SERMON GUIDE

"Don't Shrink God"

Exodus 20:4-6

BE KNOWN

NEWS TO KNOW

- SERVE SEPTEMBER – Throughout the month of September we are asking everyone at TJC to join a serve team. Sign up to serve in the lobby on Sunday morning!
- Women's Discipleship Conference – September 25
- Gather – October 3
- 2nd Saturday – October 10

CONNECT WITH YOUR GROUP

- Ask everyone about their week.
- How are everyone's marriages?
- How are their children and/or grandchildren?
- How is their work?
- Are there any challenges they are facing?

KNOW

SUMMARY OF THE SERMON

- **Exodus 20:4-6 –** [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.[5] You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, [6] but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments."
- **Main Point:** The second commandment forbids us from reducing God to something we can make, manage, or manipulate.
- **Point 1:** God will not be shrunk.
- **Point 2:** God will not share you.
- **Point 3:** God's steadfast love goes further.

- **Application:** You need more than a manageable version of God.
- **Application:** Worship God as a worshiper, not a consumer.
- **Application:** Mind your habits because you're handing them to your kids.
- **Reference passages:** John 4:24, 14:9; Romans 1:21-23; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **How can idolatry involve editing God rather than completely rejecting Him?**
    - Idolatry can happen when we claim to worship the true God while only emphasizing the attributes of His character that we prefer. This gives us a false representation of God because we have reduced His perfect character rather than receiving Him as He has revealed Himself.
- **What does it mean to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth?**
    - To worship God in spirit means that we must access him through the Holy Spirit, and we must worship him with authenticity and fervency. However, we must also worship him in truth, according to how he has revealed himself and told us to worship.
- **What does the golden calf teach us about worshiping God in the wrong way?**
    - Israel was not necessarily attempting to abandon the LORD for an entirely different deity. Aaron connected the calf with a feast "to the LORD." Their sin was attempting to make God visible and manageable through an image. This demonstrates that sincere intentions are not sufficient in worship; God also cares about whether we worship Him according to His instructions. Therefore, we must worship God in both spirit and in truth.
- **Why can no created image adequately represent God?**
    - God is the Creator, not a creature. He is spirit and transcendent. Any physical representation necessarily leaves something out and therefore communicates something incomplete about Him. Any material representation of God falls short because it is dependent material trying to represent an independent God. Reducing the infinite God to something created inevitably makes him appear less than he truly is.
- **How can repentance change the spiritual inheritance of a family?**
    - Although particular sins and habits may be handed down through a family, they do not have to determine its future. A person who turns to Christ can interrupt patterns of idolatry that have existed for generations. Instead of passing those same patterns to the next generation, repentance and faithfulness can become a new spiritual inheritance for the family.
- **What does the contrast between the "third and fourth generation" and "thousands" teach us about God?**

    - The contrast emphasizes the severity of God's judgment and the immensity of his grace. Judgment is applied to multiple generations, but covenant love extends to thousands. The point is not that God ignores sin, but that grace is central to His revealed character. God is both just toward the guilty and abundantly gracious.
- **Based on this sermon, what is a practical step you can take to grow further into the image of Christ?**

MAKE KNOWN

PRAYER

- Open up the floor for everyone to share personal prayer requests.
- Pray:
    - Over anything shared with the group
    - Over each family in your group, that the Lord would shape them into the image of Christ
    - For our church
    - For our elders
    - For our missionaries

SERVING

- Are there opportunities in your group for you to make Christ known to each other by serving each other?
- Has your group taken the opportunity to serve in a Serve the City ministry at TJC?
- Has your group taken the opportunity to serve on a Sunday at TJC?

If you need to reference the sermon manuscript you may find it here.