

Sermon Notes
Hearing God
Week 4

The title of this week's sermon was→ The Only God Who Hears. I preached from 1 Kings 18 (and a few other texts that I'll include below) to see one of the primary ways that the Old Testament addresses our human tendency to worship things other than God (which is called idol worship). Often you might hear sermons that accurately say that we should not worship anything other than Yahweh and while that is 100% the right answer, we don't focus on the precise reason that the Old Testament so often gives. The Old Testament reasoning is this→ Don't worship idols because when you do you worship and hope in something that is not real. The heart reason why we should not turn to anyone other than Yahweh is that Yahweh is the only God who hears all of us and when we trust in something other than Him, our worship goes towards nothing. Only Yahweh can hear all of us. All of our worship that is directed elsewhere, no matter how sincere and genuinely misplaced, is going towards a name that does not act in this world.

When I look at my life and the idols I've served (most often my Self) I see that I've given myself to things that were not real and did not love me. I've given myself to other things for much of my life and in seasons of change I've often tried to leave in my own strength without reminding myself of the better reasons of why my worship was misplaced. I think that it is a better biblical message to remind my heart of the better WHY. My inner dialogue often sounded like this... "Pedro, don't do that, don't go there, don't look at that because it's against the rules. Or because its bad." While that is true, I'm challenged in this sermon to replace that with... "Pedro, don't do that, don't go there, don't look at that because it doesn't love you and it's not real and God is present and He can help you with something more real" (long sentence I know). I find that when I constantly remind myself of the better biblical narrative, my idol worship is challenged to see that my hope is rooted in something that isn't real, something that can't help me, something that can't offer me something good, something that can't speak to me, something that can't care for me. Only Yahweh's name can do all of this in our world and that is a much more compelling vision to use when reminding my heart to not worship creation over the creator.

I want to introduce a new passage that I didn't use in the sermon. I feel as though it beautifully adds another entry for us to see in the Bible's narrative on the subject.

Isaiah 46:5-7 (read the whole chapter because it's incredible)

5 "To whom will you liken me and make me equal,
and compare me, that we may be alike?"

6 Those who lavish gold from the purse,
and weigh out silver in the scales,
hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god;
then they fall down and worship!

7 They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it,
they set it in its place, and it stands there;
it cannot move from its place.

If one cries to it, it does not answer
or save him from his trouble.

When we are precise with what is really happening when we put things before God, we realize that we are living out the words of this passage.

In reflection to verse 5→

- If Yahweh is God, how could we ever replace Him for anything that is so much smaller and less powerful?
- If Yahweh is God, why do I think I can replace Him with something that He made?

In reflection to verse 6→

- If Yahweh is God, then how could even the most beautiful thing in creation be better than Him?
- If Yahweh is God and He made all of creation, how could something be more valuable than Him? He made the gold, the silver and so why bow down to something that was made instead of the one who made it?

In reflection to verse 7→

- If Yahweh is God, why would I want a god who can't move, speak or save me when the real God can?

Here is my last thought. I felt a big urge this week to remind us to be precise with how we handle the Bible. In 1 Kings 18 we are reminded that when called upon, Baal's name did not satisfy the challenge and Yahweh's name did. I challenge you to look into your life/heart to see if you trust in Yahweh's name for everything in your life. If Yahweh is not your hope or the source of all that you trust in, I remind you that you've chosen something infinitely smaller than Yahweh. God is the only one who hears and His name is the only name that works.

These are the passages that I used in this week's sermon.

- 1 Kings 18:1-40 Yahweh vs. Baal
- 1 Samuel 5 Ark of the Covenant vs. Dagon (please read this. I said that I would interact with this passage and ultimately I did not but please read this passage. It is just a physical reminder of God's supremacy of all gods. Yahweh is God and not just another god.)
- Deuteronomy 4:28
 - 28 And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.
- Daniel 5:23
 - ...And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood, and stone, which do not see or hear or know, but the God in whose hand is your breath, and whose are all your ways, you have not honored.
- Psalm 115:2-8
 - 2 Why should the nations say, "Where is their God?"
 - 3 Our God is in the heavens; he does all that he pleases.
 - 4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.
 - 5 They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see.

- 6 They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell.
- 7 They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat.
- 8 Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.