

SERMON NOTES

1 Kings 18:20-40 Battle for the Heart

I. Identifying Heart Idols

²⁰ So Ahab summoned all the people and the prophets to Mount Carmel.
²¹ Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, "How long are you going to waver between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him! But if Baal is God, then follow him!" But the people were completely silent.

Idolatry Defined:

Making anything more important to us than God and what He says is good

Diagnosing Heart Idols:

a) What, if it were taken away, would make you feel like your life had not meaning or value?

b) If I only had _____, then I would be satisfied.

c) What, when threatened, elicits strong emotions like fear, anger, or despair?

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II. Acknowledging the Harm of Heart Idols

²² Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only prophet of the LORD who is left, but Baal has 450 prophets." ²³ Now bring two bulls. The prophets of Baal may choose whichever one they wish and cut it into pieces and lay it on the wood of their altar, but without setting fire to it. I will prepare the other bull and lay it on the wood on the altar, but not set fire to it. ²⁴ Then call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the LORD. The god who answers by setting fire to the wood is the true God!" And all the people agreed. ²⁵ Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "You go first, for there are many of you. Choose one of the bulls and prepare it and call on the name of your god. But do not set fire to the wood." ²⁶ So they prepared one of the bulls and placed it on the altar. Then they called on the name of Baal all morning, shouting, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no reply of any kind. Then they danced wildly around the altar they had made. ²⁷ About noontime Elijah began mocking them. "You'll have to shout louder," he scoffed, "for surely he is a god! Perhaps he is deep in thought, or he is relieving himself. Or maybe he is away on a trip, or he is asleep and needs to be wakened!" ²⁸ So they shouted louder, and following their normal custom, they cut themselves with knives and swords until the blood gushed out. ²⁹ They raved all afternoon until the time of the evening sacrifice, but still there was no reply, no voice, no answer.

"Whatever you treasure most is the thing that has your heart and controls your life." -Tim Chester

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III. Fighting Heart Idols

³⁰ Then Elijah called to the people, "Come over here!" They all crowded around him as he repaired the altar of the LORD that had been torn down. ³¹ He took twelve stones, one to represent each of the tribes of Israel, ³² and he used the stones to rebuild the LORD's altar. Then he dug a trench around the altar large enough to hold about three gallons. ³³ He piled wood on the altar, cut the bull into pieces, and laid the pieces on the wood. Then he said, "Fill four large jars with water, and pour the water over the offering and the wood." After they had done this, ³⁴ he said, "Do the same thing again!" And when they were finished, he said, "Now do it a third time!" So they did as he said, ³⁵ and the water ran around the altar and even overflowed the trench. ³⁶ At the customary time for offering the evening sacrifice, Elijah the prophet walked up to the altar and prayed, "O LORD, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, prove today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all this at your command. ³⁷ O LORD, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God and that you have brought them back to yourself."

How To Fight Heart Idols:

- a) Pray for Heart-Change
- b) Turn to the Truth about God

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IV. The God Who Wins Over Our Hearts

³⁸ Immediately the fire of the LORD flashed down from heaven and burned up the young bull, the wood, the stones, and the dust. It even licked up all the water in the ditch! ³⁹ And when the people saw it, they fell on their faces and cried out, "The LORD is God! The LORD is God!" ⁴⁰ Then Elijah commanded, "Seize all the prophets of Baal. Don't let a single one escape!" So the people seized them all, and Elijah took them down to the Kishon Valley and killed them there.

A Father's Day Prayer:

"Heavenly Father, for the benefit of my family, make yourself first in my life."