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Soul and Spirit pt. 2

Last week we began talking about the soul and the spirit. And if you'll remember we talked about how man is tripartite (three parts – body soul and spirit). We mentioned a little about the individual functions of body, soul, and spirit. And I want to reiterate that I do not think it is very important that learn those distinctions with your mind. It will do us no good if, hearing this message, the only thing we walk away with is an intellectual distinguishing between soul and spirit.

That is not our aim. That must never be our aim. Again, what good is it that you can point out the difference between the old man and the new man? There is no value in that unless the old is being put away and the new is being put on. What good is it that you can point out the difference between the old covenant and the new covenant? There is no value apart from abiding in, living by the new covenant.

It's the same thing with the soul and the spirit. Humans love to learn facts, gain knowledge, grow in wisdom. And yet we can be "ever learning and never coming to a knowledge of the truth". The truth is a Person who lives as Spirit within those who are born of the spirit. And a true knowing of him is a participation in His life. True wisdom is having His mind formed in you. And **spiritual** facts must be learned in such a way that they bear upon and define the soul, or they are merely words.

And as we discussed last week, the problem with the soul is not that it exists. We are not trying to eliminate the soul. The problem with the soul is that has, from Adam's day onward, lived as its own source. It has become the source of its own emotion, its own desire and will, its own understanding and judgments. It takes its bearing, it draws from, itself or the world, and so it is moved and motivated, pushed and pulled, drawn and driven by just about anything and everything in the world.

And what I attempted to begin to expose last time was that that can happen just as much in the church as it does in the world. That can happen just as much if you're Christian or atheist. Because when you're born again, you are reborn in your spirit and not your soul. Spirit gives birth to spirit. You are born of spirit. But your soul can retain all of its fears, opinions, judgments, condemnation, anger, dogma, lusts or whatever, until that soul is transformed, conformed to the image of the resident spiritual life – which is Christ.

And it is my opinion that, in the church, we have found and exploited our ability to motivate souls to do Christians things, or so-called "Godly" things. And yet, to the extent that those things are done apart from His life as their source – the life of God in the soul of man – they are nothing.

We talked about how we, in the church, are able to fine tune our preaching, our music, our lighting, our conversations in ways that pull on the chords attached to the human soul. We have found it is quite possible – even easy – to stir up the soul. Stirring up tears, excitement, fear, obligation, longings, all sorts of emotions,

attractions, stirring up (temporary) gratitude, zeal, devotion. Stirring up these things in the soul of man, and all in the name of the kingdom of God.

And we think that it **is** in fact the kingdom of God. We really believe that it is spiritual life, when in fact it is often the soul - the mind, the desires, the emotions, the religious lusts of the human soul. This is a bit ugly, but lets face it...sometimes we think our souls love Christ when really our souls are loving ourselves and all that we think Jesus will do for us.

Nothing is anything apart from the life of God in the soul of man. Christ must be the head of His body. How does a body relate to its head? Well, the life, the mind, the will, etc from the head are manifested through the body. It must be the impulses of life from the head that move the body. So too with the spirit of Christ and the soul of man.

Lets just say that I was just a head, sitting up here on this table talking to you this morning. Pardon the weirdness of this analogy. But lets just say that all I was, was a head. Now, you could say that there was something of an expression of Jason there in the head, but you couldn't say that it was a full manifestation, a full representation, a full expression of Jason's life. I would need a body to fully express myself, manifest myself, in the earth. I would need a body that my life could flow through, that my life could move. And that would be what I am after (if I were a head), that is what is GOOD...a body that can express my life in this earth.

Now, lets say that, through some miracle of science, a doctor walked in here and attached a body to my head. Suddenly, I had a body. Sounds great, right? Well, there's a problem. The body is not responding to the impulses of life that I am sending from my head. The impulses of my will, my actions, my life that flow from my mind somehow or another are not effecting this body. In fact, it seems like the body is more or less **unaware that I am the head**. Its kindof doing its own thing.

Now I can tell that this body believes that my head exists because it keeps wearing T-shirts with my name on it, and "what would Jason do" bracelets. In fact, that's a little bit weird, because that bracelet says "what would Jason do" and yet I've been trying to direct this body according to my mind, my emotions, and my will, and it is entirely unresponsive. It seems to know my head as a concept, but not as a source of life. It seems to believe in my head as a heavenly being, but not live by my life. It somehow has learned to live from itself as a source.

And as I watch, more or less helplessly, all sorts of OTHER things are stimulating, moving, motivating, scaring, attracting, exciting, driving, and comforting this body. Religious things, non-religious things, worldly things, active things, emotional things...all of them seem to move this body, but **none of it has anything to do with me**.

Yesterday, I watched my body do a huge "Jason is the head" conference. That was really weird. And last week my body went on a short term missions trip telling people about my head. And before it left it spent the entire day on it knees seemingly praying to get closer to my head.

I keep hoping that one day my body will move in accordance with the impulses of life, MY LIFE, that I am wanting to express through it. Because as far as I'm concerned, that is the only good thing my body can do - express MY LIFE. You

might think that's a little exclusive or narrow minded, but it is MY body! Shouldn't goodness and purpose for this body be bound up with my will, my emotions, my mind?

But as it is, my body is constantly trying to do what it thinks I want without having my mind. And so I have this hand that is constantly trying to brush my hair and its getting on my nerves. This finger over here keeps picking my teeth, because it read in a book that that's what I like. It read a book called 7 steps to fulfilling your finger potential. And yet, that finger's potential is entirely and exclusively bound up with the movement of my life within it.

I know that analogy is silly and slightly gross, but it illustrates something. It illustrates that the soul of man, and of course the body as well, can be moved by any number of things. And it can be moved towards things that appear to be good, or Christian, or kind, or whatever. And what we tried to establish last week was that, just as in the analogy of my body, all that the head appreciates is that which comes out from the head. That is the purpose for your soul (and your body) – to express that which comes out from the Head.

All that is truly good and truly fruit and truly eternal must be the movement of the Spirit of God in the soul of man. Reading a book about "how to do ministry" or listening to a song that makes you want to tell your neighbor about Jesus can very well have nothing to do with His impulse of life. So it all comes down to the Life of God in the soul of man

When we were born again, we became the body of His head. Do you realize that? That is what salvation is. It is being grafted into Him as a member. What is the purpose of a member of my body? Obviously, to manifest my life in a creation.

Bunny Trail ~ Do you realize that that is the purpose for this creation? This creation is a place to fill with the glory of the Lord as the water covers the sea. It is a creation that becomes the realm in which Christ's life, nature, character, beauty, etc. is expressed. And so the church is His body, the fullness (full expression) of Him who fills all in all.

Ok, so being born again is becoming a body to His head. This isn't that weird, its all over the new testament.

- 1Co 11:3 But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ
- Eph 1:22 And He has put all *things* under His feet and gave Him *to be* Head over all *things* to the church, which is His body
- Eph 4:15 But that you, speaking the truth in love, may in all things grow up to Him who is the Head, *even* Christ;
- Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ *is* the head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.
- Col 1:18 And He is *the* Head of the body, the church, who is *the* Beginning, the First-born from the dead, that He may be pre-eminent in all things.
- Col 2:19 and not holding the Head, from whom all the body, having been supplied through the joints and bands, and having been joined together, will grow with the growth of God.
- Rev 3:14 And to the angel of the church of the Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Head of the creation of God, says these things:

But here's the danger about not understanding that. As in my analogy, a body that doesn't understand who the head is will try to live and serve out from itself, apart from the head. And that is what we try to do – completely apart from the life of God, **we bring over into Christ that which we were already good at, what we were already excited about, what we were already moved by.** All that is natural, all that is soul. We bring these things over into His body and continue to operate from there as we always did. Only now we do it as Christians. Only now we try to direct it "towards God", whatever that means.

Can you see that? We bring over into Christ a bunch of natural or soulful things and that is where our Christian hierarchies come from. It comes from natural abilities of the soul becoming the measure of maturity, rather than maturity being the measure of Christ in all things.

Now listen, I'm not saying that the Lord will never use your natural abilities. Of course He does. But I am saying that He must be the author and source of what is done through you. You must be His instrument of righteousness. And no instrument plays itself.

Go back to our hand analogy. Hands are good. They have all kinds of abilities. They can grab and pick and wave and write and...its all great ability. But what makes that hand useful and good to the head? All of its natural abilities? All that it **can** do? Or is it the measure to which that hand is a vehicle of expression for the life of the head. All that a hand is able to do, is only as good to the head as it is moving with the impulses of head-life.

Now, if you were to measure body parts by their abilities apart from head-life, then you could make a nice hierarchy. The hand is certainly able to do far more, of itself, than the toenail. But if the issue is really the measure to which each member manifests one life, then all are equal, and one life is the measure of all.

The good of ability or function of each body part is only as good as it is moving with the impulses of head-life. And so if there is any boast, the boast must be in the Life. Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord.

And so it is with us. It is impossible for us to do the will of God apart from the mind of God. "That doesn't make sense, Jason....just tell me what God wants done and I'll go do it! I can do the will of God if you tell me what it is! " No. **Doing the will of God is not in the accomplishing of things. Its not a series of tasks. The will of God is not bound up in things getting done, it is bound up in a life being lived.**

Let that sink into our hearts this morning, because brothers and sisters, we still think God wants a bunch of things done, and, by-golly, I better get off the couch and get-r-done. **And what I'm telling you is that the will of God for your life is not bound up in the accomplishing of certain tasks and the doing of specific things...it is bound up in being a body for His resurrected Son.**

I'm going to say that again just so that we can digest it: **It is impossible for us to do the will of God apart from the mind of God, because the will of God is not bound up in accomplishing tasks, it is bound up in living of His life.** My head

did not want that body to do a bunch of things for it. My head wanted a body to express its life.

And that, of course, is impossible without the life of God formed in the soul of man.

Well, how does that happen? That's why we're talking about this. The first thing that must happen is the living Word of God must begin to divide soul and spirit. And I'm hoping that some of that is happening this morning as we talk about this. If we don't even understand that these two aren't the same thing, then what hope do we have. Which is why we're starting there.

It must begin with circumcision of the soul. Let there be a cutting in our comprehension. Do you know that your soul needs to be circumcised? The uncircumcised soul is an enemy of God. The uncircumcised soul is cut off from the Land. How many times in the old testament does God declare that the Land belongs to the circumcised. The inheritance belongs to the circumcised. The uncircumcised, like Goliath, must be cut off from the land. The uncircumcised cannot go near the Holy Place.

I was talking to a brother yesterday about the great and deceptive world of the soul. And we were both sharing with one another about what a confusing and convoluted mess that world is.

This is a world where the random movement of men's souls is used to determine what is objectively true, what is objectively valuable or meaningful. But that is exactly the opposite of how it should be. What is objectively real and true and spirit and eternal, should be that which moves the soul of man.

Ask a person what is good, what is true, what is real, and the answers to those questions will be opinions based upon the erratic movement of man's soul. There is no clear and objective reality.

You know that's true. They say..."Well such and such a religion or philosophy or worldview is true for me". I heard that in college more times than I could count. But, what does that even mean? "true for me". I'll tell you what it means, it means nothing. It means you haven't seen anything beyond the effect something has on your soul. And you are using the effect on your soul to determine what is true and good and real. That is utter nonsense.

Friends, **everything** can effect the soul of man. Everything bears upon the soul. What is it today? Is it relationships? Is it music? Is it human love? Is it a cause? Is it a book? What about Russian literature? Is it a movement, a lifestyle, a culture, a poem. Something I stand for? Something I stand against? Something I can't stand? What about good friends, good wine, good ideas, good religion, which religion? Is it belief system, a world view, a doctrine, a book full of doctrines, a book that is against doctrines, a book that that is against books? What about in the church? Is it all about worship? Is it all about the prophetic? A movement? A restoration? Church growth? House church? Morals? Values? Principles? Law? Theology? New wineskins, new models, new leaders, new buildings?

NO! It is none of these things as things. Though all of these things can move the soul of man.

At some point in this world, at some point in religion, at some point in a world full of soul movement, soul thought, soul emotion, we MUST begin to ask ourselves, what is the absolute Truth. And I'm not talking about absolutely true doctrines. We have all of those in our Bible, and we still live our lives out from our own whimsical soul. Absolute Truth that simply remains on a page in a book will do you little good. Absolute Truth as a person, a resident Person is different.

Its funny, we'll fight to make sure that a true book stays in our schools, but what about the Person of truth reigning in our hearts? Where's the fight for that?

No, we must ask the question – WHO is absolute Truth. And is He the definition of reality. And is His mind the definition of true thoughts, true wisdom, objective, absolute right-ness? We must ask ourselves does He have emotions that are the reflection of the spiritual, the eternal, the real.

And if so, if such a Truth exists, if such a mind exists, if such a thought exists, if such real and stable affections exist in this Person, as this Person – a Person who is Himself the great Absolute regardless of any soul's opinion, a Person who is Himself the definition of eternal objective reality – if such a Person exists outside of, independent of, the raging, wild, unpredictable soul of man...well then what must happen for my soul to be filled with, and become the embodiment of, this glorious divine Person.

How do I build my soul's house on this unshakable, eternal Rock. The Alpha and the Omega. The Beginning and the End. The One who is faithful and true.

What would it mean for that eternal Spirit, to become the resident Life in my soul. Not just a dormant seed. Not a King without a kingdom. But a King who reigns in and over the conquered territory of my soul.

If such a King exists, and we know that He does. And if such a King is within us, and we know that He is. Then what must transpire in me that my soul becomes the kingdom of the living God? So that what is real, independent of man's opinions, passions, and carnal knowledge, would move my soul according to the impulses of His life.

The answer is that the soul of a born again person must have its head revealed. The soul must come to know, by the revealing of the Spirit of God, Who its life is. And we'll talk more about that next week.