**The Idol that Provokes to Jealousy**

**The Word**

Read together Ezekiel 8

**The Big Picture**

Israel’s willful and consistent idolatry within the very temple of God provoked God’s jealousy and led to the departure of his glorious presence from the temple. As God’s temple today, we need to identify and confess the contemporary idols that capture our hearts so that God can cleanse us and return us to a single-minded devotion to him.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Consider Ezekiel’s “guided tour” of the temple area in Ezekiel 8. What from that chapter stuck out to you most and why?

2. Consider the question about where you find your significance, security, and satisfaction. As you were listening to the sermon, or as you consider that question now, what in particular came up for you?

3. Consider the challenge to keep a journal of when you experience your most positive emotions (joy, excitement, and pride) as well as when you experience your most negative emotions (anxiety and anger). What have you noticed so far?

4. What about the topic of idolatry was not brought up on Sunday that you think is an important part of the conversation?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Ezekiel’s vision (v. 1-4)

A. This takes place about a year after his first vision

B. The God who appeared a year earlier appears again and gives him a visual tour of the temple in Jerusalem

C. The vision begins with God’s glorious presence in the temple where you’d expect.

II. Four scenes of shocking idolatry within God’s own temple

A. The idol of jealousy (v. 5-7). This is probably the goddess Asherah, worshipped for her ability to give life and fertility

B. 70 elders in a darkened chamber (v. 7-13). They are probably worshipping Egyptian gods and hoping to invoke the help of Egypt against Babylon

C. Women weeping for Tammuz (v. 14-15). Tammuz may have been a pagan hero associated with the death and resurrection of the four seasons and was therefore worshipped to bring a good harvest.

D. Men worshipping the sun (v. 16). They are literally turning their backs on God and worshipping a Babylonian god

III. God responds like a jealous lover

 A. This idol worship will drive him from his own sanctuary (v. 6)

B. Notice the slow and gradual departure of the glorious presence of the Lord from his sanctuary (8:4, 9:3, 10:18-19, 11:23-25)

 C. The departure of his glory is one of darkest moments in Israel’s history

IV. Facing our own idols today

A. In the new covenant, we are the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16), and he desires our hearts to be pure and single-mindedly devoted to him.

B. Idols are the things our hearts truly worship and depend on. They are our “functional saviors.”

C. Where do you find your significance, security, and satisfaction apart from God?

 1. Significance: career, role, talent, connection, impact, etc.

 2. Security: financial resources, a relationship, human approval, etc.

 3. Satisfaction: standard of living, food/drink, sex, entertainment, etc.

D. Notice your stronger emotions throughout the day as they might reveal something about your idols

1. When was I most excited, proud, satisfied today? what do I find myself daydreaming about when I have free time?

2. When was I most anxious, angry, or grumpy today?