “Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of**

**the Son of Man! 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.**

## **Proverbs 22:1**

**22 A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches,  
and favor is better than silver or gold.**

**When we don't believe God still invades life, we turn to idols.**

## **Hebrews 11:6**

**<sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.**

In any given situation, what matters is not what is true of you, but what is true of Him.