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Ten Commandments. Luther saw how the Old Testament law against idols and the New Testament emphasis on justification by faith alone are essentially the same thing. He said that the Ten Commandments begin with two commandments against idolatry. It is because the fundamental problem in law-breaking is always idolatry. In other words, we never break the other commandments without first breaking the law against idolatry. Luther understood that the first commandment is really all about justification by faith, and to fail to believe in justification by faith is idolatry, which is the root of all that displeases God.

For example, let's say a person cheats on his income tax form. Why does he do that? Well, you say, because he is a sinner. Yes, but why does his sin take this form? Luther's answer would be that the man only cheated because he was making money and possessions—and the status or comfort from having more of them—more important than God and his favor. Or let's say a person lies to a friend rather than lose face over something she has done. In that case the underlying sin is making human approval or your reputation more important than the righteousness you have in Christ.*

In our text this morning (Isaiah 59), Isaiah writes to a people who were in crisis and were anticipating a divine intervention. They had prayed for God's deliverance but their lifestyle reveals all too clearly that they were not genuinely repentant about their deeds. Their hearts and their prayers were not directed toward the establishment of God's rule on earth for they are themselves in rebellion to that rule. Their nation was falling apart around them but it wasn't political failure, or economic slowdowns that caused all these problems. It was idolatry – a theological problem.

*Quoted from **“Talking About Idolatry in a Postmodern Age,”** by Tim Keller. Source: The Gospel Coalition (<http://thegospelcoalition.org/articles.php>)

FEEDING THE FLOCK

Meet the Minister



Noel & Julie Walker

Our Real Problem

Julie and I spent a wonderful weekend in New York City last weekend. Thank-you to the many helpers that made that all possible. You know who you are! (you're probably still recovering!) On Sunday Julie and I went to two church services. One was with the Manhattan Church of Christ where we met Dr. Mark Love's parents Stuart and D'Esta Love.

They are both professors at Pepperdine University and were in New York running a marriage workshop weekend (who knew?) We had a great conversation with them and you may see them at Tintern sometime in the future doing something similar.

The second worship service was at the Redeemer Presbyterian Church where I got to hear one of my preaching heroes Dr. Tim Keller preach. Ironically, Sunday night Dylan went to a Raptors game and got to see rookie sensation / slam-dunk champ Blake Griffin. It's sort-of the same only not really.

Tim Keller was preaching part of a series on the character of God and summarized his previous sermons by saying that in a very real way, “all your problems are theological ones.” Most of us figure that we don't deal in theology on a daily basis and surely our everyday difficulties aren't related to theology either. The truth is that Keller is right. The trouble we have in our life can be directly related to the way in which we mentally frame our difficulties.

Theology is simply the way we think and talk about God. Each of us has a personal theology. We have what we say (our confessional theology) and what we do (our personal practical theology). Sometimes these are one and the same, but for most of us there is a difference. I would always say that Jesus Christ is Lord of my life but when it comes down to my behaviour, I am afraid that I don't always live a life that demonstrates the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I am sure you have seen the same thing true in your life.

God is creator and we are part of His creation. Everything He created is good but sin has entered the world and fractured it to its foundational level. Now personal agendas and selfish motives spoil what was created to bring God glory. Good food has been corrupted into gluttony. Wealth is now hoarded instead of shared. The pleasures of sexual relations within a covenant relation of marriage has become twisted and corrupted. We steal God's glory and try to make it our own when we sin. All our problems are theological ones. In another place Keller writes,

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