**SOUL, OR THE SPIRIT**

R. Giglio 1/2/20

In these difficult and alarming times, many of us fall prey to the tendency to worry, react, get angry, become afraid, discouraged, anxious or even disenchanted.

We read news, we hear stories, we feel conflict and distress, and we see unrest and trouble throughout the world.

It’s natural to be very concerned. Everything we *sense* compels us to be alarmed and uneasy about things taking place in the world and we can’t help but have anxiety about the future.

It’s a constant battle within us.

In one sense we trust God, and know that He is Lord over everything on the earth and also in the spirit realm as well.

In another sense we are troubled and concerned about the darkness we live in and among, and often become disturbed by it.

There IS a battle going on inside each of us.

It’s a battle between the Spirit and the Flesh,

And the battleground is “The Soul”. (we will fully study what that means in this series)

In this battle, we are constantly bombarded with news, information, communications, deceptions and fearful reports that can confuse, frustrate or even discourage us.

The Bible tells us however to “walk in the spirit” (Gal. 5:16),

And that,

**Gal. 5:22-23** “**the** **fruit** **of** **the** **Spirit** is;  love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23**gentleness, and self-control.

It even goes so far to say in the same verse,

“Against such things **the**re is *no law*.” *(that includes; executive order, Government legislature, statutes or regulations)*

How can we have peace, joy, patience or even Self-control, when we are in the middle of all this crisis, tension and dissonance.

And, what does it mean to “Walk in the Spirit”, and what is the Spirit anyway?

Is it OUR Spirit or HIS Spirit?

The answers to these questions and ALL questions are found in the Word of God.

In this series “Soul or the Spirit” we will study this topic using the book of Ephesians, which begins with Paul’s prayer that the eyes of our understanding will be enlightened”, and ends with Spiritual warfare and the Full armor of God.

We will use many verses from other parts of the Bible to guide us and teach us the difference between the Soul and the Spirit, and how we can win the battle of the Soul, and walk in life and peace in the Spirit.

**We will start with, and often refer back to a verse *In the Word*, *ABOUT the Word*;**

**Hebrews 4:12** “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of *soul and spirit*, and of *joints* and *marrow*, and is a discerner of the *thoughts and intents* of the *heart*.”

One of the key verses for C&MA ordination is found in 1st Thessalonians 5, where Paul talks about each part of us being *sanctified* through and through (wholly).

It is here where we see it explained that we are comprised of three unique parts;

**Spirit, Soul and Body**

**1 Thessalonians 5:23** “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Pastor Chuck Smith described it this way;

*“The superior Trinity is made up of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

*The inferior trinity is spirit, soul and body of man. And it is in the realm of the spirit where man meets God.”*

SPIRIT, SOUL and BODY

Let’s look at each one:

**BODY** – (easiest to identify)

This is our physical Body, “the FLESH”, our temporary “tent” that we are housed in while here on earth.

It is the here where our behaviors, lusts, cravings and habits are manifest.

**SOUL** – (a little more difficult to describe)

This is our internal self. Our Mind, Our emotions, and our will. Sometimes called our “heart”.

**SPIRIT** – This is that which is made alive by allowing Jesus to come in. (1st Peter 3, Romans 5, Eph 2 – we will study these).

This is the part of us that God empowers and directs by His Spirit.

***Chuck Smith - “it is in the realm of the spirit where man meets God.”***

***AW Tozer - “It is where our spirit communes with God.”***

***Paul – 1st Cor. 6:17 “whoever is united with the Lord is one with him ‘in spirit’”.***

So now, Let’s look again at;

**Hebrews 4:12** “For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of *soul and spirit*, and of *joints* and *marrow*, and is a discerner of the *thoughts and intents* of the *heart*.”

It seems that the author of Hebrews, is suggesting that we are made up of at least 7 unique parts, and the Word of God is able to divide them.

* SOUL
* SPIRIT
* JOINTS
* MARROW
* THOUGHTS
* INTENTS
* HEART

What do all these terms mean and what part of “US” are they?

Each of them is a component or subcomponent of our SPIRIT, SOUL and BODY.

* SOUL – The internal part of us that is made up of our mind and emotions.
* SPIRIT – The part that is made alive (regenerated) at rebirth and “communes with God”
* JOINTS – Part of our BODY. Representing our frame and structure.
* MARROW – Part of our BODY representing our blood and tissue.
* THOUGHTS – Part of our SOUL. Our mind and ideas.
* INTENTS – Part of our SOUL. Our *will.*
* HEART – Part of our SOUL. Our emotions and feelings.

In some scriptures, our mind, heart, will and thoughts are used interchangeably, but they all are part of our SOUL.

This is why the Soul is the battleground. It’s where we deal with lusts, habits, ill-intent and pride.

It’s also where we are vulnerable to fear, anxiety, stress, and worry.

This is why it’s so important to be led by the Spirit, NOT the soul.

When the Spirit is control of your soul, that is what it means to “Walk in the Spirit”

When your soul is in control, it will cause you to “walk in the flesh”.

Sometimes our emotions make the decisions for our soul, but usually it is our mind.

**Romans 8:5-6 “**The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.”

The mind (Soul) governed by the flesh is death (stress, worry, anxiety, fear)!

The mind (Soul) governed by the Spirit is life and peace *(love peace, joy, patience…)*

If you are feeling overwhelmed by fear, worry, stress and anxiety,

It’s likely because you are allowing your mind (soul) to be controlled by your flesh instead of your “regenerated” spirit.

**How do we have our minds governed by the Spirit?**

By recognizing, not ignoring, the gift of the Holy Spirit within you, leading empowering and guiding your spirit which was made alive by, redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, through the riches of God’s grace.

Some of us have become like the ‘foolish Galatians” who started out being led by the spirit, but reverted to operating in the flesh.

**Gal 3:3 “**Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?”

WHY EPHESIANS?

Ephesians as an epistle is not specifically about the SOUL or the SPIRIT, but offers an abundance of practical examples of what it means to be led by the spirit, and overcome the battle of the soul.

Ephesus is a city where Paul planted a church, and saw powerful miracles take place. The gospel spread rapidly throughout the region and many Jews and Gentiles came to faith.

The Ephesian Church was admonished in Revelations 2 for having “ forgotten their first love”.

In Ephesians 1, they seemed to have also forgotten who they were in Christ. This is why Paul wrote this epistle.

Paul, while he was imprisoned in Rome, wrote this letter to remind them of “*who they are in Christ*”, *The Grace that they are saved by*, *spiritual guidance for practical life*, and also *how to win the spiritual battles that they are facing*.

The city of Ephesus is much like our country is today. There is an abundance of wealth and power, but also a tremendous amount of spiritual heaviness and political oppression that these new believers had to face every day.

**Eph. 1:1-14**

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To God’s holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus:

**2**Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**3**Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. **4**For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love **5**he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— **6**to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. **7**In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace **8**that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, **9**he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, **10**to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

**11**In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, **12**in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. **13**And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, **14**who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.

*v.13 “When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit”*

Paul is reminding the Ephesians, of what happened to them when they believed.

It was a *spiritual transformation*, not just physical, mental or emotional.

* They didn’t just start going to a different temple or synagogue (Physical - BODY)
* They didn’t just start accepting a new teaching. (Mental – SOUL)
* They became as it says in the next chapter, Eph. 2:22*; “a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”* (SPIRIT).

It is the same for us.

When we believed, we were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, and became *a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*

*As believers;*

We are not just physically going to church or tuning in online and that’s it.

We are not just listening to Bible teaching and agreeing, or disagreeing with theological concepts.

We are strengthen our Spirits so that they are indwelled and empowered by God’s Holy Spirit to take control and “govern” over our souls and bodies.

This is how we can walk in power, confidence, peace and joy in spite of severe adversity.

**Romans 8:5-6 “**The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace.”

When our regenerated spirits govern our minds (souls) our entire beings experience the life and peace that is promised.

Despite the challenges and difficulties we face.

Paul prays this prayer for the Ephesians, but it is also for you and I, as we face these challenges together;

**EPH 3:14-17** “**14**For this reason I kneel before the Father, **15**from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. **16**I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17**so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”

**May you experience power through his spirit in your inner being,**

**like never before.**

**So that, Christ may dwell in your Body, Soul and Spirit,**

**all through this brand-new season.**