



**SPRING-TIME DAILY ENCOURAGEMENTS**

**Carstairs-Bancroft United Church**

*June 15, 2023*



Photo: Our Daily Bread

## PLACES OF THE HEART

*You shall not make for yourself an image.*

Exodus 20:4

**READ Exodus 20:1-6**

Here are some vacation tips: The next time you're traveling through Middleton, Wisconsin, you might want to visit the National Mustard Museum. For those of us who feel that one mustard is plenty, this place amazes, featuring 6,090 different mustards from around the world. In McLean, Texas, you might be surprised to run across the Barbed Wire Museum—or more surprised there is such a passion for, well . . . fencing. It's telling what kinds of things we choose to make important. One writer says you could do worse than spend an afternoon at the Banana Museum (though we beg to differ).

We laugh in fun, yet it's sobering to admit we maintain our own museums—places of the heart where we celebrate certain idols of our own making. God instructs us, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3) and "you shall not bow down to them or worship them" (v. 5). But we do anyway, creating our own graven gods, perhaps of wealth or lust or success—or of some other fill-in-the-blank "treasure" we worship in secret.

It's easy to read this passage and miss the point. Yes, God holds us accountable for the museums of sin we create. But He also speaks of "showing love to a thousand generations of those who love [Him]" (v. 6). He knows how trivial our "museums" really are. He knows our true satisfaction lies only in our love for Him.

**By Kenneth Petersen**

### **PRAY & REFLECT**

**Dear God, I want You to be at the center of my life. Help me rid myself of the idols I keep. Amen**

What is an area of sin that you keep secret? How will you give it to God?

### **SCRIPTURE INSIGHT**

Although the wording is different, the New Testament reiterates the teaching of the first and second commandments: worship is reserved for God alone (Exodus 20:3-6). When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment, He replied, "The most important one . . . is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength'" (Mark 12:29-30). Paul's teaching is in the same vein: "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship" (Romans 12:1). Mercy from God is the basis for dedication to God. John's teaching is succinct but sure: "keep yourselves from idols" (1 John 5:21). — By **Arthur Jackson**

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