

4. Offerings Are Not Good Enough...God Gives Us A New Heart



Wednesday

Place #4 picture (heart) on cross

Scripture: Jeremiah 7:21-24, Psalm 51:16-17, Ezekiel 36:24-28

4 candles lit before reading

Even before the world was created, God knew that Jesus would be the Way, the Truth and the Life for all who believed in Him. But God didn't just ignore His people, waiting until the time came for Jesus.

He provided a temporary way to atone and cover their sins. If they offered sacrifices from a heart of worship, they could renew their relationship with God as they proved their reliance on Him.

But people did not rely on God. They did not follow His way of sacrifice and worship. And there was an even deeper problem. Many followed the outward ritual, but they did not trust God in their hearts. They didn't love Him, and they didn't live lives that reflected His glory.

Jeremiah was a messenger for God and he gave this message to the people of Israel:

This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel says, "Take your burnt offerings and your other sacrifices and eat them yourselves! When I led your ancestors out of Egypt, it was not burnt offerings and sacrifices I wanted from them. This is what I told them, 'Obey Me and I will be your God and you will be My people. Do everything as I say, and all will be well.' But My people would not listen to Me. They kept doing whatever they wanted, following the stubborn desires of their evil hearts."

(Have kids blow out another candle. Do not light again until Easter.)

Even though most of the Israelites did not understand what God really wanted from them, some DID get it. King David was one of those people. He understood that sacrifices weren't enough and wrote about it in one of his Psalms.

You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.

Even though God's own people refused to obey or listen to Him, God still had a plan for them. God loves us so much that He made a way to take our stubborn heart and make it new!

For I will gather you up from all the nations and bring you home again to your land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. Your filth will be washed away, and you will no longer worship idols. And I will give you a new heart and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put My spirit in you so that you will follow My decrees and be careful to obey My regulations. And you will live in Israel, the land I gave your ancestors long ago. You will be My people and I will be your God.

PRAY: Praise to God our Father! You are a loving and gracious God and You give us gifts that we do not deserve. Thank you for giving us a new heart and Your spirit to help us follow You.