

ULC Sermon Study Resource

Idols - Materialism

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March 14th, 2021

Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: What is your most prized possession?

Reading: Ecclesiastes 5:8-20

Outline:

- I. Materialism and Justice (v. 8-9)
 - a. When we make materialism our idol, we look to material goods as our primary source of comfort, security, worth, and identity.
 - b. The idolatry of materialism is tied to injustice, whether we are aware of it or not.
Q: Why should we not be surprised to see exploitation of the poor in our society?
- II. Materialism and Hyperreality (v. 10-12)
 - a. Materialism is hyperreal, meaning it promises better than reality. This continually invites us to press further into materialism, hoping it will deliver on its false promises.
 - b. Placing our faith in possessions is not only idolatry, but it is also futile. We cannot take our possessions with us.
Q: How does Qoheleth describe the impact of materialism on the life of an individual?
- III. Materialism and Contentment (v. 18-20)
 - a. We can worship God by being content with what he has given us, and by loving others with those blessings.
 - b. When we view possessions as gifts, we will be overly occupied with the joy in our hearts, and we can live in generosity toward others.
Q: How does this differ from what the world tells us about possessions?

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) Why do you think it may be difficult for us to recognize materialism in ourselves?
- 2) Can you identify examples of materialism in your life or in society as a whole?
- 3) Why are we quick at times to believe the false promises of materialism and hope it will deliver?
- 4) Can you think of an example of the hyperreality of materialism that you experienced? How did it let you down?
- 5) What do you think about viewing material possessions as gifts? How can this shift your perspective?

Suggestions for further study:

- James 5:1-5 **Q: What does this passage say about material wealth?**
- Luke 12:15 **Q: How should we think about greed?**
- 2 Corinthians 8:9 **Q: How does this verse highlight what Jesus did to save us from our sin?**

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, we thank you that in you we have more than enough. We thank you that you so willingly gave of yourself and poured out the riches of your mercy on the cross. God, we pray that as we receive your grace, it would make us joyful and content, and that it would lead us away from the idol of materialism. We pray that we would resist the traps of hyperreality and that we would instead turn our focus to you and your kingdom. We pray all this in your name, Amen.