

## ULC Sermon Study Resource

### *Idols — Individualism*

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**March 28, 2021**

**Prayer:** Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

**Icebreaker:** If it's going to rain, do you prefer sustained light showers or a heavy but quick downpour?

**Reading:** Genesis 3:1-7

#### **Outline:**

- I. The Limit of the Individual (v. 1-5)
  - a. We are fundamentally limited as human beings: God is God, and we are not.
  - b. I worship myself as an idol when I make myself the ultimate source of authority for my life and try to live without being limited by my status as creature, not Creator.
  - c. I may take great pride in all *my* accomplishments and self-reliance (rugged individualism) or pursue *my* authentic self free from authority, institution, religion, or tradition (expressive individualism), but either way I'm seeking freedom from God in myself.  
**Q: Why are Adam and Eve limited by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?**
- II. The Fragility of Individualism (v. 6-7)
  - a. Immediately Adam and Eve realize their nakedness, fragility, and vulnerability.
  - b. Our traditions, experiences, works, things, country, and selves will continue to disappoint.  
**Q: Does hiding from God bring an end to our feelings of frailty and insufficiency?**
- III. The Invitation to Community
  - a. Christian community offers us an alternative to the fragility of individualism. God forms us as his people and reminds us that we are made not for ourselves but for him.
  - a. We are shaped not because of our view of the individual relating to society, but because we come together as one under the lordship of Jesus as individuals before God!  
**Q: How does the theme of Christian community permeate the early church?**

#### **Reflection/Application Questions:**

- 1) Why is it tempting to push the limits and live life exactly how we want to live it?
- 2) How does reality check this desire? How do we respond when we understand our fragility?
- 3) Why might the idol of individualism be more pervasive in the Western world than in the East?
- 4) Have you struggled with putting yourself above God? How can you confess that to him today?
- 5) How can we live in Christian community that honors individuals while worshipping Christ as Lord?

#### **Suggestions for further study:**

- Acts 2:42-47 **Q: How does the early church live out the invitation to community?**
- Romans 12:1-8 **Q: How does the body of Christ honor our individual differences?**
- 1 Cor. 12:12-27 **Q: How does the body of Christ unify us under the lordship of Jesus?**

**Closing Prayer:** "Gracious God, you made us as your people and created us to live in relationship with you, but we try to assert our individuality and discover who we are by trying to be like you instead of being loved by you. We ask you to break us of the worship of self and invite us to live as your people, where we discover what it means to be loved and rescued by you, and learn to follow you by giving ourselves away for one another. We ask this by the power of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus, Amen."