**Digging Deeper Hezekiah Week 2**

Scripture Readings

* 2 Chronicles 29
* 2 Kings 18:1-5

God knew his people would have the desire to worship others and put their trust in other things so he made it very clear from the beginning of the Law He gave to Moses how he felt about that.

* Exodus 20:3-4“You shall have no other gods before me.4“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.
* Exodus 20:23 You shall not make gods of silver to be with me, nor shall you make for yourselves gods of gold.

Let’s define a few terms. Idolatry is excessive devotion to or reverence for some person or some thing. An Idol is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give.

Idol worship was nothing new in the time of Hezekiah. It was around during the time of Moses and is still around today. Hezekiah had the high places torn down and wanted to help rid the kingdom of idol worship that had taken place during his father, King Ahaz’ reign. Our idols today may not be pillars or carved images. We may not be making sacrifices to them or physically bowing down to them, but **we do bow down to them in our hearts**.

We are going to look at different idols that may be drawing our attention away from the Lord and different idols where we may be putting our trust rather than in the Lord.

Money can become an idol. Money in and of itself isn’t a bad thing – we need it to survive.

* Ecclesiastes 5:10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.

Working more and more hours to make more money, spending all of your time obsessing about how much money you have or don’t have. Never feeling like you have enough money or never being satisfied with your financial situation could be an indication that money is an idol – when we think more about money than we do about God.

Do you think about money more than you should – whether you think about how to get more or worry about not having enough? If you get a raise do you already have the money spent or do you just adjust to the new income as part of your spending rather than asking the Lord what He wants you to do with it?

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The same can be said of our stuff/possessions. If you are constantly trying to get more stuff, worried about keeping up with the Jones’ or you have to have the latest and greatest technology the minute it hits the market, your stuff could be an idol.

Do you find yourself constantly thinking about the next thing you want to buy immediately after you purchase something? Today we have so much stuff that we rent storage units to hold all of our stuff.

How much thought, time and energy do you spend on acquiring stuff versus how much thought, time and energy you spend on worshiping the Lord and growing closer to Him?

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Activities, sports and hobbies can also become idols. Do you find yourself having time to do your hobby – sewing, crafting, watching tv, playing video games etc. but you don’t have time to read the Word? Do you have time to play golf, hunt, work out, spend time on the computer but you don’t have time to pray? Which of these might be an idol for you?

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Our jobs or volunteering or even ministry can become an idol. If we define ourselves solely through what we do and not who we belong to, our jobs, volunteering or ministry positions can be idols. If we spend so much time working, volunteering or even doing ministry that we have no time for our family or our relationship with God, we have turned our jobs and positions into idols.

Has your volunteering or ministry become an idol?

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Another source of idols for us today can be people. Caring too much about what others think about us and constantly trying to please others can turn them into idols.

* Galatians 1:10 For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Galatians+1:10&version=ESV#fen-ESV-29051a)] of Christ.

Do you worry more about pleasing God or man? Do you worry to much about what others think of you? Do you find yourself trying to please others too much – are you the person who says ‘yes’ to everything? Are you saying ‘yes’ to things that you should say ‘no’ to in order to have more time for God?

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Our children and grandchildren or our spouses can become idols. Living our lives vicariously through our children – using them to fulfill our unfulfilled dreams to live the lives we wanted to live can turn our children into idols. Being obsesses about them being the best athlete, musician, student, etc. Even worrying about them too much – constantly worrying about every aspect of their life can make them an idol because you are excessively devoted to thinking about them and leave very little thought time to the Lord.

Do you have time to take them to every practice, game and activity but find yourself too exhausted to come to church? Are you obsessed with their success? Are you living vicariously through them? If you have grown children, were these areas you used to struggle with? Maybe it’s not your children but your grandchildren. Are they becoming idols for you?

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Our current circumstances can turn into idols. Whatever you are going through at the moment whether it be something exciting like moving to a new house, getting married or getting ready for a vacation or something negative like an illness, a loss of a relationship, loss of job or having to shelter in place. If we are spending all of our time and energy so focused on what we are going through at the moment that we don’t have the time or energy to discuss it with the Lord, then it is taking devotion away from Him.

Are your circumstances becoming an idol? Are you so tunnel-visioned that you don’t have time to read the Word or study or time to serve others? Are your circumstances taking up all your thoughts?

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Idols are something we all struggle with, but if we don’t take stock of what they are in our lives, how can we change our excessive devotion to them? God wants to be the #1 priority in our lives. He wants to come first. Just as Hezekiah had to cleanse the towns of idols and tear them down, we need to do the same in our lives. We need to identify the things in our lives that compete for our devotion to God and the time we are to devote to Him. Spend some time and ask the Lord to reveal any idol you may have in your life. Ask Him to help you put the person, thing or situation into perspective. Repent of allowing something or someone to take devotion away from Him.

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This next section is something we discussed in the teaching, but I thought some may want to dig deeper and have more time to pray and seek the Lord.

* 2 Chronicles 29:5 and (Hezekiah) said to them, “Hear me, Levites! Now consecrate yourselves, and consecrate the house of the Lord, the God of your fathers, and carry out the filthfrom the Holy Place.

‘Carry out the filth’ – this is referring to the pagan cult objects that had been set up in the temple. King Ahaz had allowed pagan objects to be brought into the temple and had even moved the bronze altar and replaced it with one he had built that was a replica of a pagan altar.

* 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, **20**for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Like the temple that Solomon built the Lord, our bodies are to be holy temples because they are where the Holy Spirit resides. Do we treat our bodies like holy temples? Like the ‘filth’ that had to be carried out of the temple of the Lord, is there ‘filth’ that we need to rid ourselves of? Look at the following categories and ask the Lord to reveal any areas of ‘filth’ that you need to remove.

* Your mind – are there thoughts that you think and say to yourself over and over again that are not in line with what the Lord says about you?

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* Do you say that you are too (fat, old, impatient…) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or not (smart, pretty, good…) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ enough? What words can you fill in that you say to yourself? Ask the Lord to remove words that He does not say about you and replace them with what He does say about you.

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* Do you think too little of yourself? Do you think too much of yourself? What do your mental tapes say? Do you need to rid ourselves of some of them? Record what you say to yourself over and over again and ask the Lord to change your tapes. What does He want you to say about yourself?

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* Your heart – do a heart check – are there people you are holding a grudge against? Are there people you need to forgive? Are there people that you need to ask forgiveness from because of things you have said or done?

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* Your mouth – are there things that come out of your mouth that are not honoring the Lord? Are you a gossip, are you critical of others – do you spend more time tearing down others rather than building them up? Maybe it’s not so much WHAT you say but HOW you say it. What does the Lord want you to change about your words and your tone with which you say them?

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* Your physical body – do you take care of the temple itself – are you eating healthy and getting exercise so we are in the best physical shape we can be in? What is the Lord calling you to do today?

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Prior to King Ahaz (Hezekiah’s father), Judah had 137 years of pretty good kings – they were not perfect, but they are described as ‘doing what was right in the eyes of the Lord’. Ahaz only ruled for 16 years and yet during that time, the country completely abandoned the Lord and their worship of Him. It wasn’t even a generation and those who **had** followed the Lord turned away from Him and were easily influenced to worship idols by King Ahaz. How about us? Are we easily influenced by the culture around us? How has the culture influenced your thinking? How has the culture and leadership impacted the way you worship the Lord?

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As we discussed in the teaching video, Hezekiah did not follow the ways father, but rather, more the ways of his grandfather, Jotham. Jotham ruled in Judah for the first 9 years of Hezekiah’s life before his father, Ahaz took over. So, Hezekiah had his grandfather’s influence for the first 9 years of his life and his father’s for the following 16 years before he took over as king.

* + 1. Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go;
		    even when he is old he will not depart from it.

The training Hezekiah must have received under the leadership of his grandfather had a great impact on him – even though it was only for the first 9 years of his life. This is why it is so important for us to raise children in the church. It is why we need to take children, even young children, to church and to Sunday school and to VBS. Young children are like little sponges and they are so open to learning about the Lord. We all have a responsibility to help raise children in the faith whether we are biological parents, grandparents or aunts. Children need to hear our stories of faith, they need to see us reading the Word and praying. There are children around us – neighbors, friends, etc. Who does the Lord want you to influence for the kingdom?

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* 2 Kings 18:1-3 In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. **2**He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. **3**And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that David his father had done.

In this passage, Hezekiah is even listed as a son of David – in the lineage of Jesus. Hezekiah didn’t allow his past – the legacy that his father left – to define who he was. Even though he grew up with an idolatrous father, Hezekiah didn’t allow his upbringing in a pagan home to prevent him from serving the Lord. It is easy for us to allow the things in our past to prevent us from serving the Lord today. However, it doesn’t matter where you come from, God loves you and wants to use you for His kingdom purposes. Your past doesn’t have to determine your future. We need to not let the things of the past hold us back today. Whether it is things you have done or where you come from or even things that were done to you – God wants to use each and every one of us for His kingdom purposes and NOTHING in our past disqualifies us from serving Him today.

Are you letting your past define your future? Are you letting something that you did in your past convince you that you can’t possibly be used by God? Are you blaming where you are now on something that happened in your past? Spend some time with the Lord taking a look at how your past is impacting your present and your future.

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Our God is a redeeming God and He can redeem your past.

* + - * Ephesians 1:7 in him (Jesus) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

Are there things from your past that you would like the Lord to redeem? Ask Him and be willing to ask Him if there is anything you need to do – do you need to confess, repent, ask for forgivness and be willing to do it. Remember He requires complete obedience and not just partial obedience.

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Remember what Louie Giglio says, “Our mess is the canvas on which God paints his story of redemption.”

During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, our ability to worship the Lord in our churches has been greatly impacted. Even when we are able to return to our church buildings, our worship will likely look quite different i.e. less people, wearing masks, unable to sing, unable to pass the peace, unable to chat and hug and fellowship with our church families.

* + - * 2 Chronicles 29:30 And Hezekiah the king and the officials commanded the Levites to sing praises to the Lord with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed down and worshiped.

What a glorious day it will be when we can worship the Lord fully in all of our churches! Until then, share with the Lord what you are missing, what has been difficult for you in regards to not being able to worship him in your church building with your church family. This is a challenging time for all of your clergy and pastors. Please take time to write a prayer for them. I encourage you to email, text or snail mail your prayer to your clergy as a way of encouraging them during this time.

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