

Small Group Notes: Pembury Baptist Church, 9th May 2010

Love isn't all you need

Series: Counterfeit Gods

Week Two: 9th May 2010

THE BIG IDEA:

When love becomes the ultimate thing, the central thing in our lives and replaces God, we end up hurting ourselves and the people we truly love.

OPENING ICE-BREAKER:

Get people thinking about love – ask people about the first date they ever went on?
Then ask: What is love? How do we recognise love? Can love ever be wrong?

BIBLE READINGS

- **Genesis 29:16-35**

THOUGHTS

- Jacob made a relationship the ultimate thing in his life. Jacob's life was empty. He never had his father's love, he had lost his beloved mother's love, and he certainly had no sense of God's love and care. Then he beheld the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, and he must have said to himself... "If I had her, finally something would be right in my miserable life. If I had her, it would fix things"
- Love has become this god in our society, and there is an obsession with love and relationships. Tim Keller says: *"It has always been possible to make romantic love and marriage into a counterfeit god, but we live in a culture that makes it even easier to mistake love for God, to be swept up by it, and to rest all our hopes for happiness upon it"*.
- Idols stop us from hearing God's voice: Make us hear what we want to hear. Laban said 'it would be a good idea'. Didn't say 'yes'. He never said it's a deal – he said 'it is better that you get her than someone else'. Jacob wanted to hear a yes, so he heard a yes.
- Idols make us make unwise choices - Jacob had wedding feast, his wife was heavily veiled, and he'd probably become inebriated from festivities, and slept with her only to find out she was the wrong sister. He had made an unwise choice.
- Idols will leave us disappointed. Leah kept on trying to please Jacob by having children. When we have people as our gods, we will put divine expectations on us, and they will always disappoint.
- The only way to rid ourselves of our idols is by replacing them with the love of Jesus. Leah finally found hope in Yahweh, the God of grace. (v.35) and there are signs that she'd found a breakthrough.
- Jesus is the ultimate description of love – 1 Corinthians 13

QUESTIONS

1. How do you know when a relationship has become an idol in your life?
2. What are signs in our culture that it has become obsessed with love and relationships? Think of songs, films, TV programmes etc.
3. When we ask for God's blessing or help in our relationships, why do we fail to hear his voice? What would God say if we asked him his opinion on our relationships?
4. How do our idols make us make unwise choices? Can you think of any examples of how our idols make us go off track?
5. Leah kept on trying to please Jacob by having children. What's wrong with this? Can you understand how she was feeling?
6. How do those you love disappoint you? Do you have too high expectations of people? Do people have too high expectations of you?

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7. CS Lewis said "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. Discuss.

8. How has God dealt with the idols in your life? How can we continue to let him deal with these things?

9. Check out 1 Corinthians 13 – how does Jesus meet these requirements of what love is?

VERSES TO LEARN

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres" – 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Identify a relationship that has taken an unhealthy place in your life.

- What do you need to do?
- What do I need to say?
- How can you put God more at the centre?