



## ~ Idols of the Heart ~

***“In the eighteenth year of his [Josiah’s] reign, when he had purged the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.” – 2 Chron. 34:8***

In one of my worships recently, God took me to Ezekiel 14 which was hardly a warm and fuzzy passage of scripture. This chapter is a strong message to God’s people regarding idols and unfaithfulness to Him. It was a message originally written for the Israelites after they began to be taken into captivity to Babylon and has great implications for God’s people today, specifically in vs. 3-7.

In these texts, God is not addressing physical idols that people bow down to. But rather idols they harbor secretly in their hearts. These are supposed “God-fearing” people He is addressing for they still try to “inquire of the Lord” in the various dealings of their lives. And when they inquire, they are seeking answers they want to hear vs. what they really need to hear.

The dictionary defines an idol as: any person or thing regarded with blind admiration, adoration, or devotion. Do God’s people today do that? Is it possible we hold something in high regard that distracts or takes our heart from the relationship that God has called us to with Him?

There is a movie that I thoroughly enjoy to watch. It’s a good, wholesome movie, a period piece with romance and family interactions. It is by far my favorite movie of all time. However, I notice that when I watch it, I want to do nothing else. Not only that, my mind continues to stay on the scenes of the movie long after I have stopped watching it. For some reason, the plot and characters of this story hit a nerve in my heart and mind that consume me. God had to show me that while the movie itself was not wrong or inappropriate, my response to it was. I had begun to make it an idol in my life by the amount of time and thought I was putting into it. I was choosing to dwell on the movie instead of other things God was calling me to. It was getting in the way of my relationship with God and had to go.

God wants to clean out the idols that lie secretly in our hearts. These are either persons or things that steal our affections away from our relationship with Him. 2 Tim. 3:5 says: *“having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!”* This is what happens when the idols remain intact in our hearts. We cannot have our cake and eat it too. I cannot gratify self and still expect God’s Spirit to lead me. If I put something ahead of God’s voice to my heart, then I step away from the power source that fills me and I claim I have

something that in essence I do not. This is a dangerous place to be and God is warning us of its implications so He can do a new work instead.

Joel 2:12-13 says to return to God with fasting and repentance, to rend our hearts and not our garments. This is an internal issue, not an exterior one. Rending our hearts implies allowing God to break it in order to fix it. God must clean house before He can live in it. But, if we are willing to come to Jesus for this healing and change, the promise is beautiful.

*“Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”* (Ps. 51:10) In Ezek. 36:26-27, God promises to give us a new heart and a new spirit if we come to him. Our part is asking for the change and renewal. When King Josiah finished purging the land of Judah from all its idols, he was then ready to repair the house of God. Our heart is a living temple for Jesus to dwell in and it cannot be repaired and restored until the idols that once reigned there are removed. But when we allow God to bring us thru this process and let go of those things that take our heart and mind away from His voice, we can say with David: *“The king shall have joy in Your strength, O LORD; and in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! You have given him his heart’s desire, and have not withheld the request of his lips.”* – Psalm 21:1-2 Not only are we restored, but our prayers are heard once again and we receive the real desire of our hearts!

**Prayer:** *Dear Lord, I realize there are idols in my heart that have gotten in the way of your leading in my life. Please forgive me for allowing them to reign over you. Please give me a new heart and a new spirit within me that I might receive your power and healing in my life you so desperately want to give. Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you, my Lord my strength and my redeemer! (Ps. 19:14) - Amen*

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