**September 20th, 2020**

**An Idol Audit: Exodus 20:1-3**

**(Carolyn Arends)**

1. Carolyn suggests that in every one of the ten commandments, God is setting us free *from* something, in order to set us free *for* something. In your view, what does the first commandment (“Thou shalt have no other gods before me”) set us from from? What does it set us free for?

2.Carolyn argued (quoting Tim Keller) that if you pull up the weeds of your idols, you’ll find your fears clinging to the roots. Do you see a connection between fear and idolatry (turning to solutions other than God) in the world? How about in your own life?

3. Read Matthew 6:24-34. What do you notice in the text? Why do you think, in this portion of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus moves from talking about “two masters” to talking about worry?

4. Where is the line between a healthy love for something (family, exercise, ministry, meaningful work, good food, etc.) and making an idol of it? How would you know if you had crossed that line?

5. Parker Palmer writes:

*A third shadow common among leaders is “functional atheism,” the belief that ultimate responsibility for everything rests with us. This is the unconscious, unexamined conviction that if anything decent is going to happen here, we are the ones who must make it happen—a conviction held even by people who talk a good game about God.*

*This shadow causes pathology on every level of our lives. It leads us to impose our will on others, stressing our relationships, sometimes to the point of breaking. It often eventuates in burnout, depression, and despair, as we learn that the world will not bend to our will and we become embittered about that fact. Functional atheism is the shadow that drives collective frenzy as well. It explains why the average group can tolerate no more than fifteen seconds of silence: if we are not making noise, we believe, nothing good is happening and something must be dying. – Parker Palmer*

Have you seen this kind of “functional atheism” (or idolatry of self-sufficiency) operating in the world? How about in your own life?

6. Consider sharing with the group whether you have noticed a potential idol (or two) during this “Idol Audit.” If you are comfortable naming it specifically, please do. Then spend some time together praying for deliverance from anything that would enslave you to lesser gods, and also for the ability to love and enjoy God, others, and creation well.