

Idol Hands

Genesis 13:1-13; John 15:5-8

OPEN

Where do you see examples of *power gone wrong*?

What have you seen as the impact when power is leveraged poorly—both in the moment and the longer-term impact?

DISCUSS

Last week we looked at the origin of power when it was used by God. It was simply CREATIVE and led to flourishing. God then bestowed to humanity (in his image) the ability to use power for the creation of stuff in this life and making meaning of this life (Genesis 1-2).

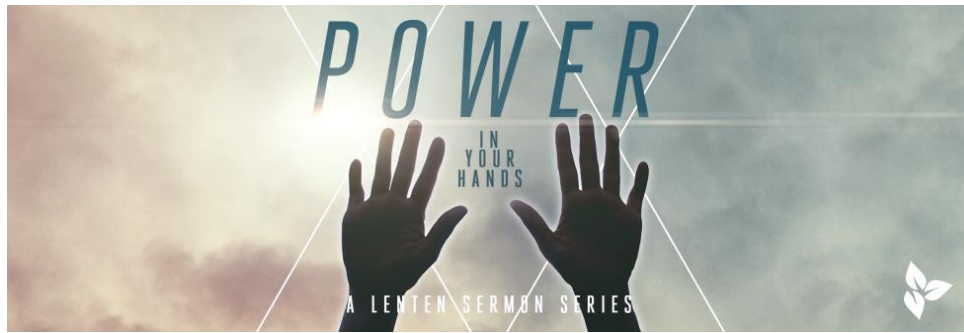
This week, we examine how power went wrong...because humanity went wrong in how they moved away from God and handed over their power to idolatry.

What do you think when you hear the word idol or idolatry?

What do you think of the quote by Tim Keller¹:

“Idolatry is when we allow anything other than God to become the center of our heart’s true happiness, contentment, meaning, identity, purpose, or security. It’s when we allow something else to become an idol or a ‘surrogate god’ in our life, ruling our thoughts, emotions and behaviors...Idolatry is always the reason we ever do anything wrong. Why do we ever lie or fail to love or keep promises or live unselfishly?...The specific answer is always that there is something besides Jesus Christ that you feel you must have to be happy, something that is more important to your heart than God...The secret to change is always to identify the IDOLS OF THE HEART.”

¹ Tim Keller, *Paul’s Letter to the Galatians: Leader’s Guide*, 108



Read the account of sin entering humanity and the move away from God in Genesis 3:1-13. As you read it (or after you read it), list everything you see of sin moving from nothing to being separated from God, one another, and even creation.

As you think about your own life, do you see a pattern of temptation leading to sin that keeps getting repeated in your own life? Explain.

From the weekend message, there were THREE BIG IDOLS² exposed. Read each of them with their lies and false promises attached. *Which of these do you identify? Why? How do these idols grip your desires or manifest themselves in your behaviors?*

IDOL OF CONTROL

Belief: If I can gain or maintain mastery over this situation... these people... my performance... my schedule... my income... or whatever, THEN I'll be okay, content, strong, or safe.

Lie: We can be like God – sovereign and in control over our own little the worlds.

IDOL OF SIGNIFICANCE

Belief: If I can just prove to this person, or social circle, or group of professional colleagues how virtuous, competent, loving, fun, capable, important, or beautiful I am, THEN they'll praise me for this and I'll be significant.

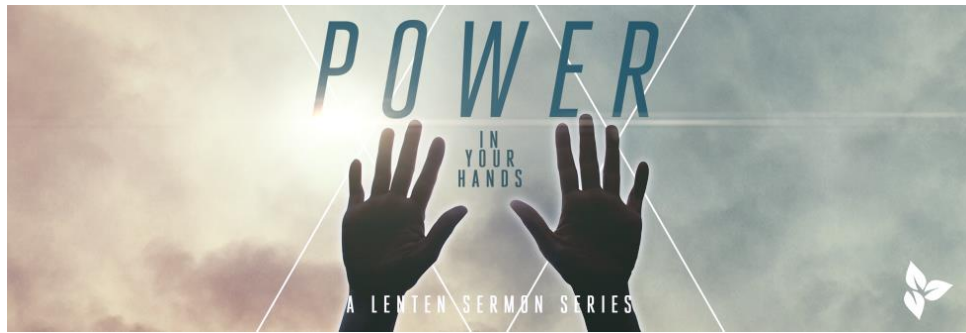
Lie: We can or should be the glorious center of things through our image and status.

IDOL OF COMFORT

Belief: If I can just hit my number, escape to that place, experience another thrill, or get free of these responsibilities, THEN life will be good.

Lie: We can be like God; and have a heavenly life on our own terms.

² Material summarized from Men's Fraternity 33: Series 3. Many thanks to the current Men's Fraternity Group at Christ Church of Oak Brook.



How are you feeling led to respond after discussing and reflecting on idolatry?

YOUR NEXT STEP...

- How does John 15:5-8 connect to Genesis 3 and the whole idea of flourishing with God at the center of our lives?
- To overcome idols, you must do a few things:
 - Admit the Struggle with an Idol and Confess it. (vs. hiding)
 - Identify the Lie—the deeper root of the struggle that has captured your sight, desire, and heart.
 - Replace the Lie with the Truth in Faith (Repent).
 - Invite Others Into Your Journey—You cannot do it alone...in fact, doing the journey alone was the first think NOT GOOD in creation.
- Seriously consider writing your thoughts and sharing with at least one other person your journey with a current idol in your life using the “overcome instructions” above.