

A KOSHER HEART – PART 1

-Ryan Parsons-

Wouldn't you have loved to walk alongside the banks of the Sea of Galilee in and around Capernaum listening to Jesus teach, heal, and call disciples? No doubt it would have been fascinating. However, as I enter that story and begin to listen to the words of Jesus, I have to wonder if I would have passed muster. As our Lord was teaching and calling people to the Kingdom of God, he was closely searching and examining their hearts. He was looking for what one man has called "kosher hearts."

You might be wondering what kosher actually means. In Jewish religious food laws, food must be properly selected, appropriately cleansed and specifically prepared in order to be "kosher," or fit to eat. When applied to hearts, I can only hear the words of David in my ears.

Psalm 51:10

*Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.*

Knowing that sin and darkness had entered and tainted his heart, David cried out repentantly to God asking for it to be made "kosher" again.

It is not surprising then, that Jesus taught fervently about how the people were to prepare their hearts before God. One of the greatest examples of this comes in Jesus' masterful Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 6:19-21

19 *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

What our Lord addresses here is the capacity of our hearts. The admonition is to avoid having a heart filled with the wrong treasure. A heart full of things pointed in the opposite direction of the Kingdom is not clean and prepared for God's redemptive work. In essence, hearts consumed by earthly treasure are not "kosher."

The Hebrew writer had a similar encouragement:

Hebrews 12:1

...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

In the same way Jewish kosher laws guide them to diligently avoid impurities and cross contamination, Jesus followers are called to shed the impurity of sin and the contamination of a heart full of worldly things.

Jesus' teachings still challenge us today. Knowing that he is looking for hearts that are clean and prepared, we are faced with the same question. Are our hearts "kosher," or are they full of the wrong things? Today is just as good as any to lay aside the wrong things and to fill up our hearts with treasures in heaven.