

I. YOU CANNOT SERVE THE LORD AND IDOLS (v.1-6)

- Micah shamelessly mixed worship of the LORD with the worship of idols (syncretism). And the section ends with v.6, to make sure we get the point.
- This kind of behavior was expressly forbidden in the first and second commandments. **Exodus 20:4**. And yet not 12 chapters later we see that while Moses is on the mountain with the LORD, the people disobey with Aaron's approval. **Exodus 32:1-10**. And what was the consequence? **Exodus 32:26-28**.
- **Further warning is given in Duet. 27:15!** "'Cursed be the man who makes a carved or cast metal image, an abomination to the Lord, a thing made by the hands of a craftsman, and sets it up in secret.' And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen.'
- **This is the shamelessness of the people when they do what is right in their own eyes!**
- **Q. Can we not be the same?** Do you see how you start doing what Micah and his mother did?
- **A. It's easy. You start thinking or listening to people who say,** "My goodness, you don't have to get all bent out of shape about doctrine. All that matters is that we are sincere. You worship God your way and I will worship him mine."
- **But, in truth, we only have two options.** We can worship God our way, your way, their way, my way OR we can worship God His way. Option one is according to human wisdom—what we think and feel; option two is according to divine revelation—what is written in God's word.
- **This does not simply apply to the way we worship the LORD when we gather.** It means that; but it means more! You cannot serve Jesus and idols in gathered worship. In addition, you cannot serve Jesus and idols any second of any day. We are to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice every second of every day for God's glory, others good, and our gladness!
- **A house divided cannot stand!** You will love one and hate the other. You cannot keep one foot in the kingdom of darkness and one foot in the Kingdom of God. You cannot with one hand sacrifice to Baal and with the other to YHWH. You cannot wear both teams jerseys. You cannot serve the LORD and idols!
- **O beloved,** "let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire!" **Heb. 12:28-29**
- **You must** "by the mercies of God...present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." **Romans 12:1-2**

II. YOU CANNOT TRUST JESUS AND YOURSELF (v.7-13)

- **Micah shamelessly tried to acquire blessings from the LORD through his own inventions** (shrewdness, ingenuity, cleverness)
- **He trusted in what he could do,** what he could accomplish, what he could acquire, thinking it would be a magnet to attract God's benefits! He was wrong. In fact, like when you turn a magnet backwards to another, trusting yourself repels Jesus from you.
- **This is the basic principle of all the religions and philosophical systems in the world:** "I perform my duties for God, therefore He will prosper me."
- **Religion and world philosophies say,** "If get the right priest or pastor or teacher or thinker or philosopher or self-help writer, they will unlock the physical and spiritual blessings for me. I get all my ducks in a row and the prosperity will begin to flow. **This is not Christianity!** This is not the gospel! This is man-mad religion! **The gospel is totally different! The gospel says your real problem** is not a virus; it's not your finances; it's not your failing relationships; it's not your physique; your real problem is not how others view you; it's not your untapped potential. **The gospel says,** "Your problem IS that you have sinned against God..." **And the gospel's answer is NOT** "Start acting better and God will cause the prosperity to flow." No no no! **The gospel says,** "You could never perform in such a way that could deal with your sin and earn God's blessings." What can a man pay God for his soul? **The gospel is GOOD NEWS, NOT GOOD ADVICE:** "Jesus, who is God, became a man in order to live perfectly flawless in every way; He became a man in order to die the death sinners deserve; He also became a man in order to destroy the power of sin and death by rising from the dead! **He did this in order to RESCUE A PEOPLE FOR HIMSELF!** All who hear this gospel, turn from their sin and believe on/trust in/embrace Jesus Christ will be forgiven, reconciled, adopted, empowered, blessed, and one day be made perfect when Jesus returns to make everything new!
- **Trusting in yourself rather than Jesus, what can we compare it to? It is like pouring water into a strainer hoping to fill it up;** it is as foolish as trying to keep a meal hot by putting it in the refrigerator; it is like drinking poison to heal yourself; it is like cutting off your legs to make you faster; it is like tying a rock to your ankle to help you float; trusting yourself rather than Jesus is like building your house upon the sand rather than the solid rock; trusting in yourself rather than Jesus is like standing in a valley during the flood rather than taking shelter in the ark!
- **You can trust yourself and be damned or trust Jesus and be delivered.** You cannot trust Jesus and yourself!
- **And by the way: if you do trust in Jesus, he does not promise you health in this life;** he does not promise you wealth in this life; he does not promise prosperity as the world counts it; he does not promise you the alleviation or suffering in this life. In fact, he promises you the intensification or suffering and persecution.
- **O but the prize far outweighs the payment!** The reward far outweighs the risk! The Christ far outweighs the cross we must bear for His name's sake!

- **You are promised that he will never leave you nor forsake you.** He promises he will not cast out if you come to Him in faith. He promises you will be persecuted but not a hair on your head will perish. He promises you peace that surpasses all understanding. He promises you there is more grace in him than sin in you. He promises he will raise you up on the last day, making everything new—even you. He promises nothing will separate you from His love. This is the kind of love you have been looking for your whole life.
- **Do not trust yourself; trust in Jesus Christ! Build your hope on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness!**

III. YOU CANNOT SERVE THE LORD AND MONEY (17:10-11, 18:4-6, 18-20)

- **The Levite Priest shamelessly served only for the money.**
- **Paul tells us to watch out for these Charlatans!** Those who “[imagine] that godliness is a means of [financial] gain.” **1 Tim. 6:5**
- **Again he says,** “Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.” **1 Tim. 6:9-10**
- **Peter warns us as well!** “in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.” **2 Pet. 2:3**
- **Jesus is clear through his apostles:** Those who are in ministry only for the money show what their true treasure is, and it is not Jesus.
- **Q. What about you?** Is your true treasure Jesus or the things you want Jesus to give you? Do you treasure Jesus or do you treasure the things you hope he lets you hang on to?
- **Delighting in the things Jesus gives rather than Jesus is like delighting in the ring box rather than the ring;** it's like treasuring the wrapping paper and not the gift; delighting in the things Jesus gives is like eating the eggshell and throwing out the egg. Jesus is the prize!
- **Hear Jesus' words:** “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.” **Matt. 6:24**
- **Q. It is easy for us to pinpoint a money hungry televangelist, but can you spot it in your own soul?** Can you spot the love of money it as it pours out from your heart into your actions? I bet most of us haven't thought for a second during this whole time “I love money more than Jesus” but that doesn't mean it is not true of you!
- **I know of no better way to fight the love of money than to give it away for Jesus' glory and other's good!**
- **Robert Murray M'Cheyne:** “Ah! my dear friend! I am concerned for [others] but more for you. I know not what Christ will say to you in that great day...I fear there are many hearing me who may know well that they are not Christians, because they do not love to give. To give largely and liberally, not grudging at all, requires a new heart. Oh my friends! enjoy your money; make the most of it; give none away; enjoy it quickly for I can tell you, you will be beggars throughout eternity.”
- **Randy Alcorn:** “Gaze upon Christ long enough, and you'll become more of a giver. Give long enough, and you'll become more like Christ.”

IV. IF YOU SERVE IDOLS OR TRUST YOURSELF OR LOVE MONEY, THE MOMENTARY RESULTS WILL BE EITHER 1) EMPTY HANDS or 2) ENSLAVEMENT. THE ETERNAL RESULTS WILL BE DESTRUCTION (ch. 18)

- Micah's Idols are stolen while the Levite Priest and the Danites' story so far ends with their enslavement to an Idol.
- **C.S. Lewis, in the abolition of man, called these types “Men without chests.”**
- **All these are men that use their heads (reason) and use their guts (instinctive urges), but have empty chests— hearts of stone that do not love the Lord or trust the Lord and desire to obey the Lord.**
- **“many...walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.”** **Philippians 3:18-19**
- **Q. Do you have a chest?** Do you have a heart of flesh that beats with love for Jesus, not money? Do you have a heart that trusts Jesus, not yourself? Do you have a heart that leads you to serve Jesus, not idols?
- If so, praise God! If not, you must be born again. You must receive a new heart from Jesus! Look at Him. Go to Him in faith. Turn from your sin and go to Jesus, embracing Him and what He's done for sinners. If you go to Him he will receive you!