

RANSOMED HEART

LOVE GOD. LIVE FREE.

July 2016

Dear Friends,

This may be one of the most important letters I've written you.

I want to deepen our understanding about something I wrote you last month—how Hatred has become the new “spirit of the age.” I wrote that before the police shootings in July. The mounting racial tensions in this country are symptoms of a much deeper reality. We need to grasp what is taking place in our world, so we know how to live and how to respond.

In the Beatitudes Jesus warns against murderous rage and consuming lust. I don't think that was by accident; I don't think he randomly chose two vices from the litany of human sin. The more you understand the essence of human nature and human conflict, you understand what Jesus was pointing to.

Human beings are ravenous. A famished craving for life haunts every person. We crave fullness; it is our design. We were created for unceasing happiness, and joy, and life. But ever since we lost Eden, we have never known a day of total fullness. We are never filled in any lasting way. Human beings are like cut flowers—we appear to be well, but we are cut off from the Vine. And we are *ravenous*. Until we return to God and actually abide in him, until we experience God as our daily source of life, we are desperate creatures, lustful creatures. We look to a marriage (or the hope of marriage), a child, our work, some food or drink or adventure, the next dinner out, the new car—anything to touch the ache inside us. We are ravenous beings. *That* is why Jesus warned about consuming lust.

Then, the world does not cooperate. Far from it—the world gets in the way of our ravenous ache. It constantly thwarts us. People don't treat us as we long to be treated; we can't find the happiness we crave. Our boss is harsh, so we sabotage him. Our spouse withholds sex, so we indulge online. The ravening won't be stopped. But boy o boy—when somebody stands in the way of our desperate hunger, they feel the fury of our rage. We are ready to kill. People shoot each other over traffic incidents. Parents abuse a baby who keeps them up at night. We shred one another in social media over political disagreements. *That* is why Jesus warned about murderous rage.

This is the human condition: ravenous, and ready to kill anything that gets in our way.

Now, enter two more dynamics. The first is the hour in which we are living. These are the last hours of the age, and Scripture describes them with startling clarity:

...in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. (2 Tim 3:1-3).

Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. (Matt 24:12)

Human beings lose their capacity to love when their own souls are parched, tormented, and thwarted. When sins rage, when cruelty, selfishness and hatred rule the day—yes love is hard to cultivate. Yes it “grows cold”—even in the best of us. Enter dynamic number two: the *spirits* of the age. Here comes the Perfect Storm.

Spirits of Hatred, Violation and Violence have been released on the earth here in these last days. Paris, Brussels, Orlando, Dallas—how much more proof do we need? Hatred, Violation and Violence are sweeping the earth—and they find massive opportunity in humanity’s current condition. Someone (remember they are ravenous) feels violated; the spirit of Violation jumps all over it, and inflames it like gasoline on fire. Hatred joins in (like sharks smelling blood in the water); they feel hatred—they want to retaliate with a murderous rage. Thus Violence.

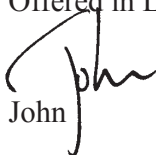
Friends, this will shed so much light on so many things for you. Not just “out there” in the world; it is so close to home, too. I am finding that normal relational tensions are open doors for this darkness; this “violation” followed by “hatred” jumps on every opportunity. It can be triggered by an unkind email or Facebook post or remark. Even just driving. Simple irritation becomes an open door to suddenly feel a whole lot more than just irritation.

Never before has Love been more important to cling to, to pray, to invoke. You are going to need to be vigilant—no little grievances, no offense, no revenge, no open door to any of this. Now I understand why Jesus keeps bringing us back to love, to pray love, to enforce love. Forgiveness, mercy, overlooking offenses, breaking any agreement with violation, hatred or violence. So often these days, as I ask him what to pray, he responds with, “Love.”

“Jesus, we love you. We really do love you. We turn our hearts towards you in love. Jesus - we receive your love. We take refuge in your love. We make our deepest and total agreement with your love. We receive your love. We take refuge in your love. We make our deepest and total agreement with your love. And Jesus - we dedicate our lives and our kingdoms to your love. We devote our kingdoms to the love of God. We command that the love of God fills our kingdoms, in every way. May the mighty love of God flow like a river over and through our lives. Love like an ocean around us. We bring the love of God against all violation, violence and hatred. We bring the love of God against all envy, jealousy and judgment. We bring the love of God against all cursing. We choose love. We align ourselves with love. And we command the love of God through our lives, our homes, our kingdoms. In the mighty name of Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Amen! Just stay with that kind of praying. It will really, really help! God is love, and as we call down love we call down the heart of God himself, and we call down the power of his kingdom.

Offered in LOVE,


John