

Heavenly Wholeness
Honor God with our Bodies Pt. 2
July 29-30

Introduction:

Aloha everyone! I'm Mark, and I want to welcome you to our service. This is the final week of our series, *Heavenly Wholeness* where we have been learning about the different parts of who we are — spirit, soul, and body, and how necessary it is to be led by the Spirit because, let's face it, bad things happen when we're led by anything else!

Who is Driving?

We've had a recent rash of driving accidents in the community — Teapresso, Foodland. My family and I spent this past week on the Big Island and as we were flying over I was reminded of the recent news story about the woman in Kona who drove her vehicle into the harbor because she was following her GPS.

[News Video - 1:00]

"They didn't seem panicked or have any sense of urgency to get out of the car." - Witness

That sounds like a perfect description of how so many people are living their life and the direction in which they're heading. The Bible tells us in the book of Proverbs,

"There is a way *which seems* right to a person,
But its end is the way of death," (Proverbs 14:12).

In other words, so many people are blindly following the ways of this world, following their heart, going with the flow, but the Bible says that their final destination is destruction. They don't seem panicked or have any urgency but their lives are slowly sinking.

Let me ask you, who or what is driving your life? Is it your soul? Are you led by feelings and emotions? Maybe logic and reason? Is it your body? Pleasures and desires? Or is it the Holy Spirit? Is it God's Word and His truth?

Ranking the Spirit, Soul and Body

One of the big takeaways of this series is that, in Christ, your **spirit** is the only perfect part of you and that the rest, (your thoughts, emotions, and body) are on a journey of transformation. But it is only by living from the spirit that the rest of you will be transformed.

I believe that, of the three parts that make up who you are, your spirit is the most significant, followed by your soul, then your body. Your spirit — your connection with God is the most important part of who you are and should inform the other areas of your life. We get into trouble when it's any other way.

After the spirit comes the soul. Your thoughts, feelings, beliefs and values play a huge part into who you are. Not as big an impact as your connection with God and who He says you are, but important nonetheless (especially as your soul is being renewed by the transforming power of the Spirit).

Last is the body. Your skin color, your hair, your eye color, your height, or weight have nothing to do with your worth or value as a person. Listen to the words of Paul,

“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day,” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

I turned 37 this month so this is good news for me! Paul is saying, “Don’t worry, don’t get hung up, don’t lose heart over what is temporary. My hair is not receding, my face is just advancing! Sure, take care of your body but more so develop what is eternal — your inner self!”

Pastor Glenn shared this verse last week,

“For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come,” (1 Timothy 4:8).

Our culture places so much emphasis on what is external at the cost of what is eternal. People are so infatuated with the physical/material world that they neglect the eternal. Whenever my friends say, “Today, I worked on my glutes and hammies.” I tell them, “Well, I worked on forgiveness and letting go of the past! You see a personal trainer? Cool, I see Dr. Brian!” The outer self is of some value but we can’t neglect what’s inside! We want to be a people who are led by the spirit and who are transformed from the inside out. We don’t want to conform to the patterns of this world and be blindly led by our soul or body. Let’s recap,

Letting the Soul Drive

What happens when soul is in the driver seat? [slide]

1. Soul
2. Body
3. Spirit

Our individual expression and feelings dictate the way that we live. Our society idolizes individual expression and personal feelings. What a person believes or feels to be true about themselves holds more weight in our world than science, scripture or societal norms. Individual expression has become god in our culture and everything else must bow down to it. There is a growing movement of people who believe it is the role of a parent to support whatever their child believes to be true about themselves. How many of you believe it is your role as a parent to support whatever your child believes to be true? How many believe that it is the role of a parent to know what God’s Word says and train up your child in the ways of the Lord? I’m sorry, but if my child believes they’re a bird I’m not going to drive them up to the Pali and throw them off the cliff. Yet this is the case when the soul leads. When soul is in charge my feelings and beliefs trump scripture, my biology or any other authorities. But the reality is that we were not meant to live with the soul in charge, which is why mental and emotional disorders are at an all-time high. Our culture is giving undo authority to the soul.

The world tells you to follow your heart but the Bible says,

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?”

(Jeremiah 17:9 ESV).

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding,”

(Proverbs 3:5 ESV).

In other words, the soul is an unreliable GPS and following it will lead you straight into the harbor. Don’t trust your heart as if it is Lord, trust in the Lord with all your heart. We have to get the order correct. Today we’re going to talk about what happens when we let the body drive.

Letting the Body Drive

What happens when the body is in the driver seat? [slide]

1. Body
2. Soul
3. Spirit

In 1775, the American Revolution fought to gain greater independence from the tyrannical oppression of King George III. In the 60s and 70s the Sexual Revolution sought to gain greater independence from societal and religious constraints regarding sexual expression. Both revolutions achieved their aim. Today, we live in a society that not only tolerates, but celebrates nearly every form of sexual expression. And if it hasn't yet...just you wait. Our culture celebrates what the Bible condemns and condemns what the Bible celebrates. Just as our society idolizes individual expression and feelings, it also idolizes all forms of sexual expression. There are many people in our world for whom pleasure and desire are number 1.

In his popular hit, *Shape of You*, Ed Sheeran sings,

*I'm in love with the shape of you
We push and pull like a magnet do
Although my heart is falling too
I'm in love with your [body]*

The emphasis is that, while there may be some feelings involved, the body is what is being sought after. Body first, soul second, spirit...absent.

In, *Into You*, Ariana Grande sings, “A little less conversation and a little more touch my [body]”.

Less conversation. Why talk and get to know each other? Your opinions, beliefs, values, convictions? Nah, I just want your body.

This is the world's approach to intimacy and relationships. We start with the external — the physical and material. Do they have the right look? Do they drive the right car? Do they wear the right clothes? For many people, that's all they're looking for. A slim few press on to matters of the soul. What are your values, convictions, and beliefs? But where are those who value the things of the spirit?

A Biblical View of the Body

For Christians, our top priority is the Spirit. If you are a single man or woman who is looking to be in a relationship, your top priority must be the Spirit. Paul writes,

“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common?” (2 Corinthians 6:14).

[Picture of oxen yoked together]

To be yoked with someone does not mean to befriend someone or even do life together. To be yoked means that your life is joined together with them. When you are yoked with someone you are moving in the same direction. Paul is asking, “Why would you yoke your life together to someone who is not going in the same direction as you? Christians and unbelievers have different destinations. One is led by the Spirit, the other is led by the flesh. You're either going to pull each other apart or one of you is going to drag the other along. That's not marriage material, that's dead weight!

The Spirit is our top priority. And when the Spirit is our top priority, He shapes the way we see ourselves. Among secular philosophies and world religions, the Christian faith holds the human body in the highest regard.

From a philosophical view, the body is often viewed as physical matter that has little or no impact on the other parts of who we are. Dualism sees the body and soul as distinct substances. What I do in the body has no real impact on my emotions, feelings, or will — It's just physical. This is how some justify the termination of a human fetus. It's just physical matter.

But God created us as whole beings. Our existence isn't compartmentalized. We don't naturally see our bodies as separate from our souls. If two people bump into each other they don't say, "Hey! Your body ran into my body!" No, they say, "Hey! *You* ran into *me*!" It wasn't the souls that bumped it each other but we don't see our bodies as separate. We are whole.

Utilitarians view the purpose of existence as seeking happiness, avoiding pain, and maximizing overall well-being. So the purpose of your body is to experience maximum pleasure and avoid pain at all costs. Paul had to address the Christians in Corinth who were using this kind of thinking to justify sexual immorality.

12 "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything," (1 Corinthians 6:12).

The Corinthians were saying, "I have rights! I'm not doing anything illegal! It's *my* body!" And Paul was saying, "Just because the world gives you the right, doesn't make it right." Who defines what is right? Culture or God's Word? Are you going to conform to the patterns of this world or be transformed by the renewing of your mind through God's Word? What is your GPS?

13 You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body," (1 Corinthians 6:13).

This is the utilitarian perspective. "When I'm hungry I eat, when I'm thirsty I drink, when I get the itch, I scratch." The body is for maximum pleasure and pain avoidance. And Paul says, God gave you your body for a higher purpose. What you believe leads to joy may actually lead to sorrow. What you think leads to suffering may actually produce joy. Look at Jesus.

Moving from philosophy to world religions, many world religions view the body as a vehicle or instrument for doing the will of God. By stewarding our bodies, keeping them pure, and fulfilling our purpose, we will achieve an eternal reward — Heaven, Nirvana, Enlightenment, etc.

What sets Christianity apart from philosophies and most world religions is that, from a Christian view, the body is not merely the vehicle through which we experience the natural world, or an instrument by which we serve and worship God, it is the very temple of God's Spirit. Yes, our bodies are instruments for God's purpose, but not by us doing our best to fulfill God's will and work our way to Him, but by His Spirit living within us and radically transforming us and the world around us!

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies," (1 Cor. 6:18-20).

Conclusion

There are many different areas we could cover in a message about the body. We could talk about gluttony, alcoholism, or substance abuse. But Paul creates a distinction when it comes to sexual sin. He writes,

“All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body,” (1 Corinthians 6:18).

The word for body here is ‘soma’, which encompasses the entirety of who you are — your soul, your feelings, your emotions, and your physical body. He’s saying, no other sin impacts the entirety of who you are (spirit, soul, and body) like sexual sin. It is not merely a physical transaction, it encompasses the entirety of who you are.

Within the context of marriage it is meant to be a beautiful sharing of the entirety of who you are. That level of vulnerability is meant to be safeguarded by commitment and trust. Outside of the safeguards of marriage it gives people access to sacred parts of your being without the security of commitment and trust. No other kind of sin does that. We were designed to know and be known on a deeply intimate level and sexual promiscuity goes against how God wired us.

As Dr. Brian said a couple weeks ago, the most important thing in life is relationships. God gave us our bodies as a means to relate to one another and build deeper intimacy. That happens best when we abide by His ways. And we sabotage our ability to connect when we do it our own way. God’s ways are not intended to restrict but to offer maximum enjoyment! Jesus has come to give life and life more abundantly!

Our world thinks freedom is being able to live without restrictions. God’s ways are restrictive the same way a parachute is restrictive. A parachute isn’t meant to stifle your joy, it’s meant to maximize it and keep you from smacking into the earth! The same is true when we let the spirit lead. He gives us life more abundantly.

Communion

As we conclude our *Heavenly Wholeness* series this week, I was reflecting on the wholistic nature of communion. Communion engages the spirit, the soul and the body. Jesus tells us to,

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind...”

We are to love God with every part of who we are. We are to love Him with our thoughts, our feelings, our intellect, and our actions. Jesus didn’t just love us in spirit. He loved with every part of Himself — His thoughts, His prayers, His emotions, and every ounce of His strength. So in the same way, we are to love God with all that we are, nothing held back.