

MISPLACED TRUST

(EQUALS IDOLATRY)

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Exodus 20:3, "You shall have no other gods before me."

Idolatry, in a very basic sense, means to trust in or depend on something or somebody else instead of God. It is to have our "place of trust" on something or somewhere besides God. This has always been most important for a true Christian to understand, and even more so in these days when Satan has so many disguised plans of false trust in the world, to tempt us to follow.

Satan (through, people around us who are under his control), can easily deceive us into following the many plans that man has to offer us. These man-made plans can lead us to compromise on where our "place of trust" really is, for we do not always know or understand our own heart. The Christian life (in its truest sense) is where or what our heart is really trusting on.

God warned us through the prophet Jeremiah, how deceitful our heart can be, if we do not seek His guidance and be willing to follow it. (Jerem) 17:9) "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

The human heart will put more confidence in something human (the seen things) "even if it were only the size of a pinhead" (the late Pastor said), "than it would want to put in the great God of Heaven (and Creator of everything, the unseen One). Our only hope of ever having any real faith in God is to lay aside (get out of (our) sight forever, all dependance (on the seen human things we are trusting in).

Idolatry can take many different forms (the late Pastor warned), such as the golden image of Nebuchadnezzar, Darius on the throne, a sacred bull in Egypt, or the two golden calves that Aaron made for the Israelites. All of these things they could worship, they could see. Idolatry could be in the form of a doctor's special treatments, or (in this era) the special muscle or body building exercises, designed for our better health or weight management. or, in the form of a pill or a spoonful of medicine, (again, something we can see to trust in).

With any of these examples, our "place of trust" would be in something else besides God, thus it would be a form of Idolatry.

If we are trusting in human help for our spiritual, physical, or financial needs, or anything else when Jesus comes, "we will not be ready to meet Him, and that is the serious part of it all -- our Eternal Life is involved."

(The Pastor said) "Idolatry can even be in the form of extra clothing we would wear to (specifically) protect us from catching a cold (as they say), or our staying in the house in cold or wet weather, for fear that our health would not be protected if we were to go outside. If we accept a financial "Insurance" plan, or one of Satan's many deceitful financial installment-plans to pay off a debt, or use safety seat belts or helmets to protect us from possible dangers that befall someone who is not claiming God's promise of financial and physical protection, (then we have been deceived or tricked into Idolatry, by Satan.)

Psalms 91, promises protection from possible or sudden dangers that befall the unbeliever, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty", (vs.5-6) "You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday", (10) "then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent, (14) "Because he loves me (meaning the believer)" says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges (trusts in) My name."

Thus, with God's never-failing promises to protect us, it would be Idolatry to trust in any of man's plans instead of Him to protect us, physically, financially, or otherwise.

If someone in the home, workshop, or elsewhere does something to disturb our peace, and we use human efforts in words or actions to change them (instead of trusting God to control them), "we are as much of an idolater (the late Pastor said), as if we knelt down before an idol and prayed to it for our deliverance." We would be trusting in our own self efforts instead of in God to control the other person.

Even a good resolution we make, would be Idolatry, if we intend to carry it out in our own strength, like Peter did when he only said he would not deny Jesus Christ. Neither can we deny Jesus Christ, nor God His Father, when He has promised to guide and protect us.

Jesus explained that we can't just say "Lord, Lord", but we must do the will of (or obey) His Father in Heaven (Matt.7:21). When we say we are trusting on God's promises to protect us

physically or financially, or to give us peace from those around us, and then our actions contradict our words, we are saying but not doing the Will of our Father in Heaven, thus we are denying our Master like Peter did.

God knew there would be many forms of Idolatry (or MISPLACED TRUST), thus He gave us the second Commandment of His, to be obeyed by all those whose love for Him is sincere (Exodus 20:4-6) "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath, or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them;" [In this Commandment of His, God is telling us not to worship the many forms of Idols set up by man (meaning, not to serve, obey, or trust in man-made plans instead of Him], (the verse continues) "for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments."

Jesus warned us of the importance of keeping and obeying His Father's Commandments (Matt. 5:17-19) "Do not for a moment suppose that I have come to abrogate the Law or the Prophets: I have not come to abrogate them but to give them their completion. Solemnly I tell you that until Heaven and earth pass away, not one iota or smallest detail will pass away from the Law until all has taken place. Whoever therefore breaks one of these least commandments and teaches others to break them, will be called the least in the Kingdom of the Heavens; but whoever practices them and teaches them, he will be acknowledged as great in the Kingdom of the Heavens."

Thus, any teacher who does not emphasize the importance of God's commandments, is not giving the full Truth of God's Salvation Plan, as Jesus did. The Minister is only giving a part of the Truth, if he says it doesn't matter if you accept a man-made financial or healing plan, own property or have a treasure on earth of some kind, or depend on, or trust in self efforts to defend your rights when you are wronged or spoken against. When Jesus was spoken against, He didn't even answer His opponents.

To use self-efforts yourself or give permission for someone else to use self efforts to defend you, is (again) MISPLACED TRUST, and is just another form of Idolatry.

When a person is trusting in efforts of the self-life (trusting in something or somebody else), they have allowed that seen thing to become an

Idol between themselves and God, who told us not to serve or trust in even the form of an Idol (just one of His Commands). There-fore, a teacher should emphasize the importance of keeping and obeying God's Commandments, just as Jesus did in giving us His Plan for Salvation, which (by God's Command) does not permit any form of Idolatry, (MISPLACED TRUST).

An inquisitive young Christian (new in the Truth) may ask "why do you call the teaching, "THE TRUTH"? Because, Jesus, called His true Gospel Message "THE TRUTH" (John 8:31-32), "Jesus therefore said to those of the Jews who had now believed in Him, "As for you, if you hold fast to my teaching, then you are truly my disciples; and you shall know the Truth, and the Truth will make (set) you free." When Jesus prayed for His disciples (and His future followers as well), he said, (John 17:17) "Make them holy in the Truth: Thy Message is Truth." ["Future followers" can mean you or me, or any other true believer who is free from Idolatry and MISPLACED TRUST.]

Jesus also warned us however, that there would be false teachers who rise up. He called them false Christs and false prophets who would rise up, "with a view to lead astray—if indeed that were possible—even God's own People" (Mark 13:22).

This passage Jesus used, refers to Deuteronomy 13, where God inspired Moses to tell the Israelites, that these false prophets (or dreamers as He called them) would rise up, but (vs.3-4, quote) "you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep His commands and obey Him." (Unquote)

Moses, (inspired by God) was warning the Israelites that God would test them, to see if they had any Idolatry or MISPLACED TRUST in their heart. This was also brought out by Jesus, (Rev.2:23), "and all the Churches shall come to know that I am He who searches into men's inmost thoughts; and to each of you I will give a requital which shall be in accordance with what your conduct has been."

And (Rom.2:6-9) "To each man He will make an award corresponding to his actions; to those on the one hand who, by lives of persistent right-doing, are striving for glory, honor and immortality, the Life of the Ages; while on the other

hand upon the 'self-willed' who disobey the Truth and obey unrighteousness will fall anger and fury, affliction and awful distress, coming upon the soul of every man and woman who deliberately does wrong."

(The late Pastor said), "It is very important that we really understand what Idolatry is, for when we do, we will have made the first step towards getting rid of it. [Idolatry was the first sin ever committed, he said. The Bible doesn't say that Adam ever lied, cheated, or stole anything. It doesn't say that Adam wasn't an honest, sincere, and an upright man, or that he wasn't a good husband. What Adam did was start out to depend on his own efforts instead of on God. That is what permitted Satan to come in and wreck his home and family (even causing one son to murder the other), and to cause so much sorrow and trouble to follow.]

Idolatry was also the cause of Job's trouble, for Job was depending on his own goodness and self efforts as a means to be righteous in God's sight. Job was considered, "the greatest man among all the people of the East," (the Bible says). However, this self-righteousness led to a spiritual pride in Job, that landed him on an ash-heap with terrible sores on his body, robbed him of almost everything he had, and almost took his life.

When God exposed Job's spiritual pride and self-righteousness, he 'repented', confessed his sin of pride, and humbled himself before God. After this sin of Idolatry was confessed by Job, then God could deal with him, and by the spiritual grace that God gave him, he got rid of the self efforts and false pride that had resulted.

Job realized that his own goodness could not save him, but only by the mercy and grace extended through Christ. God gave him a new nature within, as He will do for anyone else who will humble himself or herself before Him. Job had had a "MISPLACED TRUST", an Idolatry which had to be exposed by God and gotten rid of.

If we are trusting in human ways to perfect our spiritual condition, or, on human help for physical health or financial needs, or anything else when Jesus comes, (the Pastor said) "we will not be ready to meet Him, and that is the serious part of it all——our Eternal Life is involved.

"No doubt many of us wonder (the Pastor said), why our deliverance is delayed sometimes. It is because 'hidden away in our heart', there is a compromise of our trust in God, or perhaps some hidden resentment, rebellion against God's promises (or 'spiritual pride').

(We may think of ourselves as better than the next person (our fellow Christian), and, thinking to ourselves "I wouldn't do what they are doing, or I wouldn't let my children do what they are doing." Thus, our spiritual pride (and thinking we are all packed up and ready to go to Heaven, as the late Pastor would often say), is really a form of Idolatry which absolutely must be gotten rid of. We should be thankful that God finds us worthy to be dealt with, and we must be willing to make any changes He brings to our attention.

Certainly, our actions and words (and those of our children) should be controlled and always done or said in a Scriptural way or Christlike manner, but it should be accomplished by placing ourselves and children under the Holy Spirit's control and guidance within, and never accredited to anything of ourselves.

Or perhaps our victory is held up because there is a reservation in our heart, that if we are not healed, or delivered from a financial problem, within a certain time, we will resort to some man-made plan or effort of self-life. That is the reason for delayed victories in most cases. We need to settle it from the very beginning to trust God alone to the end and not resort to man or any of his plans and methods under any circumstance; then our temptation can be over quickly.

Satan (who came in one way), would flee in seven ways (the Pastor said), and 'spiritual blessing' we would receive along with the deliverance would be the most valuable result. Then, we would come to know God better and we would be that much more confident and ready to deal with Him personally, no matter what the temptation may be.

The cause of all our troubles is "MISPLACED TRUST" (trusting in something or somebody else). And if we were not delivered from it, our lives would eventually be ruined, and would send us to the Lake of Fire with no hope of ever getting delivered. *The most important issue or decision in our life, is whether we are going to trust God, or man.

We are not expected to learn to trust God in our own strength. We only need to be pliable and willing to learn in God's own school, and Our God, who wants no one to perish, will take us by the hand and lead and guide us with the utmost wisdom, patience, mercy, and tender love. (2 Pet.3:9) "But He bears patiently with you, His desire being that no one should perish but that all should come to repentance."

Thus, through His Holy Spirit within our willing heart, He will lead us (as He promised to us in John 16:13), away from dependence upon ourselves or anybody else, and will lead us into perfect faith and trust in Him. And this is not arbitrary, for God's power is completely shut out, when we are trusting in anybody or any man-made plans (things) instead of Him.

His full power (in all its wonderful ways of working), is only manifested when our confidence is in Him alone. The verse (2 Chron. 16: 9), encourages us to be faithful in obedient love for God, "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him."

A good example of how God works in behalf of those whose confidence is only in Him, is the case of Elijah and the widow of Zarephath and her son. A 3½ year drought and famine came on the land of Israel, because of their 'trusting in Idols' and other man-made plans and devices, inspired by Satan. God found one faithful person there, His servant Elijah, so He told Elijah to move eastward and stay by the brook Cherith. Elijah faithfully obeyed God, moved to where God told him, and he drank from the brook and was fed by the ravens that God sent to feed him. Elijah didn't question God as Job had done and resulted in Job ending up on an ash heap, covered with sores.

This was Elijah's first lesson of financial trust as God led him along at His pace, for Elijah was tested again when the brook dried up. This certainly could have tempted Elijah to wonder where his supplies would come from and could cause him to doubt God and turn to man for help. However, Elijah remained faithful to God, so, God had a new and better plan ready to supply for Elijah, as well as the widow of Zarephath and her son, who also rejected Satan's doubts and accepted God's promise to provide for them.

In the same way, we should not listen to the doubts and fears from Satan for one second, when the human source of supply we can see and were depending on, fails us. We need to be tested just like Elijah was. But how short-sighted we can be, and how we allow Satan to block our view of God and forget His many wonderful promises.

In His great love, mercy, and power, He is just waiting to supply everything we need, or fulfill any desire that is within His Will. Whether it is a spiritual, physical, or financial need (or whatever it may be in the home or workshop or anywhere), when that sin of Idolatry (all human dependence

on our part) is out of the way, God will take its place just as He did for Elijah, and the widow and her son, "who did eat many days." [That is a wonderful exchange for each one of us to make, to be rid of the sin of Idolatry and have it replaced with confidence in God, Himself. It is then that we are obedient to Exodus 20:3-4, "You shall have no other gods before me. "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below." It is then that we have placed our trust completely in God.

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Main Points:

The lesson emphasizes God's commands (Exod.20:3-4) to have no other Gods before Him, nor to allow any Idols to come between us and God.

The lesson points out that Idolatry really is placing our trust in something besides God, and that anything else we are relying on becomes an idol between us and God.

Also, that even our own heart can deceive us, to think that we are not trusting in something besides God when we really are, for "The heart [is] deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" (Jere.17:9). The devil can deceive us in this way, and we can be an Idolater the same as if we bowed down to a golden image.



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