

# EASTER

## GOD'S HEART FOR THE LOST

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### "RETHINKING OUR RESPONSE IN A HOSTILE WORLD"

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**MATTHEW 5:43-48 (ESV),** *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*

**INSIGHT:** Living in a world of dying people on borrowed time, Christians have a responsibility to communicate the gospel to them. They can die at any time; they aren't in control of when, and their only hope is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

#### I. WE LIVE IN A WORLD INCREASINGLY HOSTILE TO THE GOSPEL.

**INSIGHT:** As followers of Christ we must learn to live in the tension of hostility to the gospel and at the same time the desperate need for the gospel, which alone can rescue people from hell.

**INSIGHT:** That's why we have our footprint in W. Africa, the Far East and the U.S. West Coast... to get out the gospel. That's why we exist; that's our great high calling.

\*ROMANS 1:18ff describes God's abandonment of a nation as a series of increasing stages:

1. Rejection of the Bible
2. Turning morality upside down, Romans 1:26, 28
3. Demanding tolerance
4. Intolerance of the gospel
5. Persecution of the gospel

**INSIGHT:** The great danger is that in time the mission field of dying people bound for hell and about to perish becomes the enemy.

**TRUTH:** As followers of Christ, we can't turn men and women hostile to the gospel into our enemies and objects of our hatred.

#### II. THE HEART OF CHRIST WE ARE CALLED TO EMBRACE

**TRUTH:** Love is the fulfillment of the whole Law of God.

**INSIGHT:** The second most important commandment before God says...you and I as followers of Christ are to display love for all those outside the family of God (Leviticus 19:18).

**INSIGHT:** God's will is that the sum of our lives would communicate the love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness of God that we have experienced.

**INVITATION:** Here's the question: Do you love your enemies?

Could an enemy who's at odds with you theologically or relationally say, we don't agree but he/she is a good, kind, loving person?

Does your life show you live for the gospel as you relate to people?