

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Exodus 32, verses 15 through 24.

These are God's words. And Moses turned and went down from the mountain. And the two tablets of the testimony. We're in his hand. The tablets were written on both sides on the one side and on the other they were written. Now, the tablets were the work of God. And the writing was the writing of God.

Engraved on the tablets. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, He said to Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. But he said, It is not the noise of the shout of victory. Nor the noise of the cry of defeat. But the sound of singing, I hear.

So it was as soon as he came near the camp that he saw the calf and the dancing. So Moses' anger became hot. And he cast the tablets out of his hands. And broke them at the foot of the mountain. Then he took the calf, which they had made.

Burned it in the fire. And ground it to powder. And he scattered it on the water. And made the children of Israel drink it. And Moses said to Aaron. What? Did this people do to you? That you have brought so great a sin upon

So, Aaron said, To not let the anger of my Lord become hot. You know, the people that they are set on evil. For they said to me, make us gods that shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt.

We do not know what has become of him. I said to them, whoever has any gold, let them break it off. So, they gave it to me and I casted into the fire and this calf came out

Well, sends this reading. Of gods inspired and And Aaron worked.

That is when we realize how wicked. How irrational? How self-destroying? All right, dollar tree really is. That we begin all the more to see how gracious God has been. To redeem us from it. Last Lord's day, when we considered. The previous portion. Of Exodus 32 and we considered to Yahweh Um, Telling Moses to leave him alone.

So the Israelite might burn hot against them and down onto from verse 10. Into verse 14, we can consider it to under the The idea or the theme of all of the surprises. In the passage because there were various surprises of various kinds. And yet, if we were surprised by God's grace before, If we were surprised that he would have mercy upon those who richly and rightly deserved as wrath.

Then we're much more surprised. When we come and we see the wickedness for ourselves or at least we can feel Moses being so, you almost get the sense that If Moses could have seen. The calf and the dancing beforehand, he might not have interceded for them. That it was God's mercy to have.

Uh to have held back from Moses, how grossly and greatly offensive. Their sin had been so that as he provoked Moses and last week's passage to intercede implying to him. That if you do intercede, if you do, pray as you've been called to do, then I will relent and Moses did pray.

He interceded and the Lord did relent because he was for us in that portion, a wonderful picture. Of the Lord Jesus towards us. Interceding, even for such idolaters, even such rejectors of God, as he is of coming to him in the way that he has given us to come to him.

The Lord Jesus has interceded. Well, if we were surprised by grace before. Then just wait till we see. How bad our idolatry is. And in this passage, we see the evil of idolatry. And at least these three ways, First it, rejects God. It's an attack on God. It doesn't want to be his and his Christ's even as we've just sang, we have just sung in Psalm 2.

And we've been thinking about and saying earlier, In Psalm 2 itotry assaults God. It's an attack on God. It's also an assault on reason. Now in God's good providence. We've Uh, we've seen this several times Hezekiah was encouraged that? Yahweh would deliver him, whereas the gods of the nations couldn't deliver them from a serial, why?

Because all the gods of those nations had been made with hands. And so Hezekiah. We saw Hezekiah praying to Yahwe, of course, no one else's God could deliver them. Oh, Lord. Because they were the work of men's hands. And we, of course, rejoice that our Lord is not the work of our hands.

Clear. The work of his hands. And so idolatry gets all of reality, all of creation, all of our existence upside down and inside out and backwards. That wars against reason, it is the most not just irrational, but contractional. Thing that we could do. To worship God, the way that we want.

And then in the third place, we'll see. Idolatry is an attack on ourselves. If we worship the way we want, That instead of having fellowship with God and being blessed by him. And his means that he has appointed for his worship. We will harm ourselves. We will be the worship equivalent of the evangelism of the pharisees.

When they go to the ends of the earth and make a proselyte, they make them twice, the son of hell that they are. But we come and we think that we'll help ourselves spiritually By the worship that we want, because if we feel like the worship is good, then we will really grow in our faith as it were.

We'll get something out of it. You've heard that phrase, I'm sure. Maybe even. Spoken. Felt it. And yet, we find especially in what we see of Aaron. And the last part of our passage. That he who began by indulging, a little man-made worship, a little will worship, Quickly backslid and descended spiritually.

Greatly harmed himself. By the worship. That he had led Israel in. So those are the three things we see first. Adultery's assault on God, rejection of God as he has, Moses turns and goes down from the mountain and verse 15. Picks up where verse 18 of 31 left off.

When verse 18 of 31, When he had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, he gave Moses two tablets of the testimony tablets of stone written with the finger of God. And then, it tells us. What the people were doing? At the end of the 40 days, as Moses was getting ready to leave.

But what the Lord himself has told Moses about, they said,

Make us gods. That shall go before us. For as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of egypt. And aaron makes the calf with an engraving tool and they say, this is your god of israel that brought you up out of the land of egypt.

And you always says, to Moses, go get down. For your people whom you have brought up out of the land of egypt and moses has in his hand a copy of the ten commandments which starts how i am yahweh your god. Who brought you up out of? The land of egypt out of the house.

Of slavery, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods. Before me. And so verse 15 reminds us. That this isn't just. A mistake. In which? Uh, they have gotten too caught up in the worship horse. How will we worship the lord? And of course, the contemporary worship now was The new worship was the worship that god was commanding.

Upon the mountain, the traditional worship at the time. Uh, was the old way with gods that you can see. But contemporary or traditional isn't the point, is it? It's man's way, or god's way. Well, we worship the way that the lord Who is and who has made us and who has redeemed us?

Gives himself to be worshiped, gives to us to come to him. Or will we worship the way that we want? But these these 10 commandments, These tablets of stone. They also functioned for israel as a copy of their contract with god, a copy of their covenant with god. We see that in the In the carefulness of verse 15.

To tell us the tablets are written on both sides. On the one side and on the other. This is not. Half of the commandments on one tablet and half of the commandments on the other. This is two copies of the contract to be kept in the ark of the testimony.

One copy belonging to israel and one copy. Belonging to god. And what's more? There were written? With the handwriting of god. Now. I've had bad handwriting or poor penmanship. Uh, children almost my entire life. One one thing could cause me not love for god and the desire to do excellently.

And all those things that should have caused me, when i was a grade school student, like many of you are. Um, In your early education. The one thing that made me have to, The that compelled me to write with neet. Penmanship was suddenly i had children And i had to teach them to write.

And so, i invented for them, a A font. That included, the least number of variants possible over the entire english. Alphabet. So that if they followed that font, they could have good printing and i started using it and my family of origin. You know, i would they would see things that i had printed and they literally did not believe me.

Thought i was lying that i had because they had seen how badly written it was Well. My handwriting is not so interesting, a thing as to be in a too long illustration in a sermon. But isn't it amazing? Moses saw gods handwriting. God wrote on the tablets himself, i don't know if there was any difference between how Moses had previously previously written Hebrew characters and the Hebrew characters on the stone.

But if you were, i were moses We would want to write with characters that were on the stone. Now. Those god's handwriting. But as God's handwriting, Because it's God's covenant. And because it's an expression of god's character. You know, god makes a great distinction. Between what we call the moral law.

And what we call the ceremonial or the civil law, he really does. I don't know if you've run into people who in order to keep, usually it's the civil law. Not too many people are trying to keep the ceremonial law but in order to keep the, the civil law, they say, well god puts his law, all together and jumbles it up in a bunch of places and Exodus and Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

Therefore, you We have to keep the civil law, that's the only law that we can have. We can talk about that some other time. But if you are trying to say, That the moral law and the civil law and the ceremonial law are all in the same footing then however you got there.

You have arrived at an error. Because god cannot make more clear to us. That the ten commandments are an expression of his own character. The moral law is written with the finger of god. The ceremonial and civil laws are written with the hand of Moses. The moral law is engraved on tablets of stone.

The moral and the civil law are. Scribbled on parchment. The moral law was thundered from the mountain by the voice of god himself. The ceremonial and civil law was spoken to Moses. And he was the one. Who spoke them to the people. When god gave the moral law. As the contract, the covenant between him and the people.

He was making display of the fact, not only that, he was the one who had saved them by himself from the land of Egypt. But that he was the one who had saved them. For himself. That's why he brought Israel out of Egypt, so that they would come to the mountain and worship him.

That's why he saved them from their bondage, not just to to Egypt, but that's why he saves us, from bondage to sin. So that we may have him. You know, it's a wonderful glorious truth that we will praise god forever for that, god has redeemed us, That Jesus Christ has given himself for us.

But there's a way in which that's secondary to. That god in Jesus Christ. Has given himself. Us. And so, that's That's one of the great dynamics here in Exodus 32, they have god. But they want instead. God, the way that they would have him.

And so, When Joshua hears what he thinks. Is war. It's loud enough. It's exuberant enough. That's also thinks it's war but Moses knows as it is because god has already told him what they're doing. And Moses in an irony writes, a song. You can see it. They're not on the half sheet.

Sorry, I should have fixed the formatting of that. But if you have a copy of your bible open, you can see It's a little song and not the noise of shout of victory, nor the noise of the cry of defeat. But the sound of singing, I hear. What did the people think they were doing?

They were singing and dancing. They thought they were holding a feast to Yahweh. And so here they are singing with all their heart, the latest Hillsong tune or Bethel song or You know, whatever the fanny Crosby of the day is look at me wrong. A lot of what fanny wrote was not Most of what fanny wrote was not as bad as.

What comes out of those? Publishing machines. But they thought they were worshiping god with all their heart. But it really was war, wasn't it? It was the psalm 2. Having. The universe be. The way that you want it. This is a sobering morning. Against how our preferred worship may be received in heaven.

We may sit. We may think that we are worshiping so intensely. So sincerely, so energetically and that we are worshiping god. And it may be as offensive to him as war. Against him. We

simply. Do not see what we are doing. But idolatry is an attack upon god, it's not just a worship preference.

Worshipping our way is to put ourselves in the place of god and our pleasure. Our pleasure as the highest priority and it's an assault on reason. It's irrational to think that people can come up with a way to worship god. It's more irrational. Then thinking that your cow or your steer is going to tell you how to cook your steak.

But we are lower than steers, and God has higher than people. Only god can define what worship is. When you or i Want to worship the way we want to. We have already put ourselves in the place of god. Haven't we? I will decide what worship is. Because it feels worshipful because i get something out of it.

It's almost as a rational or it is as a rational, but almost as vividly irrational as having a god that can be made with hands, Okay, so verse 19. Moses comes near the camp. He sees the calf and the dancing and his anger becomes hopped. This is what the lord said to let him alone so that he could do.

He cast the tablets out of his hands and he broke them at the foot of the mountain. Now, does not mosas having a temper tantrum. He's going to be ration. He's going to strike the rock later. But he realizes that israel has already violated the covenant they hadn't even delivered yet.

And he breaks a copy of the contract and God and his mercy is Going to produce a second one. I used to think reading that mosas was the one who produced the second one that's wrong. The, um, we'll get to it when we get them. But then he takes the calf which they made.

And what does he do? What does he do with their god? He burns it with fire. Here's a clue or As i sometimes say, pro tip If you're god, can be burned with fire, it might not actually be god. And then he grinds it to powder. Well, that's another clue.

Isn't it? If it can be ground to powder. Or lost in a market crash. It isn't god. And then he scatters it over the water. If you're god, can be sowed in a field, it's not god. Even worse. If your god can be ingested. And there are many of us who live for consumable pleasures, aren't there?

If your god can be ingested and then eliminate it. It's not god. It is in the Narrative of the account a little bit like what elijah does with the prophets of bail, isn't it? If your god can fall asleep or be on vacation or be too occupied because to listen to your prayers because he's on the potty, He might not be God.

You know what happened? In Exodus 32. Children. Millions of israelites went potty. And they expelled their god. Because they had drunk them. Now, that sounds gross. There's all that's too low for preaching. It's because idolatry is too low for god. Do you see how moses? Absolutely humiliated, the irrationality the contra-rationality of worshiping god the way that we want.

It's completely against reason. If god is not the living god who has made us and who has redeemed us, if he has not brought us near in jesus christ, there is no reason to go to worship and then he kind. Because i worship cannot go up to him. We can not bring ourselves near to him and safety or in wisdom.

He is already in himself infinitely glorious. It cannot magnify his glory to do anything. In worship other than what he has said. And we become the absolute and utter fools that. Those whose idolatry is some other sort, think that much of the church is What a crazy thing. That they get

together and that they do those things for so many hours, on a lord's day, And if the lord hadn't given us those things to do, it'd be a crazy thing to do it for 10 minutes.

Well, adultery doesn't just assault reason. It harms ourselves. Moses said to Aaron, what did this people do? That you have brought so great, a sin upon them. You know what the great sin is? The Aaron brought the upon them. Letting them worship the way they want it. I don't know.

I hope none of you children have ever been wicked enough to think. Let alone say this. But i have heard children, his mom or dad. We're not letting them do what they wanted to do or making them, do what they didn't want to do. I've heard them say. You hate me.

Do you know what real hatred from a mom or dad is? It's to let that child. Do whatever she wants. Or let that child, do whatever he wants. That is hatred and even unbelievers, know that A lot of child be the slave of his own folly, her own folly.

How could you do that to a child? Could you imagine? What would happen if you got to eat, whatever you want or whatever you want it. If you've got to do whatever you wanted with your time, Go to bed whenever you want it. It's so quickly. Destroy yourself, wouldn't you?

That's a hateful thing. But did you know that there are Those in. Christ's church. Who hate god's own children that way. I've been even in reformed churches. That passed out worship surveys. To find out how the people liked. ABC and D. So that they could change it to suit what the people wanted better.

The scripture comes to us and say. What did that congregation do to you? That you have brought so great to sin upon them. If you're a husband, if you're a father, The worst thing you can do. Is let your family be governed by whatever the family wants. Now. It's also bad for you to let the family be governed by whatever you want, isn't it?

Needs to be governed by the word of god. But idolatry is an assault upon ourselves and we can see in the following in the verses that follow how much Aaron had harmed even himself. Aaron said, do not let the anger of my lord become hot. He sounds like the devil.

The lord had said. Let me alone that my wrath may burn hot against them. And then when Moses sees what god rightly responded to in that way, his wrath became hot against them. And then Aaron says, Do not let do not let the The anger of my lord become hot.

You can hear him. You shall not certainly die. You shall not surely die. And then he says, You know, the people they are set on evil for, they said to me, make us gods that shall go before us blame shifting. Now, he sounds like Adam. Did you eat of the fruit?

Adam. The woman that you gave me. You know, the people It was their idea. This blame shifting and then Manipulation. He tries to we call this in relational. Um, Uh, psychotherapy terms. He tries to triangle himself in, with moses against the people. For they said to me as for this moses, the man who brought us out of the land of egypt.

We do not know what has become of him, moses. They blamed you. You, the people are wicked and you know, they're not just wicked against god moses. They thought you took too long on the mountain. You know, they're horrible people and You know what else? Moses? I just did what you did.

I said to them, whoever has any gold, let them break it off. So they gave it to me and i cast it into the fire. You and more you and you and i Moses were we're really quite similar. That's what you did with the gold when you saw it too.

It's just when you threw it into the fire you know it burned up and then you grounded up. But when i threw the gold into the fire out, came the cast And so not only does he shift the blame and tried to manipulate moses? But it falls into this outright lie.

Because the holy spirit told us that he intentionally used that engraving tool. We were thinking. You know when we put ourselves in his place oh isn't an amazing that Aaron had this this gift for fashioning and engraving goal to make into a molded calf. Or perhaps it's describing Aaron as the general contractor and others with gifts but some gifted Human.

Had made that thing under errands. Leadership. And it's just a horrible. Horrible lie. Now.

When moses. Sorry. When when Aaron, Began. By accommodating the people's desires. And permitting this idolatry. He began something that led to him. Sounding like the devil in. Um, In opposing the mind of god towards the thing. Do not let the anger of my lord become hot sounding like adam.

The one of the first symptoms of the fall. Uh, blaming others. Manipulating. Moses trying to triangle him in. And then outright lying. You see, it's impossible to to take a step in any sin. Without opening yourself up to falling into more and more sin and more and more kinds of sin.

And how much more when it's a sin concerning worship? And so, when the lord, Uh, listens to mosas when he restores them. When he gives reconciliation. We'll see, just how great his grace is. And we need that grace. That we won't worship the way that we want to. That we won't war against god, even when we think we're celebrating him.

That we won't worship in. Contradiction to reason. By putting ourselves in the place of deciding, what worship should be instead of god, And that we won't harm ourselves. By. Isolating ourselves with our sin and becoming more concentrated in it. Rather than coming to god. And for the grace, To put our sin away.

Let's pray.

Father, we are weary and we are finite. And we are sinful. And yet, all of these things, make us that much more grateful that you Who are almighty and you who are infinite, and you who are good. Have determined to display. Your goodness and your glory and redeeming for yourself a people.

Thank you that you have brought us near through christ. His righteousness and his sacrifice. But even more lord, his very person. And that you have helped us by your spirit. We pray that you'd continue now. Helping us by your spirit. That by you're giving us to Meditate upon your word and be sanctified by it.

That we would love you. We would know your love for us. And loving you because we first you first loved us. That you would bring us more and more. To keep your commandments and not find them burdensome. To love our brethren. Indeed, to be little copies. Of your son.

Our lord jesus. And his name, we ask it. Amen.