

Heavenly Wholeness
The Spirit-led Life Pt. 2
July 1-2, 2023

Introduction/Recap:

Aloha everyone, I'm Mark if we haven't met, and I want to welcome you to our service. This week we will continue our brand new series, *Heavenly Wholeness* where we are learning to live from the spirit so that we can experience more of heaven in our lives.

Last week, Pastor Mike introduced us to the three parts that make up who we are. Each of us is made up of three parts — A body, a soul, and a spirit.

Body (מֵעָה) “me`eh”: Your visible, natural, physical being (brain, bones, blood, organs) that allows you to relate to the physical, visible world—God gave you 5 senses.

Soul (נֶפֶשׁ) “nephesh”: Your invisible thoughts and feelings (not your brain but your mind, not your physical heart but your feelings). Your soul is how you connect to yourself and other souls. Your mind and heart are included in soul.

Spirit (רוּחַ) “ruach”: Your invisible, supernatural part of you that allows you to relate to God, and the invisible supernatural dimension.

23-24 “May God Himself, the God who makes everything holy and whole, make you holy and whole, put you together—spirit, soul, and body—and keep you fit for the coming of our Master, Jesus Christ. The One who called you is completely dependable. If He said it, He'll do it!”

(1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 MSG).

Our prayer is that God would bring our spirit, soul, and body into proper alignment so that heaven would be released in us and through us. If God said it, He will do it!

What is our Spirit?

Of the three parts that make up who we are, I'd wager many of us are most familiar with our bodies and our soul. Would you agree? We're all familiar with our bodies. We generally understand how it functions, its limitations, and what it can/can't do (Food goes in this side and it comes out...well, you know). We are also pretty familiar with our soul — our thoughts and feelings. We generally understand how the mind works and how our thoughts and feelings affect our lives. But the part of us we probably understand the least is our spirit. And this is a problem because our spirit is the most significant, real, and eternal part of who we are. So why do we understand so little about it? Writing to Christians Paul writes,

1 “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath,” (Ephesians 2:1-3 NIV).

The reason we know so little about the spirit is because the Bible says every single one of us is born spiritually dead. Because of sin, our lifeline to God is severed at birth. And without the spirit how do we live? Verse 3, we gratify the cravings of our flesh and follow its desires and thoughts. In other words, without the Spirit to guide us who's in charge? The flesh — our cravings, thoughts and desires (The body and the soul).

A person who does not have the Spirit to lead them will be led by their body and their soul. They will follow their feelings, do what feels good, and follow their own reasoning. Anybody else relate? Before coming to Jesus and having Him raise our spirit to life, we were led by our body and our soul. But the reality is, even after coming to Jesus and having Him raise our spirit to life many Christians are still led by their body and their soul.

⁵ “Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God,” (Romans 8:5-8 NIV).

Even after coming to Christ and having our spirit raised to life we can still live according to the body and the soul. The Bible calls this living by the flesh or carnal living.

Spirit, Soul, Body Diagram

Slide 1 - We are born spiritually dead. So everything we think, feel, do, and believe comes from the natural. We follow our five senses and do whatever feels good and makes sense in our own minds. (Ephesians 2:1-3).

⁵ “Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶ The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷ The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, nor can it do so. ⁸ Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God,” (Romans 8:5-8 NIV).

Nobody who lives according to the flesh can do what the Spirit desires. We are unable to live for God. In fact, we live in a way that is contrary and hostile to God. We are unable to please Him or live for Him. The flesh can only produce counterfeit fruit. Only the Spirit can produce fruit that pleases God. The very next verse in our Ephesians passage says,

⁴ But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,” (Ephesians 2:4-6 NIV).

Slide 2 - When we put our faith in Christ, God raises our spirit to life. God lifts our spirit out of the grave and places it with Christ in heavenly places. Through faith God has given you an identical spirit to that of Christ. Your spirit is now perfect, lacking nothing.

But Mark, if my spirit is perfect why is my life still the same in many ways? My thoughts are out of control, my body is falling apart, my relationships stay all ‘hamajang’.

¹⁷ “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5:17 NIV).

When you come to Christ you are a new creation. The old has gone and the new is here. What has gone? Your dead spirit. What has been made new? Your spirit. Your new spirit is perfect in every way. Your spirit is identical to that of Christ. Your spirit and Christ’s spirit are seated in the same place.

So now you have a choice. Will you continue to live according to the flesh or will you now live according to your new spirit? This is going to be a challenge because we've never let the spirit drive before, it's always been our soul and our body.

If you look at Slide 2, I want you to catch something. Where is the soul? It is sandwiched between the body and the spirit. Your soul is the only part of you that touches the other two. Do you know what that means? It's a gateway.

Look what happens when we flip Slide 2 on its side. Look at it this way. Slide 3 shows us that the soul is between the spirit and the body. Prior to Christ, the only input your soul could receive was from your natural senses. Now, in Christ, you have a choice. You can either live according to the flesh or according to the spirit.

² *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world,"*

In other words, don't live like everybody else. Don't live according to *your* feelings, *your* thoughts, *your* reasoning, what feels good in the moment. That's how the world lives. That way of life leads to death. Never before has it been easier to live any way you want. People today can live however their hearts desire. Through social, medical, and technological "advancements" people today can live any way their hearts desire. You can live anywhere, any way, and anywho, or what, you want. So why is depression on the rise? Why is suicide on the rise? Why is this next generation feeling more isolated than ever before? Because the mind governed by the flesh is death! Do not conform to the pattern of this world,

"but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will," (Romans 12:2 NIV).

Adam and Eve

Throughout this entire year we've learned how many of the themes we are covering originated in the Garden of Eden. So where do we see the idea of spirit, soul, and body in the garden?

Before *The Fall* Adam and Eve had a perfect relationship with God. Their spirit-man was perfect. In Christ, your spirit-man is perfect. The devil knows he cannot attack your spirit-man because your spirit is seated with Christ in heavenly places, out of the devil's reach. So what does the devil go after? The body and the soul.

¹ *"Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"*

² *The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, ³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"*

⁴ *"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman. ⁵ "For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*

⁶ *When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it," (Genesis 3:1-6 NIV).*

What did the devil appeal to? Not the spirit. The devil appealed to mankind's soul and body. The devil knows he can't touch your spirit. So instead he will cause you to doubt God's goodness. He will go after your thoughts and your emotions. He will try to deceive you and turn you from the truth. He will seduce you with things that look good for the body and pleasing to the eye. You don't need God's truth! Trust your own truth, your own wisdom. What does God know about good and evil? Doesn't this *look good* to you?

¹² *"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—"* (Romans 5:12 NIV).

Living by the Spirit

Now, because of Adam and Eve, each of us is born spiritually dead. We live from our soul and our body. Many of us have spent most of our lives living from our own thoughts, our own reasoning, our feelings, and desires. This is natural. So how do we live from the supernatural? How do we live according to the spirit?

² *"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will,"* (Romans 12:2 NIV).

Rather than allowing our soul (our thoughts and feelings) to be conformed to the patterns of this world (to be governed by our natural senses) we need to ask the Holy Spirit to transform our soul through the renewing of our mind. We need to change our thoughts, our attitudes, and our values to conform to the Word of God.

Clock Illustration

At 12 O'clock the Word of God is deposited but it is just a seed. The potential for fruit is there but it is still in seed form.

At 3 O'clock you will be tested. You will be given an opportunity to conform or transform. You can either react in the flesh or respond in the spirit. Remember, prior to Christ you had no choice but to react in the flesh. Now you have the option to live by the Spirit. This is the moment of truth. This is where our thoughts, attitudes, and beliefs must conform to the Word of God through the power of His Holy Spirit. If you don't pass you go back to 12 O'clock and the Word of God remains only information to you. [Give Examples]

At 6 O'clock you have passed the test and that seed has begun to bear fruit in your life. God's Word has gone from information to incarnation. You have moved from information or inspiration to transformation. God's Word is not meant to inform you, or inspire you, but transform you!

At 9 O'clock it has become lifestyle.

Our minds do not need to be renewed so that we can "get" more of God. Our minds need to be renewed so that we will understand all that we have already received in Christ. You have already been given every spiritual blessing in Christ and as your mind is renewed you will unleash everything you've already been given.

Conclusion:

In his book *Spirit, Soul, and Body* Andrew Womack asks readers the question, "What if you were told there was a million dollars buried in your front yard?" Even if you "believed" it, if you never started digging it would just sit there unused. You would drive by it every morning.

But even if all you had to dig with was a spoon, if you never gave up you would eventually receive it! Church, what we're talking about today is worth so much more than a million dollars.

Jesus says His Kingdom is like a priceless treasure buried in a field. Some of you may be digging with a back hoe, others with a shovel, and some of you feel like you're scraping away with a spoon. As long as you never stop digging. Keep digging into God's Word. Even if you don't understand 90% of it, be true to the 10% you do understand. God will honor your faithfulness. And as you allow God to transform your soul through the renewing of your mind you will experience more of heaven flowing into every area of your life! Because if we don't live by the spirit, it will be impossible to live the Christian life. But when we live by the spirit, nothing in this life will be impossible.

A life that is not filled with God's Spirit is like a glove that is not filled with a hand. Even the most seemingly insignificant tasks will be impossible apart from Him.