Gods at War: The god of Me

Traveling around the world (30 countries, 6 continents)- It never ceases to amaze me to see what people around the world today will worship. As many noted scholars have observed, “When people refuse to worship the one true God, instead of worshipping nothing, they'll worship anything.”

Examples (Pictures):
- Famen Temple (Xian, China) - the Buddha's finger
- The Temple of Ganesh (Bangkok, Thailand) - the elephant god of Hinduism
- Vial of Pope John Paul II's blood (currently on a world tour)
- Batu Caves (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) - the idol of the python

How foolish? (Romans 1:22-23, 25)

Now, it’s easy for us to point out the blatant idolatry in other people’s lives, but really, don’t we all have our own idols? Ours may not be elephants and pythons, but if we’re being honest, all of us wrestle with idolatry. We all in our own way exchange the truth of God for a lie.

You see, what’s an idol? An idol is anything that competes for our worship over and against the true and living God. An idol is anything that we turn to as our source of joy, security, or hope other than the one true God. And if we’re being honest, all of us wrestle with our idols; and some of us aren’t even wrestling, really.

Ex. Bag of examples (checkbook, scale, fishing lure, car keys, ipad, football helmet)

Friends, our world is full of idols that compete for our allegiance, but today, there’s a foundational question that we need to come to terms with if we’re ever going to deal honestly with our idolatry... And that question is this, “Who sits on the throne of my heart?”

You see, out of all the idols in the world, the biggest competitor to the one true God of the universe... it’s ultimately, me. It’s the god of me.

You see, friends, all of us have a throne that resides within our hearts; and that throne only has room for one ruler or Lord. And at the end of the day only one of two people will reign from that throne over your life, it will either be Jesus or you.

So, today, I want us all to ask ourselves this question, “Who sits on the throne of my heart?” Who’s calling the shots in my life today?

You know, friends, there’s really 4 ways we can answer this question; and everyone of us here today will fall into one of 4 camps...

Who sits on the throne of my heart?
1) Not Christ but I
This is the person who has no interest in letting anyone but themselves sit on the throne of their heart.
Ex. Rich Young Man (Mark 10)

Mark 10:21-22
Mark 10:29-30

Ex. Mark Cahill & Michael Jordan ("but I know what that means & I like my life.")

2) I and Christ
This person believes in Christ, but Jesus really isn't on the throne of their heart...
(a few different versions of this person)

Jesus is a lucky charm
Jesus is their lucky charm, the guy they go to when they need something from him; otherwise he's an afterthought.
Ex. James & John (Mark 10:35-37) - "We want you to do for us whatever we ask."

Jesus is an accessory
Jesus is just an accessory they can call on when needed. He's convenient to pull out during Christmas & Easter, or for weddings & funerals, or times of personal crisis, but otherwise he generally stays tucked away where he won't bother anyone.
Ex. 9/11 - America turned to God... How long did that last?

Jesus is a fire insurance policy
And yet for others in this camp, Jesus is nothing more than a fire insurance policy (get out of Hell free card).

Can a person in this camp be saved? Sometimes? Maybe? But it’s not a safe place to be! Anytime your faith revolves around the attitude of, “What’s the least amount of Jesus I need to still be ok?” Friends, you’re probably not ok.

3) Christ and I
This person would represent many of us in the church today. This person has accepted Jesus as their savior, but they don’t always live with him as their Lord. Their motivations and desires are mixed between God’s will and the things of this world.

Ex. Peter (Luke 22:33) - “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.”
Later that night he denies Christ 3 x’s
- What did Peter do? He basically said, Jesus is Lord as long as it doesn’t cost me.

Now, it’s easy for us to beat Peter up over his denying Christ, but don't we all deny Jesus at times? Don’t we all wrestle with counting the cost of following him?
- When we doubt his promises & faithfulness
- When we question our self-worth as children made in God’s image
- When we choose our will over his
- When we turn to the world for pleasure instead of turning to God

Friends, in all of these cases we’re taking Jesus off the throne of our heart. And you know something, there’s a word for that... Compromise.

When we deny Jesus we compromise... and while compromise is an offense against our holy God. I think God mourns over our compromise more because of what it does to us... because when we compromise we quench the power and joy of the Spirit in our lives. We miss out on the fullness of life God intends for us.

J**ohn 10:10b**

Ex. Backpack w/ rocks

Do you want to know how to have life to the full? Do you want to know the secret? It’s found in the apostle Paul’s answer to the question, “Who sits on the throne of my heart?” What was Paul’s answer?

Galatians 2:20

4) Not I but Christ
Paul says, “Not I but Christ.”
Paul understood that the secret to experiencing life to the full is to place Jesus on the throne of our heart. He must increase and we must decrease.
This is where life is found (John 10:10).
This is where joy is found ([Philippians 4:11b-13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians%204:11b-13&version=NIV)).

The life and joy that God has for us isn’t like the false idols of the world, it’s a contentment, peace, and security that’s with us at all times and in all circumstances.


Ex. Buyer’s remorse (fishing boat) vs. contentment & joy that lasts...
How many? How much? What’s it going to take to fulfill you?
I’ve never once had buyer’s remorse with Jesus.

It’s all about priorities...
Matt. 6:33

Ex. Cone of priorities
God’s not promising health, wealth, and prosperity… but he’s promising life to the full, satisfaction, joy, contentment no matter your circumstances. Because when Jesus is on the throne of your heart nothing can shake you (this is why Hebrews 6:19a calls our hope in him an anchor for the soul).

Ex. Paul- death/ beating/ prison/ let him go... what do you do with a guy like that?

Now, some of you might be here thinking this morning, “But Jason, I’ve pushed God off the throne of my heart for too long, or too many times. There’s no way that God would ever give me the kind of life you’re talking about!”

But friends, if that’s what you think, you don’t understand who our God is!