

Worship The Living God

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Date: 26 June 2022

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[0 : 0 0] now it's my pleasure to welcome up to our pulpit Jonathan Clark. Welcome, brother. Pleasure. Good morning, friends. It's good to be back with you again. I was here in, I think it was March was the last time I was here. But for those of you who don't know me, my name is Jonathan Clark.

I've actually, I grew up in Colorado Springs. I've been gone for a while now, but I keep coming back to Cheyenne Mountain. I actually worked here as a pastoral intern while I was in seminary. And if you don't like Matthew, you can blame me. Capone and I were roommates in seminary, and I told him about this job out in southern Colorado Springs, and so he applied. And so a lot of why. Yeah, so Capone's an old friend. He's a faithful friend. Love him while we're praying for his quick recovery. Currently, I just moved back to Colorado Springs a couple of weeks ago, actually, about a month and a half ago with my wife, Caroline, and our daughter, Phoebe. And our hope and our plan is to plant a new campus ministry at UCCS and to college students in the Colorado Springs area. I work for an organization called Reformed University Fellowship. John Alpeter was talking briefly about the PCA. The PCA is the Presbyterian denomination that Cheyenne Mountain is a part of, and RUF is the official campus ministry of that denomination. And so we are going to attempt to start a new Reformed voice at UCCS, a new Reformed community for college students. So if you have friends or students who are in that fit that age range, demographic, please, I would love to meet them and connect with them. We're going to start doing things even this summer, like fun events and Bible studies.

So we'd love to connect with them. And so, but that's not why we're here today. We're here to see what God's Word teaches us and how to live and follow and obey God. And as I was, turn with me in Deuteronomy chapter 4, Deuteronomy chapter 4, or it's printed in the bulletin around you. And as I've been thinking recently about starting something new in a new place, starting a new campus ministry, I've been reflecting on what are we doing as Christians? What is, you know, what is, what's the foundation? What are the old things? And so I've been rereading some old books from books that have really made an impression on my life and thinking about ministry, going back to the basics. And even as we read in our catechism this morning, you know, there's this very simple, right at the beginning, confession that we say as Christians, that there is one God and only one God. And that is, like John said, something that's so common to our minds and our hearts that I think we can move past it. But truly, as I think through college students in a new place, and I think, my goodness, this is still so important, so applicable to our hearts and our minds today. And so what we are going to consider today is how does this reality of you shall have no other gods besides me still apply to our world, to our secular, to our Christian, to your family, to your marriage, to your work? How does that apply today? And I think it does. And so we're going to examine today this idea of worshiping God alone and the idea of the contrary, which is idolatry, and examine that in our hearts. And the idea, the big thing that I want us to walk away from today is that God continues to call us every day, every week, to worship Him alone and to reject the idols of our heart. That God calls us to worship Him alone and to reject the idols of our heart. And so if you are, and we'll see this as we look at our text today, we're going to look at Deuteronomy chapter 4, and we're going to start at verse 15. So this is God's Word. Therefore, watch yourselves very carefully, since you saw no form in the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire. Beware, lest you act corruptly and make a carved image for yourself in the form of any figner, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth. And beware, lest you raise your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the hosts of

heaven, you be drawn away and bow down to them and serve them, things that the Lord your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole heaven. But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace out of Egypt to be a people of his own inheritance, as you are this day. Furthermore, the Lord was angry with me because of you, and he swore that I should not cross the Jordan and that I should not enter the good land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance. For I must die in this land. I must not go over the Jordan, but you shall go over and take possession of that good land.

Take care, lest you forget the covenant that the Lord your God, which he made with you, and make a carved image, the form of anything that the Lord your God has forbidden you. For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God. And now skipping down to verse 39. Know therefore today and lay it on your heart that the Lord is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. There is no other. Therefore, you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you today, that it may go well with you and with your children after you, then that you may prolong your days in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for all time. This is God's word. Would you pray with me? Father, Son, and Spirit, we pray now that as we have read your word, that you would now use your spirit to do what you have done for thousands of years for millions of people across time, that you would take words on a page and write them on our hearts, that we would walk out of here changed men and women who are more able to know and love you and to know and love one another. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

[6 : 20] Okay, so I want to try and set the scene a little bit for what's been going on in the life of the Israelites in the life of Deuteronomy, because if you're anything like me, it's been a while since you read Deuteronomy. And if you remember, this is a letter that Moses is writing to recount what he has told to the Israelites as they are getting ready to cross into the promised land, right? And so for 45 years, it's been 45-ish years since they've been rescued out of their slavery to Egypt, and now they are standing again on the edge of Canaan. But this is not the first time they've been here.

They've been here one other time, and when they were supposed to go into Canaan and take the land that God had given them, they chickened out, they did not trust God, and they went back. And God condemned that faithless, untrusting generation to die and wander in the desert. And now they come back at 40 years later, and God says, okay, enter into the land. And now Deuteronomy is, Moses is pretty much his giant pep talk of, don't be like your fathers. Don't be like that faithless generation.

This is a new generation. And Moses, who is their spiritual and their political leader, is now speaking to them. Really, he's preaching to them to exhort them to do better than their fathers and their parents. And most of Deuteronomy is Moses recounting God's faithfulness to them and exhorting and encouraging them to improve on their fathers' faithlessness and to enter the land, right?

And many of the themes of what he is exhorting them to center back into, you shall worship the Lord your God alone. We read just two chapters later earlier this morning, the core faith commitment of the Israelite people. The Lord our God, hero Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one, right?

And so the major theme that Moses is calling to here is monotheistic covenantal faithfulness, or to keep the promise packed that God had made with his people to worship him alone, contrary to the idols that are so much cropping up in their culture and in their hearts around them.

[8 : 32] And so what I want us to do is to consider today three things, three things. One, the reality of idolatrous hearts. Two, the only redeeming God. And three, how do we guard our hearts, right? So three things. One, the reality of idolatrous hearts. Two, the only redeeming God. And three, how do we guard our hearts? And so the first thing I want us to look at is the reality of idolatrous hearts. So notice here that in our text, we see here that there are four exhortations or commands that Moses gives his people to watch out, to look carefully. Verse 15, watch yourselves very carefully. Verse 16, beware lest you act corruptly. Verse 19, beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven. And verse 23, take care lest you forget the covenant. The language is different in each one of these, but the gist is the same, right? The warning is the same. Moses is warning and commanding and exhorting the Israelite people against slipping into any kind of idolatry, right? Or worship of anything other than him, worship of the other living God. And so, but in his cautions, I think we can see some distinguishing characteristics of sort of this deterioration, the fall into idolatry for the Israelite people, right? So first, notice here, verse 15, that idolatry starts with the desire for a tangible God. Verse 15,

therefore, watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly, right? Well, what does this mean? Well, he says, hey, do you remember when back at the mountain, when God spoke to Moses and all you saw was a fiery, a mountain on fire, but you never saw a God. Remember what they did? Well, they said, we can't see this God. We're not sure. We don't know what's going on. We need something. What did they do?

They made an image. They made an image. They took their gold and they constructed something that they could see, right? Something that they could touch to worship. And part of this is cultural because all other religions in the world had created physical idols, things that they could see, that they could worship, right? But behind this, behind this very old 2,000 years before Christ cultural phenomena is something that happens and moves in each human heart and therefore continues for us today, right?

There's a spiritual reality in this that each person, each culture, the Bible says, aspires to replace the invisible God with something physical, something that we can at least put our eyes on, maybe put our hands on and say, ah, this is something that I can actually begin to worship, right? And so this tells us that the major source of idolatry is the seeming, the apparent absence of the living God. Not that he is absent. We know that he is here. We know that he is present. But we say, I can't see him. He seems so far off and I need something that I can look to for help and security, right? We look around and we wonder, where is God? So I'll find something that I can worship, something that will make me feel valuable and significant, right? So idolatry begins with our inability to see God and say, I need something in this. But then second, notice that idolatry progresses when we corruptly fashion an image out of something created, right? The next step for idolatry is to look into the world, see the vacuum for a visible God, and to create something tangible or accessible, something visible. And look what the text says. He says, verse 16, beware lest you act corruptly. How? By making an image, a carved image for yourself in any form, in any form, right? That's saying that nothing, no physical form is sufficient to capture the beauty and the radiance and the uniqueness of the living God, the creating God of the Bible. But just to make sure that you understand how encompassing any is, O Israelites, let me tell you, it cannot be male. It cannot be female. It cannot be on any animal. It cannot be a winged bird. It cannot look like anything that creeps. It cannot be in the fish in the air. So he says, you're going to look around you and you're going to see a bunch of things.

And you're going to see things that you say, that's an option. And he says, it must not. Do not act corruptly by perverting something that is out there and saying, well, I could turn that into something that could feel significant in what feels invisible, right? So in short, Moses is saying idolatry is turning the most basic building blocks of the universe upside down, where we replace the creator for a created thing. Idolatry is when we, as Paul says in Romans 1, exchange the creator for the creature, right? And you can see this. You'll notice if you flip through your bulletin, there's a little, there's some quotes from a great theologian that I respect named Chris Wright, where he says, when this happens, we are turning the way that the universe works upside down. We are twisting the universe upside down and we are using, replacing things that God has given for our use for our God and we're rejecting God, right? And so this leads to the third and final step into idolatry, which is verse 19.

And beware lest you raise your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars and all the hosts in the heaven. You are drawn away and you bow down to them and you serve them, right? And so this third and final decline into idolatry is when we finally look to created things and we say, ah, this is divine. Ah, this is the source of hope and meaning that I have in my life, right? So idolatry starts when we feel the absence of God. We say, where is he? We know that scripture tells us he's there, but we don't always sense it. And we say, I need something. Oh, this will work. And we start to look to that as an image of hope and peace and security. And then we worship it, right? And we give it divine power and capacity, right? Idolatry is taking a good created thing and inscribing ultimate creator status, right? Now, this is speaking to a group of Israelites who are living in a, you know, agrarian culture and 2,000 years before Christ, a long time ago. Does this still apply to us? Perhaps some of you are here today and saying, Jonathan, we live in a very secular, very enlightened world, there's no pagans running around necessarily. I don't see people worshipping cows in Colorado Springs.

[15 : 22] How in the world does this possibly apply to my life, to my heart, right? Well, I think it's frankly the height of folly, it seems to me, for both the Christian and the non-Christian. And I think it's frankly one of the evil ones' best tricks to say, oh, that was then.

We've moved past that. That's not where our hearts are today. I don't worship a wooden stone. I don't need to worry about this. John Calvin, who's one of the great theologians of the Christian faith, says this. He says that the human heart is an idol factory. The human heart is an idol factory, that each of us is constantly generating new things to replace the creator with the creation, with that he, that in the absence of God, that our heart's eyes is constantly roving through your world and through your life to say, find something that says this can give me significance. Some of you, you know, perhaps Christians, you're saying, well, I don't think I'm doing this, Jonathan. I've come to church. I worship Jesus. Some of you who are non-Christians, you say, I am not idolatrous. In fact, I'm not religious at all. This does not describe me in the least. I don't, I reject the whole premise of superstitious spirituality. I'm a modern, enlightened secular. And I want to try and peel back and say that just as true as this was for the Israelites 4,000 years ago, it is still as true for us today. And I read a book a few months ago. It's a book called *Seculosity*. *Seculosity* by a guy named David Zahl, Z-A-H-L. Highly recommend this book. Great book. The subtitle of the book is *How Career, Parenting, Technology, Food, Politics, and Romance became Our New Religion*. So if you're looking for something to make your brain work a little bit, I highly recommend this book. But this author, what he's basically trying to do is trying to explain how in our modern world, each of us, in our little subcultures, in our little family units, in our own hearts, have basically repeated the golden calf idolatry in an own unique way for each one of us, right? And he writes, contrary to what we may think, religion is not on the decline in America. It's just rebranding itself, right? It's just changing its form, right? Because through each one of us is this desire to worship something and this sinful desire to replace the creator for the creation. So we are all just doing this as much as the Israelites, right? And this aligns so well with the words of a great philosopher he wrote, actually a while ago, a guy named David Foster Wallace, who wrote this commencement speech at Kenyon College. He's not a Christian, but listen to what he says.

He's writing to college graduates. He says, in the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there's actually no such thing as atheism. There's no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. If you worship money and things, then they are where you find your real meaning in life. And you will never have enough and never feel you have enough. It's the truth.

[18 : 24] Worship your body or beauty or sexual allure, and you will always feel ugly. And when time and age and grief start, and when time and age start showing, you will die a million deaths before they finally grieve you. So what's David Foster Wallace saying? He's saying that atheism is just a, it's an imagination of a philosopher that everybody is worshipping something, right?

Tim Keller, a great pastor, says, anything in life can serve as an idol, a God alternative, a counterfeit God. And we live in a culture which allows you, which empowers, which compels you in many ways to curate your own individual idol life, right? To find the individual things, idol sources of life that will say, hey, this, turn to this, and you will find meaning and hope and security, right? And that's what makes it so deceptive, is that we each get to kind of do this on our own, curate and create our own idolatry, right? So what are the things that I think we turn to in our culture today, right? Well, of course, you know, the easy one is money, right? All of us do this regularly. I do it, you do it, right? Recall what Paul says in Colossians 3. He says that greed or covetousness is idolatry. Doesn't get any more obvious than that, right? But there's this, this, this, this, I think this is a particularly an American problem. Alexei de Tocqueville, who was a

French political philosopher in the, in the, in the early 1700s, toured America as it was beginning to form, and he's studying American culture. And he looks into American culture, and he says, hey, you know what the besetting sin of the American society is? Greed. This country loves money, and it will be the great downfall of this culture, country. He's watching this country as it's beginning to form. It seems at its best, and he says, the idol of this time, of this country, is how much it loves money. It's willing to enslave human beings to make money. It's willing to subject human beings to horrible work conditions because of money. This is an American problem. You ask an international person, hey, what, when you think about America, oh, they're so greedy. They just want money, money, money, money, right? And so that is, I mean, this is just the air we breathe. Each one of us in our work, in our stock portfolios are thinking, how can I get a, just a

marginal more, you know, marginal gains, just a little bit more, right? But closely linked to this is the idolatry of my people. Think of it this way. Think of another one. We all know that our country is becoming more and more polarized politically, more and more right and left, right? And identity politics is what we're calling this. And identity politics is turning my group, my people, my color, my socioeconomic class, my religious affiliation into the ultimate people. We are the ones who have the solutions to our country's problems, whatever they are, right? And so as our nation polarizes right and left, it's becoming increasingly easy to say, my ideas, my people, my group, this is what will save our world, save our country, right? And friends, the hard reality, the hard reality is that Christians are probably as much participants on both the right and the left as anyone. I'm probably participating in this as much as anyone. It's in the air we breathe. We can't not do it. We turn on the news and we're pulled one way or we're pushed another way to say my group is the right group. And that becomes idolatry.

And so I know that I have to be constantly doing hard work of when have I replaced my group, my values for what God tells us in his word, right? When have my principles become perverted, right? [22:16] Another idol that I struggle with, and I think many Coloradans struggle with, exercise, right? We live in the fittest state in the country. We're proud of that. We live in a state where we have a bunch of military colonels and, I mean, enlisted officers and people who are enlisted in officers who are in great condition. We live in a place where there's amazing Olympic, I mean, Olympians, amazing outdoor opportunities. It's a really great place in Colorado Springs to let your physical fitness become an idol, become something where you say, hey, and I am strong enough. I am strong enough to be able to be the athlete that I want to be, right? Another one is romance. Listen to this. A marriage counselor that I respect to write named Esther Perel wrote this. She says, when we come to another person in romance, we are basically asking them to give us what an entire village used to provide. Give me belonging, give me identity, give me continuity, give me transcendence and mystery and awe all in one.

Give me comfort, give me edgy, give me novelty, give me familiarity, give me predictability, give me surprise. She says, we want a savior. Under the auspices of a secular world, you could hardly formulate a more religious definition of marriage or romance than this one, right? So each one of us, married or single, is looking to our spouse in many ways or looking to where our hope our spouse would be and say, ah, if only I could have this, then I would be satisfied. If only I can have this, then I will be content. We idolize marriage or romance. We wrap our satisfaction, our intimacy, our status up in these things, right? So what's my point in all of this, in money, in identity, in money, in exercise? And I could go on and on my point is that we don't live in time that that's far away from the Israelites, that our hearts are no different from the Israelites, longing to rove around our world and find something that we can say, this will give me security, right? And the Bible tells us that this is futile.

Whenever we create an idol, it cannot bear the pressure that we're putting under it. When we turn to a person and say, be my everything, a human being could never do that. When we turn to our stock portfolio and say, be my hope, it could never do that, right? All of these things we say, I will forever be an athlete. That's not true. So I hear when you turn 40. None of these things can give us the final satisfaction that our hearts crave for and need when we are created to worship the living God.

And so Moses hears warning the Israelites and the warning that he gives them, do not forsake the worship of the living God, still rings true to our hearts today. And so that's just, if this is the warning, where is there hope in here? Where is the God, a good God in this? Well, this is our second point that only, that we must see the only God's redemption. And so Moses, if he's telling them the threat of idolatry, which was for their hearts and our hearts, where does the Christian gospel meet and counter and overpower this threat, right? How does Christianity speak to that? Well, Moses gives us two answers, two answers here that are applied to this. And he says, first, look to God's redemptive acts. Look to the redemptive acts that God has done. Look at verse 20. But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of his own inheritance as you are this day. So what are you saying? He's saying, hey, when you feel the tug towards worshipping something else, remember what God has done in your life. Remember who you were. You were enslaved in the iron furnace.

What a description of their slavery in Egypt, right? A horrible place of forced servitude that he says iron was the strongest metal that they knew of back then, right? A place of incredible intense heat that no one could survive. This was your, this is where you were living. And what has God done to

you, O Israel? He has brought you out of that by his great redemptive power and grace. And he has made you a people of his own inheritance. It says when he thinks about what are the things that he looks forward to in life, you, you are his inheritance, right? Exodus 4, he says that he loves Israel as a son.

[26 : 48] Exodus 19, he says, I see Israel as my treasured possession, right? He loves Israel greatly. And so he redeems them powerfully, right? And so the question, there's a rhetorical question in here, which is why would you turn to a powerless idol which can never satisfy or provide for you? Why would you turn to that from the living God who tenderly cares for you and loves you? And the answer is you wouldn't. You would never do that. You would never exchange this creating loving father for a powerless idol. So he says, remember what redemptive things God has done in your life, O Israel. But then he says, remember God's superiority. Look at there and look down further at verse 39. Know therefore today and lay it on your heart that the Lord is God of heaven above and on the earth beneath. There is no other.

What is he saying here? Yes, there may be many things that are distracting, but there is one only who is the true and living God. Yahweh alone is God. He is superior to all the other things that your mind and heart can cultivate and create, right? He is the creator. A few weeks ago, I bought some stamps, right? So I went to the post office to buy some stamps and she said, hey, what kind of stamps do you want? And one of the selections was some Mona Lisa stamps, right? We all know what the Mona Lisa looks like. 20 stamps of the Mona Lisa. And I was like, eh, I'll take the Mona Lisa ones, right? How silly would it be to treat the stamps of the Mona Lisa with the same reverence as the Mona Lisa in the Louvre in Paris, right? If I was to be like, oh man, I need to put it layers of security and put it behind six inches of glass, a stamp, right? That would be utterly foolish. People would be like, Jonathan, this is crazy, right? It's only a small picture. It's a copy of the thing that is infinitely more valuable than a stamp, right? Moses is saying here, God is like the Mona Lisa. He's the only one.

He's the original. He's the valuable, beautiful one. Everything else is just a worthless copy. Nothing else can measure up and compare to him, right? Now, if this is true that he calls the Israelites to remember God's redemptive acts and to see his superiority, well, how do we do that, right? How do we in the New Testament, in the New Covenant, see this? Well, turn with me to Colossians chapter one. Colossians chapter one. If the Israelites had a sign of God's redemptive acts and his superiority, we who are after Jesus have so much more. And Paul shows us that Jesus is the pinnacle, is the climax of God's redemptive acts and of God's superiority. Listen to what Paul says, Colossians one, verse 19 through 20. For in Jesus Christ, all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. So what this is, what Paul is saying here is that God's redemptive acts and God's superiority don't get duller with time. They get sharper with the arrival of Jesus. Do you want to see the climax of God's redemptive work in the lives of his people? Look at Jesus. Yes, he's the one who brought us out of the iron furnace of sin, not of slavery to Egypt, but of our iron furnace of our captivity to the evil one who wanted nothing less than our destruction. Jesus rescues us from the burning heat of our own sin. Jesus delivers us from the eternal slavery of sin. Jesus is the pinnacle, the high point of God's redemptive acts, right? Jesus is the high point of God's redemption. But not only that, Jesus is the high point of God's superiority. God's superiority gets sharper with

Jesus. Jesus is God present among us. Remember how I said idolatry starts when we want something we can see. What is Jesus? God made flesh. The word, God himself, became flesh and dwelt among us. What does the hymn we sing at Christmas say? Veiled in flesh, the Godhead seen? Hail, the incarnate deity.

What does this mean? It means that if you are looking for something that you can put all of your hope in, the ultimate superior God that you need to worship, look no further than Jesus Christ.

[31 : 35] He performed the greatest redemptive act with all the power of God himself. He is the most superior God that your heart could need. What does this mean, friends? It means that Jesus is the antidote to idolatry in my heart and in your heart. He alone can give us what we long for, a visible, caring, tender God who redeems us. And if that is true, then all of the ways that your heart is looking for other things begin to unravel. And you can see and worship a God who loves you, who dies for you, right? Behind the idol, we are looking for salvation and deliverance. And Jesus shows us that most clearly, more than any idol we can create.

So for the Christian who sees themselves falling into some sort of idolatry, and for the non-Christian who sees that their life is permeated by this and it's futile, Moses, God's word would say, turn once again to Jesus. And that's good news for all of us. So what do we do with this? Well, last point, we guard our hearts. We guard our hearts. How do we respond? Verse 39, Know therefore today and lay it on your heart that the Lord is God. Knowing in Hebrew, for the Hebrew people, was more than just intellectual knowledge. It was driving head knowledge into their heart so that the deepest part of who they were was shaped by it and be assured by it. Tim Keller says you can't remove idols from your heart. It's just like a vacuum. Something will fill the space. The only thing you can do is have something that will worship that will actually satisfy you, right? Knowing in your heart means replacing the vacuum of idolatry with the superiority and love of Jesus, right? Experiencing Jesus' redemption in his power, right? So first, we have to discern our idols. How do we do that? Well, it takes time. It takes community. But ask yourselves these questions. What do you spend your money on? Do you spend your money? What do you daydream about? What are the things that you get a spare moment, you get on your phone? What do you daydream about? Where are the places in your life that you feel great embarrassment?

Perhaps there's something there. What are the things or that one thing that if it was taken away, this one thing, you would be undone and you would say life wouldn't be worth living or I would never quit binging TV if this was taken away. What is the thing or the things in your life that you were looking for to say you were cared for, you were loved, you were vindicated? As you begin to look into your heart and answer those questions, that's probably where your heart is looking for something, right? And to you, I would say, look to Jesus. Tim Keller writes, Jesus must become more beautiful to your imagination, more attractive to your heart than your idol. If you uproot an idol and fail to plant the love of Christ in its place, the idol will grow black, will grow, will replace it, right? And friends, this has to be done in community. This has to be done with brothers and mothers and sisters and fathers of the faith, right? We often get so entangled in our own idol webs that we are trapped and we need people who will come into our lives and help us, pray with us, discern with us, right? To show us the subtlety of our own idols and the beauty of Christ, right? And killing idols together. I'll end with this. You know, I was reading the other day 1 John, 1 John's epistle, right?

[35 : 23] And in 1 John, if you've read 1 John, the ending is fascinating. So 1 John is a book all about God's love, right? God shows us his love, God is love, all this stuff, right? God loves us by sending Jesus to die for us. And then he says, okay, if this is how God loves us, then you must go one another and love each other, right? But the last line of 1 John does not end with, greet the brothers in faith, does not end with, peace be with you. You know what the last line of 1 John is? Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Now, that is either a giant non-sequitur that does not follow or fit with the rest of the book, or John knows something that we don't know or that we forget. That love, namely God's love for us in Jesus' redemptive works, and our love for one another, our mutual love for each other, is the antidote to idolatry, right? That as we sit in God's love for us, and as we sit in our love for each other, as we challenge one another, as we exhort one another, as Moses does the

Israelites, we will keep each other from idols, right? So my exhortation to you is to make Cheyenne Mountain Presbyterian a community that puts in the time and the trust and the effort to root out idols in your own heart, in your friend's heart, as hard as that can be, and to replace them with the steadfast love of Jesus. Let me pray for us. Father in heaven, we pray that you would indeed root out idols in our heart. Lord, we know they're there. Your word shows us there are. Our own consciences show us that they're there, and we need your power. We need the Holy Spirit to do what you have always done to make us more like Jesus through the power and love of Jesus. May Jesus' love outshine the things that distract us, create communities where his love triumphs over idols, and we will give you the glory and the praise that you deserve alone. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.