

A Call for Redemption in the Hearts of Man

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What is it in the hearts of man that blinds us to the struggles in the world today? Why is it that around every corner and on every continent we see or hear of these struggles and remain inactive? And who is it that will judge the hearts of man? Evil is the result of absence. It's not the absence of God around the next corner or the absence of God on continents, but rather the absence of the presence of God in man's hearts.

Between the sweatshops, rock quarries, diamond mines, brothels and the countless other ways man uses man, there are around 27 million slaves in our world today. These are actual human slaves that are bought and sold like food, cars, and houses, if you're one of the lucky ones who understand what it means to have such things. There are countless other slaves to countless other things in our world all around us: slaves to economies, slaves to consumerism, slaves to materialism, slaves to governments and the list goes on.

How did it get this way and how do we get out? Do we want out?

If we are willing to look close enough, we will be shocked at what we see. We would be shocked to know that in this place we call home here in America, 6% of the world's population, that we consume 40% of the world's resources while countless others consume none.

We have because others do not. We want more for less at the expense of others working more for less. If we look close enough, we might see that while we have freedom, having what we want when we want it, it comes at a very high price. Slavery is literally woven into the fabric of some of our clothing, and some materials used in our technological world are mined by those in forced labor. On some of our hands there are these stones that are mined by people who have no other option, they are forced and come at the expense of someone else's hand.

How did the abnormal become normal? The more we hear, the more it seems we ignore. It is easier to ignore than to get involved. God has given us eyes to see, ears to hear, mouths to speak and hearts to feel. We cannot sit idly by while so much of the world struggles for freedom or an idle moment of rest; things were not intended to be this way.

When the hearts of man are filled with anything other than their intended content, people suffer. What if we filled the voids, hurts, and emptiness with the only thing that can satisfy? What we might find is that the eyes, ears and hearts that we have been given would see, hear and feel as they were intended.

Are we not to set the captives free rather than making more captives? Are we not to release the oppressed rather than oppressing more? Does what I buy, where I buy it and how much of it I buy have an impact on the world around me? The answer is: yes it does. This is a call to the church in America to rise up and be the church.

Jesus stood up in the Synagogue and opened the scroll of Isaiah. In the reading of the words, he announced the beginning of his ministry and he said out of Luke 4, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

That same Spirit has been given to the church with the same instruction, and if we are not doing that, can we call ourselves the church? The Kingdom of God has been made available to all, and the Kingdom of God always looks like Jesus. The church was created to pick up broken pieces and by the Breath or the Spirit of God be Tikkum Olam- healers of a broken world.

The brokenness of this world is not too big or too difficult for the redemptive and reconciling Spirit of the living God who is restoring all things. So may we as the church, as people filled with the Spirit of God, be the people of God to this broken world.