

No Image Worship

Lord's Day Sermons

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Bible Text: Deuteronomy 5:8-10; Deuteronomy 4:9-20

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Let us call upon the name of our covenant God together in congregational prayer.

Our Father, which art in heaven, thy perfect righteousness is in thy judgments shown, and in thy unchanging faithfulness thy truth thou hast made known. We thank thee that we may come before thee as thy people in this evening, drawn unto thee by the irresistible Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ who in the cords and bonds of covenant love hast gathered us as thy church. And we thank thee for thy word in which thy perfect righteousness indeed is displayed and thy commandments which are the unchanging and perfect testimony of thee, the living God, so that although men change day by day and great men change their minds year by year, and nations change, rising and falling, and the seasons change, and all things change, thou dost remain the unchanging God. We pray that thou will speak to us in this evening to comfort our souls with the meat and drink of Jesus Christ that we may behold him who is the revelation of thee, the living God, that we may see in him, the perfect Lamb without blemish and without spot who with perfect diligence and zeal obey thy holy law, who was not broken in any of his bones or mired in any of his works but was undefiled and who in that perfect obedience bore our sins and all of our poor and sinful worship, and all of our wickedness and corruption, and has borne it away. Wilt thou declare unto us that Savior and that work for our comfort and peace this evening. Be with thy servant, opening his mouth and guarding his lips, that what proceeds from his mouth may be the word of thee, our God, a faithful and true exposition of the doctrine of the scriptures, that we may hear Jesus Christ as his sheep who hear his voice and follow him. Bless us as we hear that we may hear in faith. We pray that there may be brought out of the storehouse of heaven many good things for us, many rich treasures of our salvation that they may be given to us by thy Spirit and word, and received by faith that we may be filled and nourished and be happy in our Lord. And Father, wilt thou bless our worship that through Jesus Christ it may be pleasing unto thee. Give us thy Holy Spirit to abide with us and to give us the gift of worship in spirit and in truth.

We thank thee also, Father, for the denomination of which we are a part. We thank thee for the testimony even that this denomination is in its union and communion in the truth in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We see the madness of the church world today as it rushes headlong every denomination into the arms of every other, every denomination living

with every other as if nothing divided them, as if there was no distinction between them, so that a denomination that declares gross things about thee with their rampant divorce and remarriage, and another denomination that purports to reject divorce and remarriage, may link arms and labor in many projects together. Indeed, Father, we see in this the mystery of iniquity working, the bride of the Antichrist who is the great whore that rides the beast, laboring to establish the kingdom of man, laboring to teach even those who have the name of conservative churches and even have the name of Reformed churches, that what really matters in this world is man and man's feelings and man's cooperation, and what does not matter in this world is the truth, doctrine, the gospel. Father, as we look around today, we see the spirit of Antichrist laboring and operating, the mad ecumenicity, false ecumenicity of the churches. We pray that thou will preserve us in this age where the spirit of this age is strong, it is winsome to the flesh. For following the spirit of the age, the church no longer needs to bear the reproach of the cross, no longer must she lose her life for the gospel, no longer must she be ridiculed and reviled by all men, the breathing and living in the spirit of the age and the church may be praised and sought after and exalted by men. And we confess that appeals to our flesh but we hate that spirit by the Spirit of Christ whom thou hast given us, we hate the spirit of the age that has no regard for the truth. We pray, Father, that thou wilt preserve us and that love of the truth and that rejection of all compromise of that truth, and we pray that thou will make the federation that thou hast given us to be a precious gift unto us, more precious even than it is to us even now that we may behold the true unity of thy church and the true peace and cooperation of thy people which is in the gospel alone.

And wilt thou remember our fellow congregations as they bear the reproach of the world in particularly an acute form. Here in our congregation, we have what seems so many compared to our fellow churches, so that in some of them they live what our Lord said about the number of their consistory, that there are two or three gathered in thy name making the righteous judgments that belong to the church. Wilt thou remember our brethren, remember these our fellow churches, as they look so foolish to men. Give them the comfort and the peace and all of us the comfort and the peace of our Savior's love and of thy gospel. Raise up men to preach the gospel among us. Be with our students who now study, strengthening them and preparing them and filling them with thy Spirit and word which no teacher can do, that they may stand in the pulpit and proclaim "Thus saith the Lord." Give us more students according to thy will.

Remember Mr. Boomers, as he considers the calls extended to him as the needs of the church are obvious and pressing. Give him wisdom to know thy will and to rest in that will. Give the churches that rest also. We pray that thou wouldst remember our schools. We thank thee for them, for we must forever confess that thou didst give our schools to us when we were least deserving of them and has kept us from perishing in the matter of the schools though our own flesh would have loved to perish, everyone running his own way and doing what is right in his own eyes. We thank thee, Father, for these schools which must, as long as they stand in the truth, be a testimony of thy grace to thy people. Remember our teachers, sustain them as they teach the children to know thee in all thy works, and prepare them to serve thee in all their callings. Remember our Boards, giving them wisdom and remember the Associations and the staff and the volunteers and all who

are involved in this cause. And bless our children, our covenant seed, on whose behalf these schools are established. We pray, Father, that thou will give us teachers also, raising men and women for this high calling and task of rearing the coming generation.

Wilt thou remember our office-bearers, giving unto our elders and deacons strength and grace for their callings and office. Sustain them by thy word and Spirit and give them that word, filling them with it that as they go in and out among the congregation they may instruct and teach and comfort and warn, and that in their assemblies they may rule according to thy will. Forgive now our sins, blotting them out in Jesus' blood. Keep us from sin, giving unto us a life of gratitude and a life of worship. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

We worship the Lord now in the giving of our offerings. The first offering is for the building fund and the second is for Cornerstone Reformed Protestant School.

Psalter #339. We'll sing the four stanzas. All four of 339.

"O Lord, my earnest cry
Thy listening ear has heard;
With Thy salvation answer me,
And I will keep Thy word.

At early dawn I prayed,
Thy promises my trust;
At night I thought upon Thy word,
Most holy and most just.

O hear me in Thy grace,
In mercy quicken me;
The wicked plan to do me harm,
But they are far from thee.

Thou, Lord, art near to me,
And true are Thy commands;
Of old Thy testimonies show
Thy truth eternal stands."

We turn in God's word this evening to several passages that teach the second commandment which is the commandment that we consider in Lord's Day 35 of the Heidelberg Catechism. We begin with the second commandment itself as it's recorded in Deuteronomy 5, Deuteronomy 5:8 through 10.

8 Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: 9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth

generation of them that hate me, 10 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

And we turned back to Deuteronomy 4 beginning at verse 9 and reading through verse 20. Deuteronomy 4, beginning at verse 9,

9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; 10 Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. 11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. 12 And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. 13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. 14 And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. 15 Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: 16 Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17 The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, 18 The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: 19 And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven. 20 But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.

Then we turn to Habakkuk 2, Habakkuk 2:18 through 20.

18 What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? 19 Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it. 20 But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

This is God's word, holy and inspired. May he bless it to our hearts this evening.

On the basis of those passages and many others, we have the instruction of the Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day 35.

Q. 96. What doth God require in the second commandment?

A. That we in no wise represent God by images, nor worship Him in any other way than He has commanded in His Word.

Q. 97. Are images then not at all to be made?

A. God neither can nor may be represented by any means. But as to creatures, though they may be represented, yet God forbids to make or have any resemblance of them either in order to worship them or to serve God by them.

Q. 98. But may not images be tolerated in the churches as books to the laity?

A. No; for we must not pretend to be wiser than God, who will have His people taught, not by dumb images, but by the lively preaching of His Word.

Beloved congregation in our Lord Jesus Christ, the second commandment of God's law is about worship. The commandment itself speaks of bowing thyself down when it forbids us to bow ourselves down to graven images. Bowing yourself down is worship and the commandment itself speaks of serving them, and serving, in this sense, is worship so that the force and meaning and instruction of the second commandment is about worship. The second commandment forbids the church to worship God according to her own will and to worship God according to her own sense. When the commandment forbids graven images, it is teaching the church, "Do not worship God in a form you can see, or do not worship God according to that form that pleases and appeals to your senses. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images." God is a spirit and must be worshiped in spirit and in truth. And when the second commandment forbids our worshiping God according to our own will and forbids the making of graven images, it requires that we worship God according to his will and his revelation. We are to bow ourselves down to God as he has made known in his word and as he has made known in the lively preaching of the gospel, and we are to serve God according to that doctrine and that truth that is proclaimed in the lively preaching of the gospel. The second commandment teaches the church how to worship, worship God according to his word.

And this commandment makes me tremble, worship God according to his word. Worship God perfectly according to his word. This commandment makes me tremble because you and I are not good at worshiping. We're not good at it. We are willing to put up with all manner of departure from God's word, and I say that to a congregation in the midst of a denomination that is probably the experts on worship. What people in the world worship

as much as you do? There are very, very few people in the world who go to church as much as you do. You know, all the world today, you're the experts on worship and I say that you and I are not very good at it, that is, you and I do not worship God perfectly as he has required in his word. If we are to hear this instruction this evening, then, we must understand how this commandment is to be used among us. If you take hold of the second commandment tonight, "Thou shalt not make any graven images," and you'll try to make that commandment teach, "Do this and thou shalt live," that is, if you take hold of the commandment as that which you will do unto your life and unto your salvation, then you will have misused this commandment grievously.

The commandment may not be used by you tonight as that by which you will live, and to picture that, remember that in Question and Answer 86, there is a 250 foot waterfall 25 storeys high that flows in one direction only. All of our life and all of our salvation is upstream and that whole river of our salvation, that whole river that proceeds from God's eternal counsel as the fountain of every saving blessing, that whole river which is the gospel of Jesus Christ, flows to this lagoon where we find those trees with our fruits. If you go down to the bottom of that waterfall and you say, "Here's this tree that is the second commandment and the worship of God and I am going to take the fruits from this tree; do this and I am going to live," then you have used this commandment wrongly.

You cannot speak of how to live down there. You cannot speak of how to obtain life down there. If you want to speak of life, salvation from your sin, righteousness with God, then you must hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. You must hear his perfect work. You must have Lord's Day 7 and Lord's Day 8 and 9 and 10 and 23 and 31. You must have the truth of your Savior's perfect work. Your Savior has completed salvation which he has won for you. You are to take hold of this commandment rather this way, not "do this and live," but "live and do this." You have the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ perfect and complete. He has accomplished it and finished it so that now this commandment for you is the rule and guide of your gratitude, your thankful life to God for what he has given in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's how you hear the commandment tonight. The commandment is meant to expose you as those who have not worshiped perfectly, as those whose worship has been full of sin, and to do that in order that we may have no hope in ourselves but only in Christ, and the use of the commandment for you tonight is to show you the life of gratitude that belongs to those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Savior. And so we consider the second commandment, tonight under the theme "No Graven Images." In the first place consider "what," in the second place "why," and in the third place "who." No graven images: what, why and who.

The second commandment forbids graven images, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." That commandment refers explicitly to graven images, first of all. The church of Jesus Christ in her gratitude to God for her salvation, is forbidden from making representations of Jehovah God. Question 97, "Are images then not at all to be made?" The answer is though, first of all, "God neither can nor may be represented by any means." And question 96, "What does God require in the second commandment? That we

in no wise represent God by images." The teaching of the commandment here is that you may not make a likeness or an image of God. You may not make a likeness of God as a golden calf as the Israelites did at Mount Sinai. You may not make a likeness of God as the two golden calves in Dan and Bethel as Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made all Israel to sin did. You may not make any pictures of God, any sculptures of God, any paintings or representations of God.

Thou shalt not represent God by images, that includes today images of Jesus Christ. You may not have a nativity scene at Christmas where a baby lies in a manger surrounded by the cattle and Mary and Joseph and shepherds and wise men. That nativity scene, with its image of Jesus Christ, is a violation of the second commandment, for Jesus is God. You may not have pictures of Jesus in your Bible story books or in the material that the children receive in the classroom in their education and in their Bible classes. You may not have pictures of Jesus. You may not have morality plays and morality movies that make an image of Jesus Christ with an actor dressed up or an actor voicing Jesus' words in order to reenact the things that Jesus said and did. You may not make images of the Lord Jesus Christ, for you may not make images of God.

That sin against the second commandment is rampant in the church world today. That sin is rampant among Reformed churches today. Here the law of the second commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images," with regard to creatures, we may make images of creatures. We may have an art class and in that art class make sculptures or paintings or drawings of creatures. No drawings of God, no images of God or of Jesus, but we may make images of the creatures. You may represent them in many media and in all kinds of art or books for instruction. The creatures are just creatures. They are not God, and therefore images of creatures may be made, but you may not make an image of a creature in order to represent God by that creature or to worship or serve God by that image, by that creature, by that painting. We may not use any pictures or images or other representations of creatures as that by which we seek to worship Jehovah. The second commandment forbids it.

Now, the second commandment forbids explicitly the making of graven images. When the second commandment does so, it also forbids any false representation of God as the God who is to be worshiped. The Catechism explains the second commandment that we do not worship God in any other way than he has commanded in his word. The confession there is speaking of doctrine. God is known in his doctrine. He is known in his gospel, he is known in what is taught and proclaimed from the pulpit, so that the second commandment, as did the first, forbids any false doctrine. False doctrine and sermons is an image. It is making a representation of God other than God has revealed himself in his word and teaching the people to worship God through that representation that the false doctrine proclaims.

The teaching that salvation is in any sense by the will and the work of man is an image of God. It's also an idol. It's a false God. It's not the true God of scripture. But it is also an image of God because the teacher of the false doctrine stands before the congregation and says to the congregation, "Now this is God. Here be your gods, O Israel." That's exactly

what Aaron said to the people of Israel at Mount Sinai. He made a graven image. He was not trying to make a bull god, the god Baal, he was not trying to make Dagon or some other idol of the nations around. He was trying to make Jehovah but representing that Jehovah through that golden calf. It was a violation of the second commandment. And when Aaron made that golden calf, he set it before Israel and said, "These be our gods. This is the god that brought you out of the land of Egypt. This is Jehovah, and tomorrow we will have a feast to Jehovah to worship him through this golden calf."

That's exactly what false doctrine does. The minister stands in the pulpit and he says God, he says Jesus. He pretends that he is setting forth for you Jehovah God and the Lord Jesus Christ but it is not God according to the scriptures, as he has revealed himself in the scriptures, it is an image of him. It is a god who is dependent at whatever point that may be upon the will, the work, the desire, the obedience, the repenting, the forgiving of man. And the minister says to the congregation, "These be your gods. This is Jehovah. This is what he's like. This is your savior. This is Christ. This is what he does." But he has set forth an image. Jehovah God must be preached as he has revealed himself in his word. The doctrine that the church teaches must be the doctrine of the scriptures, the true doctrine of salvation. Anything else is an image and a violation of the second commandment.

Habakkuk in his prophecy ties the matter of doctrine to the matter of image worship. Habakkuk 2:18, "What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols?" There Habakkuk identifies image worship, graven image worship, as the exact same thing as the teaching of lies. The one who graven the image is a teacher of lies and the image itself is a teacher of lies so that the people only know by that teaching the lie. They don't know the truth by that teaching. And that's the way image worship through false doctrine in the church works as well. There are many who hear a sermon that is full of the name of God, full of the name of Christ, full of the words grace and grace alone and faith alone, but at a key point in that sermon all of that instruction about grace, all of that instruction about God, is taken away and it can be even by a single statement in the sermon, "Here is your God. Here is grace. Here is Jesus Christ. But you must do something. You must do something to have that God. You must do something to have that grace and that forgiveness." In that sermon, the only thing that the minister has set forth now is an image. He has not set forth the truth. He has poisoned the sheep. He has rent them and slain them because he has made that whole doctrine of God that he taught to be dependent on something in man that kills the sheep, that kills men, that takes men to hell. That's the seriousness of the graven image. It's a teacher of lies. That's the seriousness of the false doctrine that is rampant in the church. It is a teacher of lies.

The second commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," forbids false doctrine in the church of Jesus Christ. The first commandment did. The second commandment did. The third commandment is going to. Many of the commandments do which instructs the church of Jesus Christ of the importance of sound doctrine for the church. You must have sound doctrine, the gospel of our Savior, the pure gospel of our Savior.

The second commandment forbids images explicitly. The second commandment forbids false doctrine as an image. And the second commandment requires the regulation of worship according to the revelation of God. We call this the regulative principle of worship. The regulative principle means that in the worship of the church, the church's worship must be regulated, ruled, and it must be ruled according to a certain principle, a certain truth. The regulative principle is that in the church of Jesus Christ only those things that God has commanded may belong to worship, and all of those things that God has not said anything about or that he has forbidden may not be part of the worship of the church. Take note of that regulative principle. The principle is not this, "Worship God in whatever way is not forbidden in his word," so that you're free to do many, many things as long as God does not explicitly forbid it. That's not the regulative principle. The regulative principle is this, "Worship God only as he has commanded in his word. Only with those elements of worship that he has said belong to that worship."

That's Question 96, "What doth God require in the second commandment? That we in no wise represent God by images nor worship him in any other way than he has commanded in his word." And in the fourth commandment, Lord's Day 38, the elements that belong to worship are the preaching of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments, the singing of the Psalms, the public prayers of the church, and the giving of offerings. Those are the elements of worship. That's what belongs in the worship of the church, that and that alone.

That regulative principle flows right out of the prohibition against graven images because a graven image is an attempt of the church to worship God in a way that appeals to her, in a way that her will inclines towards. And because we live in this body and this earth, what appeals to the will of man is something you can see and touch. When God says, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images," he is teaching us, "You don't know how to worship me. You don't know how to worship me according to your own will. You couldn't have imagined it. You couldn't invent it. You must hear from me, your God, how to worship me." And that is how you must worship. In no other way than God has commanded in his word.

That governs the singing of the church of Jesus Christ as well. Reformed churches have concluded that the singing of Psalms belongs to the regulative principle. God has not merely said in his word to his church, "Sing, sing something. Sing thoughts that are biblical. Sing ideas that are moving to you. Sing things that are beautiful." God has said, "Here's a book, a songbook for my church." And that songbook is the book that Christ sings in his worship. While he was on the earth, Christ sang the Psalms. When he would go to the temple or to the synagogue, they sang the songs. Christ sang those songs. That's the songbook for the church of Jesus Christ and the regulative principle says, "Do not depart from those Psalms to sing something else."

Reformed churches including, I would guess, every Reformed church that you and I have been a part of our entire life, including today, does sing a hymn every service. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," is a hymn, a hymn that has been around a long time,

since 1674. But for all that, not a Psalm. A hymn written by a man, an Anglican bishop whose purpose with many other hymns that he wrote, including this one, was to give the church something to sing other than the Psalms. He wanted a wider songbook for the church and the way that he brought the hymn "Praise God" into the consciousness of the church is by teaching it in school. He insisted that that verse be the concluding verse of the morning, hymn, the afternoon hymn, and the evening hymn sung by the teenagers in his region. And he was successful beyond his wildest dreams for that hymn, "Praise God," is everywhere, even in those churches who have the second commandment and the regulative principle that requires the Psalms. And if someone would say, "Well, what about Article 69 of the Church Order because we have agreed as churches that we're going to sing the 150 Psalms and that we're going to strictly limit ourselves only to those hymns that were available at that time and popular at that time, singing the 10 Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the songs of Miriam and Zacharias, certain songs taken from the Bible and we're going to sing the morning and the evening hymn, doesn't that include 'Praise God'?" It doesn't. "Praise God" wasn't written when the Synod of Dort met in 1618-19. It was written many decades after the Synod of Dort. The Synod of Dort when it adopted Article 69 of the church order said wherever in the Reformed churches hymns have spread, because it recognized hymns had spread, they are to be removed in the way deemed most conducive. The Synod of Dort allowed a process for the removal of the hymns so there could be instruction.

The second commandment requires as the thankful life of the believer that he sing what God has given to sing, that he sings the Psalms of God's word in his public worship of Jehovah, that he not bow down to any graven image, that he not serve any graven image. In producing something of his own will, no matter how much he likes it, no matter how long a pedigree it has among his people, the second commandment requires, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images. You worship me only as I have commanded in my word and in no other way than I have commanded in my word."

The second commandment requires worship according to God's will when it forbids graven images. Now why, why is it that the second commandment says what it does? The Catechism gives the answer in the first place when it says, "God neither can nor may be represented by any means." You cannot make an image of God. You cannot make an image of God because God is a spiritual being. He is not a physical being. He doesn't have form and extent. He's not made-up of stuff. He is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. That Jehovah God is a spirit means that he's invisible. You cannot see him. You cannot see the naked God as it were, or the bear God. You cannot see the Trinity in its very essence. "He dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen neither can see."

That's your God, a spiritual God. As a spiritual God, he is the God who is his perfections. You can say that's what it means positively that he's spiritual. Negatively, that he's spiritual means that he's not made-up of stuff. Positively, that he's spiritual means that he is his perfections. He's not stuff. He is his perfections. He is love. He is righteous. He is eternal. All of those perfections that make up God are his being, make up his being, and Jehovah God as the spiritual God shines with this glory and this brightness so that no man

can see him. That's why you may not make a graven image of God. There's no way that a graven image can be a true representation of God. That graven image cannot portray the fullness and the glory of that God. God cannot be represented by images. Even if there were no commandment against it. God cannot be represented by images. Therefore, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images."

God, who is a glorious God and a spiritual God, does reveal himself. His revelation of himself is in his word. His revelation of himself is in his word as Jesus Christ for Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh. In Jesus Christ dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily so that when the disciples saw Jesus, they said, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth."

Jesus Christ is the revelation of God and you see your invisible God when you see Jesus Christ. That's why the Catechism refers to the lively preaching of God's word. God will have his people taught not by dumb images, all the icons and the images and the paintings and the sculptures of the Roman Catholic Church. God will not have his people taught by those dumb images. He will have his people taught by the lively preaching of his word. Why? Because the lively preaching of his word is Jesus Christ. That's Christ speaking. That's Christ declaring God to the people. That's Christ in his perfect work being set before the people, so that when you see Jesus Christ in the preaching of the gospel, you see God and you worship God according to that gospel.

That's another reason why false doctrine is such a monstrous thing for the church, because that false doctrine corrupts the gospel which is the only way people know God. That's how you know God and when ministers corrupt that gospel, they not only take the gospel, the good news away from the people, they take God away from them. The people see God and Jesus Christ proclaimed in the gospel. That's why Paul could say to the churches who had never seen Jesus Christ in the flesh, "Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth among you." Those churches of Galatia had never traveled to Jerusalem to see Jesus to which Jesus never came during his earthly life. They saw Jesus when Paul preached the gospel there. God makes himself known in Jesus Christ. That's why the worship of the church is the gospel, centers around the gospel, has as its heart the gospel, for in that gospel God is made known.

Why no graven images? Because God is a spiritual being who has revealed himself not by dumb images, but by the lively preaching of the word in Jesus Christ. And in the second place, why no graven images? Because God is a jealous God. A jealous God. Do you know what it means that God is jealous? It has to do with his love, but you can say this, you can say God's jealousy in this brief sentence, that God is jealous means that God is theocentric. God is theocentric. Everything that God thinks and knows and does and is, is him, centers around him, proceeds from him and to him. God isn't interested in anything else other than himself. And his whole creation he has made for himself. His interest in his creation is tied to himself and his church as the apple of his eye. The body of the Lord Jesus Christ he loves for his own sake.

That's a blessed comfort. If God had to love you for your sake, he'd never love you. He never would because he's jealous and because there's nothing in you that would compete with, to speak so utterly foolishly, compete with the glory of God. But if God loves you for his sake, then you are loved indeed, loved eternally and loved with a love that cannot break. That God is a jealous God means that he loves himself with an absolute love and all his thoughts and all his plan is entirely theocentric. When the Reformed church insists that her gospel be theocentric, when she teaches as the message week in and week out God, God, God, the Reformed church didn't invent anything. The Reformed church is simply speaking the revelation that God himself has given.

God is a jealous God and in his jealousy, his love for himself and all his thoughts of himself, he will not let his glory go to another. He won't give it to another and he won't let them take it from him and that's what image worship is. Whether it's the physical image worship of making an image and saying, "Now this is God," is giving God's glory to another. Or whether that's the image worship of false doctrine in which the church says, "Behold your God," and it's not God, giving glory and honor to another thing than God, God is jealous of his glory. A jealous God. And so he hates image worship. Detests it as contrary to him, contrary to his being.

Man is bold here, brazen. Man looks around at all the creation, man looks into his own heart and his own imagination and he says, "I know what God looks like," and tries to give the glory of God to that image. God is a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation, that is, giving over generations who worship images to more and more sin, more and more departure, more and more corruption. That's the "why" of no image worship and the "who" teaches us who heard this commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image." Our Lord Jesus Christ heard this commandment, loved this commandment and obeyed this commandment.

In the gospel according to John, we read of Jesus in God's house and the disciples remembered about Jesus when they saw Jesus cleanse the temple in God's house, they remembered that the scriptures had said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." They applied that to Jesus. That prophecy is about God's house, the place of the worship of Jehovah. That prophecy, therefore, was about worship and about how to worship, and that there was one who's standing in God's house was eaten up with the zeal of that house, whose will was perfectly to do the will of Jehovah God in worship, who never in all his life worshiped wrongly or sinfully or contrary to the word of God, but who for all his years, perfectly perfectly obeyed the second commandment. He never had an image. Never had one in his heart. But always worshiped God exactly according to the gospel for the Lord Jesus Christ himself was and is that gospel. He worshiped God perfectly when he hung on the tree of the cross and paid his blood for your and my sins in worship.

The Lord Jesus Christ heard this law and loved this law and was eaten up by the zeal of God's house in his perfect worship of Jehovah, and that counts for you so that when you appear before God in your own conscience, appear before God at the final judgment and the question is put to you, "How did you worship? How did you do in worship?" And the

answer of Jehovah God himself to that question is, "You were perfect. You were perfect. Jesus was perfect. I count his worship as yours." You live, congregation, for the sake of Jesus Christ and now what is your response? Live and do this in gratitude to God for the perfect worship and salvation of your Savior. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images." Amen.

Our Father, which art in heaven, we thank thee for thy word to us this evening. Wilt thou bless it to our hearts and give unto us the comfort and peace of our Savior. Wilt thou send us home with that peace and into our week with that comfort, and wilt thou give unto us zeal for thee by thy Spirit that we may in gratitude have no graven images. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Psalter #340. We'll sing the four stanzas. All four of 340.