

Spirit and Soul and Body

March 19, 2006

1 Thes. 5:23-24 (NLT)

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole **spirit and soul and body** be kept blameless until that day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. [24] God, who calls you, is faithful; he will do this.

I want to talk to you today about who you are in Christ.

For the past several weeks and even months, I have been preaching from the writings of the great Apostle Paul. Especially, those verses that deal with the transformation that takes place within us when we are born-again.

Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Paul said, “When I met Jesus He transformed me! I am not the person that I was before I met Christ.” The old me no longer exists. The old me was crucified with Christ.”

That was not only true of the great Apostle Paul. That is also true of every person who has truly been born-again.

2 Cor. 5:17 (NKJV)

Therefore, if **anyone** is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

The question is, “What is different about us?” We still look the same on the outside. We still have to deal with our old ways of thinking. But a drastic change has taken place on the inside of us. **Christ now lives within us.**
That is absolutely amazing!

Jesus Christ Himself lives within us and does His work through us!

If you have been here at all during the last several weeks, you know that I have been emphasizing this truth over and over again. I preached about it two weeks ago on Sunday, both morning and evening, as we began the Pastor's/Missionaries Convention.

Then, during the convention, Pastor Mike Mille` and Doctor Randy Caldwell both emphasized this same truth.

Pastor Mike preached three great messages emphasizing the fact that we are triune beings and that we fail to even come close to doing all that God wants us to do because we are for the most part controlled by the body and the soul rather than being controlled by the spirit.

The Bible says that you and I were created in the image of God.

That means that we are triune beings just as He is a triune Being. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

There are not three God's. There is only one God who is a triune being.

That is a mystery to a lot of people but it shouldn't be because you and I are also triune beings because we were made in the image of God.

God is the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Father is not the Son and the Son is not the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is not the Father. But, the Father is God. The Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God.

Now what about you and me? We are also triune beings. We are body and soul and spirit.

1 Thes. 5:23-24 (NLT)

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole **spirit and soul and body** be kept blameless until that day when our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.

There is only one me, but I am a triune being. My body is not my soul and my soul is not my spirit and my spirit is not my body. But my body is me and my soul is me and my spirit is me.

My body is what you see. It's my flesh. The Bible calls it the outward man. It's the earthly house or tent of flesh in which I live. It's not eternal, it's only temporary.

My soul is my mind and my will and my emotions. It is my intellect. It's the part of me that tries to reason every thing out according to worldly standards and economics.

My spirit is the part of me that connects with God's Spirit. It's the part of me that can know God. His Spirit reveals things to my spirit.

John 10:27 (NLT)

My sheep recognize my voice; I know them, and they follow me.

Romans 8:13-16 (NKJV)

For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [14] For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. [15] For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." [16] **The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit** that we are children of God,

The problem that most of us have is that we allow our body and/or our soul to dominate our spirit rather than making sure that our spirit is the dominating force within us.

Even in the church, we often make decisions based on what our soul tells us rather than what our spirit tells us.

We go to the bank and ask the banker if we should build in a certain area of town or not and if he will lend us the money or not. We go to the lawyer and ask him what we should do. We look at the stock market and let it determine what we are going to do. We look at the money we have in the bank and decide what we are going to do. We get together and share our opinions, etc. and take a vote.

Now, there is nothing wrong with getting advice from the experts when it comes to handling our business.

But the first step in the process should always be to find out what God wants us to do.

Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about.

Several years ago our church was considering a move out of this area because intellectually it seemed to be the right thing to do. Every other Anglo church in the area was moving out and the prospects of our church prospering in this location seemed remote.

I went to get advice from a banker and he advised me to move the church out of this area because he said this area was changing and it was becoming a predominantly Hispanic area and the bank would not lend us any money if we stayed in this location, etc.

Intellectually he was right. But as the body of Christ, we do not make our decisions based on what some banker tells us we should do. We make our decisions based on what God tells us to do. And as the pastor and spiritual leader of this church it is absolutely essential that I find out what God wants us to do and tell you what He said and then lead you to do it.

As I prayed and listened for God's instructions, He told me that we should not relocate, but that we should stay here and welcome whoever comes to worship with us regardless of what color their skin is and what language they speak and what their social status may be, etc.

I told the people of the church what God had told me and from that point on it didn't matter what the so-called experts said. We did what God said! And God has blessed us abundantly!

I sincerely believe that if we had listened to the experts on church planning and church growth, we would have moved from this location and perhaps we would have experienced a measure of success but we would have been out of the will of God for this church.

When we heard God's voice and obeyed it, He did some miraculous things. Our church has been greatly blessed because we are doing what God has told us to do.

Another example of doing what God told us to do rather than what our intellect said we should do is the Pastor's/Missionaries Convention that we host here every year.

Seventeen years ago, God told me that our church should host a Pastor's Convention. And He told me that our church should pay for the rooms of those who came and that we should serve them a great breakfast and lunch everyday during the convention. That did not seem possible back then. We certainly did not have the money in the bank to host a convention like that.

But we did what God told us to do and seventeen years later and hundreds of thousands of dollars later we are still blessing hundreds of pastors and missionaries each year and God is still providing the funds to do it.

There is an old saying that says, "God will not guide where He will not provide"! That is true. If God tells us to do something we need to start making plans to do it and as we do, He will provide the means by which to do it.

During the Pastor's Convention Mike Mille` said, "It is mandatory that we understand that we are a speaking spirit that has dominion". In other words the dominant force in our lives must be our spirit as it is lead by the Holy Spirit.

Most people are dominated by their flesh and/or by their souls.

The spirit will tell them to do something and immediately their flesh will give them all sorts of reasons why they can't. "It's too hot; it's too cold; it's too far; it's too expensive; it's too hard; it's not the right time; they're too tired; etc.

I talked to a lady the other day who used to attend this church, and if you asked her what church was she a member of she would say, "Elim". If you asked her, "Who is your pastor?" she would say, "Ron Nissen". But she hasn't been here in years. And every time I see her she tells me that she wants to come to church but she is just too tired on Sunday mornings to get up and get ready and come.

She goes other places, but she's too tired or too weak or too sick or too lazy to come to church. **That lady is letting her body control her.**

If the Spirit was in control of her life, she would tell her body, "I don't care how tired you are, I'm going to church."

The same is true of some people who come to church but when they get here they don't worship. They sit there and don't lift their hands or sing or pray because they are too tired or whatever. But if the Spirit is in control, you will worship whether your body feels like worshipping or not.

Others allow their souls to dominate what they do. They base what they do on the evening news. They're afraid of this and worried about that. They are worried about what's going to happen next year or what's going to happen in Iraq or Afghanistan or some other troubled spot on the globe. They try to figure out everything intellectually rather than finding out what God is telling them to do.

They are controlled by their bank account or by the Wall Street Journal or by someone's research rather than being led by the Spirit of God that lives within them.

Eccles. 11:4-5 (NLT)

If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.

[5] God's ways are as hard to discern as the pathways of the wind, and as mysterious as a tiny baby being formed in a mother's womb.

Don't try to figure it all out. Simply hear the voice of the Spirit who lives within you and do what he tells you to do.

The day after the Pastor's Convention, God told me to give my van to Pastor Eddie Cardinas so he could take it back to Belize and use it to help build his church there in Belize.

If I would have listened to my soul, I'm sure it would have given me a variety of reasons why I should not have done that. But I wasn't listening to my soul, I was listening to my spirit. And there is no doubt what so ever that the Holy Spirit through my spirit told me to do that.

The Holy Spirit told Joe Hook to give his van to Pastor Hulse. The Holy Spirit told Aaron Chavez to give his drum set and his guitar to Pastor Hulse. The Holy Spirit told many people who were here on the last night of the convention to give sacrificially and they obeyed. All the expenses of the convention were met with money left over for next year.

Now what is going to happen? God is going to bless all who obeyed Him. There's no doubt about it. We have God's word on it!

2 Corinthians 9: 6 (Amplified)

6[Remember] this: he who sows sparingly and grudgingly will also reap sparingly and grudgingly, and he who sows generously [^athat blessings may come to someone] **will also reap generously and with blessings.**

Luke 6:38 (NKJV)

Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, **it will be measured back to you.**"

The church of the Living God must be led by the Spirit of God or we are no different than anybody else.

We have the very life of Christ living within us by the Holy Spirit. He will guide us if we will only listen for His instructions and allow Him to be the dominant force in our lives.

1 Cor. 2:14-16 (NLT)

But people who aren't Christians can't understand these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them because only those who have the Spirit can understand what the Spirit means. [15] We who have the Spirit understand these things, but others can't understand us at all. [16] How could they? For, "Who can know what the Lord is thinking? Who can give him counsel?" **But we can understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.**

We are different than the world because we have the Spirit of God living within us. We recognize His voice when He speaks or at least we have the ability to recognize His voice when He speaks, because when we were born again our spirits were made alive again by His Spirit.

The world doesn't have the ability to recognize His voice because only those who have the Spirit can understand what the Spirit is saying.

God told Adam and Eve

Genesis 2:16-17 (NKJV)

....Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; [17] but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, **for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**"

God must have been talking about the spirit part of them when He said they would die the day that they ate of the forbidden fruit because the body and soul part of them lived on for hundreds of years after that.

It is the Spirit part of us that is reborn when we are born again. Jesus told Nicodemus....

John 3:3-7 (NKJV)

...."Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." [4] Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" [5] Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. [6] That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and **that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.** [7] Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

The new birth is a new birth of the Spirit! Before Adam and Eve sinned they had no problem recognizing and obeying God's voice. He talked to them all the time. He told them what they should do and where they should go. But their sin separated them from God's abiding presence.

Jesus came to restore to us what Adam lost. And He did what He came to do. When He said "It is finished", He meant He had finished what He came to accomplish.

We now have the ability to hear God's voice again and to be led by His Spirit again. We have His Spirit living inside of us and His Spirit should be the dominant force in our lives.

If we want to enjoy everything He has promised to us and walk in dominion as He says we should walk, then we must stop allowing our flesh and our souls to be the dominant force in our lives and learn to be led by His Spirit.

Romans 8:11-14 (NKJV)

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

[12] Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. [13] For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. [14] For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

My friends, I am not talking to you about something that doesn't matter. I just read to you where Paul said, "If you live according to the flesh", or in other words, "If you allow the flesh to dominate your life, you will die, but if you allow the Spirit of God who lives within you to dominate you, you will live"!

Give invitation!