

REMOVING THE BALL OF RAGE

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Some time ago as we traveled by shuttle bus the fifteen miles from our hotel in Boston to the airport we discovered our driver was a Palestinian Muslim. We knew where his home was in Jerusalem. After a few minutes of friendly conversation we asked him if he had ever observed the ball of rage within many Muslim, Jewish, and Christian people.

"Of course," he said "I see it everywhere!"

We then said, " Do you know **everyone, everywhere** has within them that ball of rage, or lust, or arrogance, or greed, or lewdness in some form or another? We are born with it"

"You're right," he said.

"Do you also know that God wants to extract the ball of rage out of every one of us like a bad tooth and replace it with a ball of His love. He promised through the prophets that spoke in your own homeland that He would do this. A prophet named Ezekiel prophesied in your home city that God would take out the heart of stone out of our flesh and replace it with a soft heart and put His Spirit in us."

"Really?" he said "I never heard anything like this before"

"Yes", we said "Many people, even imams, priests and rabbis don't know this. "God sent Messiah Jesus to take the blame for all of our sin, Jewish Muslim Christian or atheist – everyone. That's what happened when Jesus was crucified in your home city of Jerusalem. He was taking the blame for the sin of the world – of everyone including you and us. That's why we can all return to God and receive forgiveness. He then places His Spirit in us and He gives us a ball of love and kindness to replace the ball of rage."

"That is the most wonderful thing I have ever heard." he said.

Just then two smiling African American ladies jumped on the bus. He knew them and said to them, "We are having a most wonderful conversation about forgiveness. These people have told me something I have never heard before."

At that time we had to get off the bus and we asked our two new friends (whom we had established were Spirit-filled believers) to complete the conversation and show the dear man how he could receive the new heart that Jesus came to give to all of us.

Times of crisis like the present (when emotions are high and violence and protest are in our streets)

expose the existence of that ball of rage. It is in the hearts of the people from the left and right and of every culture, ethnicity and background. This exposing of the evil in our hearts is the first work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "He will convict the world of sin."

While anger floods the streets of many cities, God is also at work. He is pouring out His Spirit and convicting the world of its sin, just as Jesus promised. Conviction of sin exposes our hearts of stone – the ball of anger, lust greed arrogance etc. within us so that we are ready to have it extracted and replaced. It reveals, at the spiritual level, our absolute need of spiritual awakening; and it exposes at the natural level, flaws within our society that show the urgent need for reforms at the legal and political level.

Our God FORGIVES, REMOVES and REPLACES this heart of stone 'ball of sin within" if anyone turns to Him and receives His Spirit of love. He gives us the grace to understand and forgive on all sides.

He yearns to replace the spirit of rage with a spirit of love, the spirit of frustration with a spirit of peace and unforgiveness with forgiveness. "*Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

Times of crisis reveal the presence of the ball of rage – the ugly side of human nature. Does anyone really like to live in hate? Does anyone really like to live in left or right wing bigotry? The Holy Spirit uses crises to expose the ugly side of human nature and the urgent need for **everyone** to receive the Holy Spirit as our new heart. The evangelist is there to say: "*God's offer of forgiveness still stands because of what Jesus did on the Cross. He did enough for all of us. Come up higher. Be reconciled with Him and get a new heart.*"

It is vital that Team Jesus is not sucked into the strife of man at this time, but that we enter all situations from the unseen heavenly realm as ambassadors of the Messiah and ministers of reconciliation, forgiveness and hope.

*"Make me a channel of Your peace
Where there is hatred, let me bring Your love
Where there is injury, Your pardon Lord."*