

March 17, 2012

And out of the ground the Lord God made to spring up every tree that is *pleasant* to the sight and good for food. (Gen 2.9.) All who fashion idols are nothing, and the things they *delight* in do not profit. (Is 44.9)

Thus says the Lord God: Repent and turn away from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations. For any one of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn in Israel, who separates himself from me, taking his idols into his heart and putting the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes to a prophet to consult me through him, I the Lord will answer him myself. (Eze 14.6-8)

Not knowing that the fire was his for the asking, not knowing that fire was something that God did not need, something that God had created expressly for man, Prometheus felt he had to steal it. But why? Because he knew no god that would be willing to give it to him for nothing. He knew no god that was not an enemy, because the only gods he knew were only a little stronger than himself. He had to steal the fire from gods that were weak. If he had known the strong God, everything would have been quite different. (Thomas Merton, *The New Man*, p. 24)

Expressing Our Love and Praise: Worship in Song

Declaring What We Believe: Apostle's Creed

Welcoming Each Other (Kids may go to Sunday School)

Giving Worship to God: Offering

(Gifts to Grace Hill support the life and work of our church community. Twenty percent of gifts also go to local and global mission, including Samaritan Health Clinic, Justice Matters, Young Life, and church planting in N. American and Asia.)

Hearing God's Word: Scripture Reading *Isaiah 44.12-20, 1 4.1 - 9*

The ironsmith takes a cutting tool and works it over the coals. He fashions it with hammers and works it with his strong arm. He becomes hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint. 13 The carpenter stretches a line; he marks it out with a pencil. He shapes it with planes and marks it with a compass. He shapes it into the figure of a man, with the beauty of a man, to dwell in a house. 14 He cuts down cedars, or he chooses a cypress tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a cedar and the rain nourishes it. 15 Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it. 16 Half of it he burns in the fire. Over the half he eats meat; he roasts it and is satisfied. Also he warms himself and says, "Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire!" 17 And the rest of it he makes into a god, his idol, and falls down to it and worships it. He prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!" 18 They know not, nor do they discern, for he has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. 19 No one considers, nor is there knowledge or discernment to say, "Half of it I burned in the fire; I also baked bread on its coals; I roasted meat and have eaten. And shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" 20 He feeds on ashes; a deluded heart has led him astray, and he cannot deliver himself or say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

44¹ "But now hear, O Jacob my servant, Israel whom I have chosen!

² Thus says the Lord who made you, who formed you from the womb and will help you:

Fear not, O Jacob my servant, Jeshurun whom I have chosen.

³ For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour my Spirit upon your offspring, and my blessing on your descendants.

⁴ They shall spring up among the grass like willows by flowing streams.

⁵ This one will say, 'I am the Lord's,' another will call on the name of Jacob,
and another will write on his hand, 'The Lord's,' and name himself by the name of Israel."

44²¹ Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant;

I formed you; you are my servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me.

²² I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist;
return to me, for I have redeemed you.

²³ Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it; shout, O depths of the earth;
break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it!

For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel.

Understanding God's Word and Our Lives: Sermon

Our Problem is Idolatry

1. We Are Idol Makers, v.12-18.

2. The Problem with Idols, v.12-20.

3. Redeeming Relationship with God and Creation, v.1-5, 21-23.

Recognizing our Brokenness: Confession of Sin

Public Reading

Father, forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. (Matthew 6.12,13)

Father, we have lost sight of your greatness and turned to idols. In the calm contentment of our self-made lives, help us to remember that your lightning lights up the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before you. The heavens proclaim your righteousness, and all the peoples see your glory. All worshipers of images are put to shame, who make their boast in worthless idols. For you, O Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods. Amen. (Adapted from Psalm 97)

Private Reflection

The Grace and Forgiveness of Christ

Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him;
behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.
He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms;
he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.
(Isaiah 40.10,11)

Remembering Jesus with Bread and Cup: Lord's Supper

Jesus called those who find their life in His death and resurrection to receive the bread and cup as a tangible sign to remember and be strengthened by His Gospel. It is a spiritual meal for all who believe in Him. While Jesus spent time with everyone, he also shared the bread and cup only with those who followed him. Children who have not yet become *communing members* should not take the bread and cup but talk with our pastor or an elder about their personal faith.

On the first and third Sundays of the month, we come forward as families, groups and individuals to receive the bread and cup and for a prayer of blessing. The second, fourth and fifth Sundays, we remain seated, with time to personally remember Jesus' death and resurrection for us with the bread and cup. Whether you take the elements or not, we encourage you to either come forward for prayer or use the time for personal reflection about your relationship with Jesus.

**Juice is in the outer ring; wine is in inner rings.*

Taking hold of the Good Word: Benediction ("the good word")

"May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word." 2 Thess. 2:16, 17

Prayers for Those Not Taking the Bread and Cup

Prayer for Those Searching for Truth

Lord Jesus, you claim to be the way, the truth, and the life. Grant that I might be undaunted by the cost of following you as I consider the reason for doing so. If what you claim is true, please guide me, teach me and open me to the reality of your identity. Give me an understanding of you that is coherent, convincing, and that leads to the life you promise. Amen.

Prayer of Belief

Lord Jesus Christ, I admit that I am more wicked and sinful than I ever dared allow, but through you I am more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope. I thank you for paying my debt on the cross, to give me complete forgiveness and rightness with God. Knowing that you have been raised from the dead, in joy I turn from my sins and receive you as my Savior and Lord. Amen.

Grace Hill Financial Information:

Average Monthly expenses:	\$14,400
February 2013 giving:	7,747
Average Monthly 2011 giving:	11,621
Average Monthly 2012 giving:	13,664
February operating budget balance:	(\$6652)

Announcements and Information:

Guys Conversations. Tuesday, March 5th, 8:00 pm.
Anna Maria's.
Backyard Bible Club sign up Now.