



The Essentials: Exodus

Session 9

Exodus 32:1-20

Opening Collect

Together: Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Watch Video

Read: Exodus 32:1-20

Discussion:

1. What is the difference between a healthy admiration or commitment to something and idolatry?
2. What are the idols in our own lives and how do we determine what they are?
3. Why do you think the Israelites made the golden calf in the first place?
4. In comparison with the other Israelites, Moses' commitment to God is unique. Why do you think is so devoted to God? What might have transformed him from a reluctant follower to a devoted mediator?
5. In light of our passage how do you think we get rid of our idols?

Check in and Closing Prayer

Exodus 32:1-20

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron and said to him, “Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”² Aaron said to them, “Take off the gold rings that are on the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters and bring them to me.”³ So all the people took off the gold rings from their ears and brought them to Aaron.⁴ He took these from them, formed them in a mold, and cast an image of a calf, and they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it, and Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a festival to the LORD.”⁶ They rose early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought sacrifices of well-being, and the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to revel.

⁷ The LORD said to Moses, “Go down at once! Your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have acted perversely; ⁸ they have been quick to turn aside from the way that I commanded them; they have cast for themselves an image of a calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, ‘These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!’ ”⁹ The LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, how stiff-necked they are. ¹⁰ Now let me alone so that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, and of you I will make a great nation.”

¹¹ But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, “O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth?’ Turn from your fierce wrath; change your mind and do not bring disaster on your people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, how you swore to them by your own self, saying to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants like the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit it forever.’ ”¹⁴ And the LORD changed his mind about the disaster that he planned to bring on his people.¹⁵ Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain, carrying the two tablets of the covenant in his hands, tablets that were written on both sides, written on the front and on the back. ¹⁶ The tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, engraved upon the tablets. ¹⁷ When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a noise of war in the camp.”¹⁸ But he said,

“It is not the sound made by victors
or the sound made by losers;
it is the sound of singing that I hear.”

¹⁹ As soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses’s anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets from his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. ²⁰ He took the calf that they had made, burned it with fire, ground it to powder, scattered it on the water, and made the Israelites drink it.