Dear Reader,

I am new to producing reading sermons. So, if you have any suggestions as to how I might improve my format or what I include – please email me at cdanielwilson@gmail.com. **I will warn you, that I do not use short sentences**. I will endeavor to work on this over time, but I don’t naturally write that way. However, you can easily break most of my longer sentences into 2 or 3 smaller ones where I have “…” or “–“ or commas. If you do the work on making it into smaller sentences – feel free to email it to me, and I am happy to share your work with others. I do have some of these available which people have sent me. I will eventually make them available as part of the normal manuscripts.

I have left my sermon manuscript formatted the way I normally write and read my sermons. They are colourful and written in conversational English. If you are a grammar nazi – then you will be frustrated with my punctuation and phrasing. However, once you read it out loud, you will normally be able to tell what I meant to say. SERIOUSLY, READ IT OUTLOUD. You will also see that I use a good bit of bold, italics, underlining and different colours to signal what are the most important things to say, and also to make it easier for my eye to pick up my place in the middle of paragraphs. I would recommend that you keep as many of those things as possible to help you keep your place. However, you will probably want to increase the spacing between lines. I highly encourage you to commit as much of the introduction or children’s illustrations to memory as you can, so that these can be delivered to the congregation with maximum eye contact.

**Where possible, I highly recommend that you listen to the sermon as I preached it at either the Nelson website or the website of North Shore.** I recommend that because that will also help hear the places where I added or skipped over material in the manuscript, and the places where I clarified my meaning. I have edited bits and pieces which I thought most important, but I have not sought to include all the additional material that comes to me while in the pulpit. I would practically have to use a transcription service for that. However, I hope and pray that this sermon will be a blessing to you and to your congregation. To God be the Glory!

Blessings in our Lord, Pastor Daniel Wilson

**My Suggestions for the Order of Service**

Song before the service: #444

Brothers and Sisters**, We are not here because of our own righteousness/goodness, but because our help is in …**And Receive God’s Greeting: Grace, Mercy and Peace from God the Father, Son & Holy Spirit. ***Amen***

*Let us now joyfully sing to Our God,* **a Song of Praise: #95“Now with Joyful Exultation”**

***Call to Repentance:*** In this service of worship, the Lord Jesus Christ offers us the opportunity to come to His table to declare His death. As we eat of the bread and drink of the cup, we are fed with our Lord’s crucified body and shed blood by His Spirit, thru whom the body and blood of our Lord give life-giving nourishment to our souls. Thus Christ unites us with Himself and so imparts the precious benefits of his sacrifice to all who partake in faith.

However, For all who live in rebellion against God and in unbelief, this bread and wine will only bring further condemnation. If you do not yet confess Jesus Christ and seek to live under his gracious reign, the Scriptures warn you to abstain. However, all who repent and believe are invited to this sacred meal! Not because you are worthy in yourself, but because you are clothed in Christ’ perfect righteousness! ***We are saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ!***

**Prayer of Confession & Supplication**:

**As surely as you have confessed your sin by faith in Christ, so surely you are forgiven! Let us rejoice in God’s grace as we remain seated and sing #447 A Debtor to mercy alone!**

**Scripture Reading: Romans 1:16-25 + Lord’s Day 34**

**As *an act of worship, let us now, joyfully and obediently return to the Lord a portion of that which He has given to us!*** Let us worship with God’s tithes/freewill offerings ***(as Deacons come)***

**\* Song of Preparation: Psalm #73C“In Sweet Communion Lord with thee…”**

**Sermon Text: John 19:17-28 Sermon Title: *What Jesus DID***

***Let us respond to the sermon,* \* Song of Response: PSALM #115 “Not unto us, O Lord of Heaven” vs.1-3**

**Lord’s Supper Form #2 – A+ Invite Sing: 439 vs.1-2, 441 vs.1-2, 444 vs.1-2**

***May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ , & the Love of God the Father, & the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*** **\* Doxology: Song #491“Glory Be to the Father”**

# **Morning Sermon: “The PRIMARY Commandment” Heidelberg #41 LAW #2**

Text: Exodus 20:3 Reading: Romans 1:16-25 & LD34

**Introduction:** Children, Do you ever speak with your toys? Girls, maybe you have spoken to your dolls, and Boys you have talked to your soldiers or cars and trucks… It is fun to use your imagination isn’t it? The real question is: Do your toys actually hear you? **OR** Have your toys ever spoken back to you? ***Of Course Not!*** Wood, Metal, Stone and Plastic can’t think or talk – oh, they may talk in your imagination, but they can’t really hear, see, touch, taste or speak.

And yet, many people around the world worship idols made of wood, metal, stone and plastic. You only have to go into a local Chinese take-away shop to see an idol of Buddha. Now, officially they don’t worship Buddha as God, but anyone who bows to Buddha is worshipping Man/Humanity as God. Idols take many forms, BUT NONE OF THEM, Not a single one, can ever hear, see, touch, taste or speak.

**This morning**, we are continuing in our series thru the Heidelberg Catechism and in particular our focus on the 10 commandments. We will normally be doing these sermons in the evening service, but the session agreed that it was good to alternate the series in the morning. Which is good to do, because as Luther said: ALL Sin ultimately comes down to Idolatry. If you keep the first 2 commandments you will obey all the rest! As Paul put it, God’s law is the schoolmaster which led him to repentance! We all need to hear this!

***We begin with the most violated commandment of all:***

***Thesis: You shall have no other Gods* Before Me *– RESTATED: instead of Jehovah (the Lord God of the Bible).***

This morning we will divide our time together in 3 sections. ***We will:***

* **FIRST, Look at Some Preliminary Considerations *then***
* **SECOND, Look at the 1st Commandment Itself *then***
* **THIRD,** *we will take a* **Practical Look at Idolatry**

***First, Let’s****:*

# **Look at *Some* *Preliminary Considerations* (REPEAT)**

* 1. **I want you to NOTICE the Structure of the Law in General.**

As most of you know, there are two tables to the Law: The first four commandments tell us our duty to God and the remaining six explain our duty to our fellow man. *As I already quoted from Luther,* the first commandments concerning God ***imply or include*** ***those concerning man.*** For if you only worship God and you never put any created thing before Him in your life, then you will never disobey, kill, steal, lust, lie or covet!

It is also obvious that the Law is stated in the Negative: ***You Shall Not… etc.*** God did this because He knew that our sinful natures would abuse a positive law. ***Think about it…***

* If God had said, “You Shall Worship me” – in our sin we would have reasoned, “ok, so as long as we worship you, we can worship other things as well.”
* **OR:** If God had said, “You shall Promote/Support Life” – We would have reasoned that to promote life for ourselves/our families **then** *it must be ok to kill our neighbors for their money.*
* We see this logic naturally in Children all the time: **You parents have told your children**: “Go play with toys” only to hear crying moments later. When we investigate, we find *that child* playing with their brother/sisters’ toys – when we challenge them: **they say**, “You only said go play with toys… you never said whose toys!”

***So, the structure and tone of the commandments are very important, but so is the context:***

* 1. **The Heidelberg Cat. rightly includes the Preface to the Law as part of the 1st Commandment.**

The preface is: ***I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage***. This is important for a couple of reasons:

1. **Here God gives the Covenantal context to the Law.** Notice, He uses His covenant name… the name He used to reveal Himself to the Patriarchs: Jehovah/Yahweh. God never broke His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, **But** in Exodus 19: God renewed His covenant with this new generation. *They owned the covenant for themselves, and so this Law is for God’s covenant people.*
2. Even more than that, we see that the Law is **for God’s redeemed people**… For God did not give this law to the people in Egypt. He never said, *You need to obey this law in order for me to save you out of Egypt*. **No!** *He said, I am Jehovah your God, Who ALREADY brought you out of Egypt – who ALREADY redeemed you from Slavery!* It is this aspect of the Law which gives it an enduring place in the Church! ***We don’t obey to be redeemed, we are redeemed to obey!*** As Paul explains in Ephesians 2, we are new creatures in Christ created to do good works which God prepared in advance for us to do!
	1. **AND that is how the Law connects to us…**

Christ saved us from sin so that we might obey! God’s Law is for those redeemed from slavery! **Slavery from Egypt AND slavery from Sin**. *Therefore, while Christ has died to remove the curse of the law, the obligation still remains to Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and your neighbor as yourself.* Indeed, as believers in Christ, you **now** *have the ability* to obey *by the power of the Holy Spirit!*

***<< \*-\* >>***

*With those Preliminary Considerations out of the way,* ***Secondly, Let’s:***

# **Look at *The 1st Commandment Itself* (REPEAT)**

* 1. **The Law is stated: *You shall not have any other gods before me.***

The obvious positive meaning of this law is that **we are to only Worship the one True God of the Bible.** There is no other god, and we are not to worship any false god in place of Jehovah. *We are to trust Him for salvation. We are to find our Identity in Him. We are to wait on His provision for all things.*

God addresses this commandment to every individual by using the second-person singular: You. ***This is not a “you-all”…*** God wants every single person to only worship Him as He has revealed Himself in the Bible.

The phrase: “before me” is literally: “Before my face”. But this doesn’t mean we can do what we want behind God’s back… **NO!** ***Of Course not…*** because **Children: Where is God?** ***God is Everywhere. &* Does God know all things? *Yes, Nothing can be hidden from God.*** The Bible teaches us that there is no place where we can go or hide our idolatry away from the presence of God – *just read Psalm 139!*

***<<\*>>***

* 1. **So, Why is this commandment first? What makes it so important?**

The real importance of this commandment comes from the fact that we were created for worship. Man’s chief end is to Glorify God and to Enjoy Him forever. **In fact,** even though we are all sinful, we all continue to be unceasing worshippers. There isn’t a single human in the entire world who isn’t worshipping something/someone. We either worship the one true God of the Bible or we worship some created thing.

**As Romans 1 explains so clearly,** *even though men see God’s invisible qualities in nature, they neither glorify Him nor give thanks to Him, but in claiming to be wise – they become fools. They exchange the truth of God for a lie, and worship and serve created things rather than the Creator God!*

You see: Atheists and unbelievers *like to believe* that they don’t worship any god, ***but in reality they just don’t admit who their god is…*** it might be themselves or science or a loved one – or some other created thing. **EVERYONE WHO IS NOT A BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN is AN IDOLATER! *And some of us are as well!***

*Now I know that such strong statements demand a definition:*

* 1. **So: What is Idolatry?**

We normally think of idolatry as bowing down to some idol of wood, stone or metal. But this sin is far more pervasive! It is everywhere! *Think about it:* **This 1st commandment calls you to ONLY trust in the one True God and to wait on His perfect providence.** So, every time you turn from trusting God to putting your trust in something else, you are guilty of idolatry. ***In Colossians 3:5, Paul teaches that we are to Consider the members of our earthly bodies as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed which amounts to idolatry.*** **If you trust** money to provide for your needs, then you are worshipping the idol of material wealth! **If you don’t trust God to provide** for your sexual needs and you turn to immorality – then you are worshipping sex.

 **1st John is helpful here too –** *you can read it in a single sitting***, and it outlines what you should look and act like if you are a believer – at the end of the book John closes by saying, “Dear Children, keep yourselves from idols”** *As if that were a summary of everything he just taught in the previous 5 chapters!*

*Every Sin stems back to idolatry at the base, even in the garden of Eden. FOR:* ***What was it the Serpent said to Eve?*** He said, “God knows that when you eat [the fruit] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Adam and Eve wanted to be like God – they made **themselves** the first idols! And Secular Humanism is the most prevalent idolatry in the world today – **Worship of Self is rampant**. ***We want what we want, when we want it! And that is Idolatry! <<\*>>***

*That brings us to our* ***Third*** *point: where we are going to step back and take a:*

# ***Practical Look at Idolatry*  (REPEAT)**

* 1. **Why is Idolatry so prevalent?!**

As I mentioned before, we were all created to worship – and we are all constantly worshipping someone or something. AS a result of the Fall, we naturally rebel against the True God of the Bible, and we replace Him with created things. *But Romans 1 gives us a clue as to WHY this is SO…*

There Paul tells us *that in claiming to be wise* (think Evolutionary scientist) they became fools… And they exchanged the TRUTH OF GOD… for the lie – FOR WHAT? **the LIE! Talk about a bad trade!** *They exchanged the truth of God for the lie and worshipped and served created things instead of the Creator God!* ***We fall into Idolatry when we believe the lie.***

*Adam and Eve fell when they believed THAT Lie!* ***THE lie is that something other than God will save or fulfill…*** and ***IDOLS always Lie.*** They lie in ways that make them look like the one true God. **So you ask:** WHAT LIES DO IDOLS TELL?

* ***They claim to be Functional Saviors***: They tell you that they can deliver you from the Hell of some bad circumstance into the Heaven of a better situation.
	+ *Take the example of a woman who idolizes marriage…* she thinks the single life is hell and the married life is heaven and her husband becomes her functional savior to bring her into marital bliss.
	+ *Or take a couple who idolizes children…* they think that being childless is hell, and having children is heaven – and so when they have children they are functional saviors **and the parents essentially** make them into little gods/goddesses and the marriage is all about the children.

*NOW, am I saying marriage or children are bad? NO! I am married with children. They are good things!* ***But as one pastor said:*** *when we take a good thing and make it a God thing, that’s a bad thing! (REPEAT)*

* ***Idols also claim to Give you Identity and Joy:*** They tell you that they can make you belong/fit in – this idol will define you.
	+ *Think of the teenager who follows a particular band:* They buy the t-shirts, the CD’s, the merchandise, they dress like the singers, cut and comb their hair like the singers, they look, walk and talk like their band ***and if the band were to break up they are crushed!***
	+ *The person who is constantly following sports falls into this category* – You see it in how they watch the games and they wear the jerseys… When the team wins, they are happy! When the team loses, they are sad! They find their identity and joy in the team – not in Christ.

AGAIN, I am not saying that enjoying music or following sports is evil – but elevating it to your idol is – when you take a good thing and you make it a god thing, that’s a bad thing! ***We don’t have time to explore more… but every IDOL lie comes down to this – they tell you they can replace God as the source for your identity and joy.***

* 1. **So: How do you find your idols?**
1. **Where is your Treasure?** *What would you take out of a burning house? (obviously family/children-not nec. Idols)*
	1. *What would cause catastrophe in your life if it were taken away?* A Loss of Respect or Social Status? Then Pride might be your idol…
	2. *How would you define a ruined life?* Plans for a career didn’t go your way? Then that was prob. an Idol.
	3. *How would you respond to losing your guitar, your car, your job?*

***Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also!***

1. **Where do you make Sacrifices?** *The Bible often equates sacrifice with worship… so where are you sacrificing?*
	1. **Where do you spend most of your time?** *At Work? Or Sitting in front of the TV or Computer?*
	2. **Where do you spend your money?** *Do you spend a larger portion on sports/music than you do on God?*
	3. **What do you think about the most?** *When you have a free moment, where does your mind naturally go? Your most frequent thoughts show you what you worship!*

 ***Soft consciences out there… be careful here… there are many dear things to us which are not idols… these questions merely help you identify the areas where you might need to ask “Does this come before God in my life?”***

**Having heard how prevalent Idolatry is… you might be wondering: *So, what hope is there?!* How do you kill your idolatry?**

***Well, You worshipped your way into Idolatry, you need to worship your way out!***

***A famous theologian once said, “We can never underestimate the expulsive power of a superior affection.”***

What he means is this: A greater love for your wife will prevent you from cheating on her. **A greater love for Christ will prevent you from following your idols!** When you completely humble yourself before the True God of the Bible – and submit to Him in everything – you will find your love and enjoyment of your idols will diminish.

 Are you following a functional Savior? Have you found your identity outside of Christ?

REMEMBER THAT IDOLS LIE – THEY CAN’T DELIVER ON THEIR PROMISES, because they AREN’T GOD!

Even good things like family, good job, fun, WERE NEVER MEANT TO BE THE CENTER OF YOUR LIFE!

***Remember the One True God, and bow before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords!*** Worship the King with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and His love will set you free from your idols! **AMEN**.