

## A KOSHER HEART – PART 3

-Ryan Parsons-

A lawyer once approached Jesus with a question, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” (Mt 22:36, Lk 10:25) Jesus replied with: “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* (Mt 22:37-39)

His answer summed up the law and the prophets as well as directed all his disciples in how to walk in his kingdom which is built upon loving sacrifice (John 3:16) and belonging to God who is, in his very essence, love (1 John 4:7-12).

One of the things that grieved Jesus greatly during his ministry on earth was the hard heartedness he perceived in those around him. It should come as no surprise that a main theme in his Sermon on the Mount was the orientation of the heart. Jesus’ desire was for clean, renewed, and prepared hearts aligned with the will of God.

Matthew 5

*22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.*

*38 “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also*

*43 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

Matthew 7

*1 “Judge not, that you be not judged. 2 For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.*

He makes it clear that anger, retaliation, hatred and judgment slam the door of our heart, lock it, and throw away the key. Jesus tells his listeners repeatedly that a closed heart is not a kosher heart. And as long as it is closed, a person’s heart cannot be permeated by the love and joy of God’s kingdom.

How then can we purge our hearts of those detrimental qualities if they happen to sneak in? Author Gary Thomas says, “Build contempt for contempt. Give honor to those who deserve it.” But who actually deserves it? Jesus answered that your brother, the one who slaps you, your neighbor, and even your enemy deserve it... essentially, everyone. Contempt for contempt equals complete opposition to anger, retaliation, hatred and judgment and replacing it with love. This is how a hard and closed heart transforms into a kosher heart.