**BCM Bible Study: February 17/18, 2021**

**Exodus 32: Golden Calf Part 1**

Things Unravel: **Read Exodus 32:1-6**

The Israelites were not worshipping a calf outright, as if to say, “This golden calf is our god!” Rather, idol-making for ancient people was a means of connecting with a god, like the ark. In other words, the calf represents a god; it is not thought of as a god itself. How does this help you understand what is being said in v.4?

* If an ark could be formed as a meeting place with God, why is what they are doing sinful?
* They are worshipping a god or gods, but to do it in a way that ignores God’s revelation is to worship someone else than God. What could this look like for us?
* Why did the Israelites make a golden calf? What emotions, thoughts, and desires led them to that decision?
  + In what way do you struggle with fear about your future?
  + How do you try to can control of your life when things seem out of control?
  + How should we engage with God when we are feeling afraid?

Moses Convinces God: **Read Exodus 32:7-14**

* What is God’s initial idea in response to Israel’s sin? (v.10)
  + What do Moses’ words tell you about his character?
* What reasoning does Moses use to convince God to change his mind?
* How does God’s purpose for his people shed light on his anger in this situation?
  + Moses’ primary concern is God’s glory and reputation. What would it look like if this was your primary concern? What might you be more/less concerned about? How might you act differently?
* What do you think of the idea that God changes his mind here?
  + What does this mean about prayer?

The Aftermath: **Read Exodus 32:15-24**

* In what way does Aaron lie about what happened? Why do you think he did this?
  + Have you ever found yourself in a place like Aaron, where you felt the need to hide what you’ve done or make your actions seem less unrighteous than what they were?
  + Why is it so difficult to honestly share your shortcomings with others?
  + Have you ever experienced someone handling your confession poorly? Handling it well?

**Read Exodus 32:25-35**

* Do you struggle with Old Testament stories like this one, where God commands and allows death? Why or why not?
  + What does God’s reaction tell you about the seriousness of sin?
  + Do you feel like the Church generally takes sin seriously enough?
* What does Moses suggest as a solution to appease God’s wrath? How do you see a picture of Jesus in what Moses offers to do?
  + God is extremely serious about sin. But look at what he does – **2 Corinthians 5:21**. How does this scene amplify the beauty of the cross?
* Do you tend to think of God more as angry with you or gracious to you?
  + **Read Romans 6:1-2** and **Romans 8:1-2.**
  + What is the balance between taking sin seriously and finding freedom in God’s grace?

Challenge: As an act of surrender, spend some time writing down the things that bring you anxiety. Pray about these things, asking for and surrendering to God’s help.