

## Key Insights for Christian Discipleship @ Jazz Evensong

Week 9 – Nov 1, 2017

The False Gods Beckon

1 Kings 18:18

*He answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father's house, because you have forsaken the commandments of the Lord and followed the Baals."*

Jazz is a music that weeps for love.

It's a music that delights in love.

It's a music that explores the deep nuances of relationships, the complexities, the confusions, the contradictions that so often lie so far beyond what we can find words to express. Diane and the guys have given us a wonderful taste this evening of that kind of range in exploring the dynamics of love.

When jazz and love click, the impact, as John Coltrane so simply stated it, is "Elation!"

Those of us who gather to worship, learn, and befriend here at Brentwood and who go out from each gathering to serve as blessings develop our significance in the world from our relationship with an intimately personal force or energy that we call 'God.'

We are convinced this God created all that is, that this God fashioned human beings with crucial, but limited, powers, that this God remained determined to nurture good in spite of human misuse of their powers, and that the best way to characterize the nature of this God is 'Love.'

We also recognize that there are lots of false gods out there clamoring for our loyalty and devotion.

They beckon us in alluring ways to find our ultimate meaning in them.

Most of us have tried at least some of them at some time.

We've tried the 'god' of 'rugged individualism' and 'do your own thing,' the ones that promise ultimate satisfaction in going it on our own, relying on our own wisdom and strengths.

We've tried the 'god' of 'consumerism' and 'materialism,' the one that promises ultimate satisfaction in how much stuff we have, amassing more and more possessions to prove our significance.

We've tried the 'god' of 'popularity' and 'attractive personality,' the one that promises ultimate satisfaction in how many people like us, really, really like us.

The benefits these false gods deliver can be very satisfying, but they don't have much lasting power.

The lasting, unconditional, revitalizing love that endures, the love that I find at the heart of jazz, is the force of God in the world, working in wondrous ways that constantly surprise us.

I find that God most clearly visible in the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, the One who frees us from all false forms of love that promise so much and deliver so little.

*Part of a 50-week series of reflections at Jazz Evensong, Brentwood Presbyterian Church  
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