

Mind/Soul/Will

We are in the midst of a series on being created in the triune image of God
We talked about Creator – God almighty- creator of heaven and earth (formless-form-fullness)
We talked a being creation and that we are created in the image of God
Body – Soul (mind and emotion) – and Spirit

As we begin these next 3 weeks of teaching
I will be addressing Mind (soul) today
Next week Pastor Joe will be speaking about spirit
3rd week John Hodgson will be addressing body

Opening Prayer

A couple of initial thoughts as we embark on this next part of this series.
Why is this important?
Understanding that we are created in God’s image and as triune beings effects our worldview:
A worldview is the set of beliefs about fundamental aspects of Reality that ground and influence all one's perceiving, thinking, knowing, and doing.
These are the filters we use to make sense of things
If these are wrong or skewed our view of God is effected

So why 3 parts? **Three parts: Body, soul, and spirit**
Because not all believe the three parts are different

Commentary: Some people believe that in addition to “body” and “soul” we have a third part, a “spirit” that most directly relates to God. This view is called **trichotomy**. While this has been a common view in popular evangelical Bible teaching, there are few scholarly defenses of it today.
Be aware of deconstruction here. Jeremiah 6:16 – seek out the Ancient Paths

According to many trichotomists, man’s soul includes his intellect, his emotions, and his will. They maintain that all people have such a soul, and that the different elements of the soul can either serve God or give in to sin.

A person’s spirit, however, is a higher faculty that comes alive when a person becomes a Christian (see Romans 8:10: “If Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness”). The spirit is the part of us that most directly worships and prays to God (see John 4:24 and Philippians 3:3).

Two parts: Body and soul

Others argue that “spirit” is not a separate part of man, but simply another term for “soul,” and that both terms are used interchangeably in Scripture to talk about **the immaterial part of man that lives on after our bodies die**. The view that man is made up of two parts (body and soul/spirit) is called **dichotomy**. Those who hold this view often agree that Scripture uses the word spirit (Hebrew “*rûach*”, and Greek “*pneuma*”) more frequently when referring to our relationship to God, and the word soul is also used in all the ways that spirit can be used.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 suggests there are three parts to every person: “May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your **spirit and soul and body** be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Hebrews 4:12 says, “The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of *soul and spirit*, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” **If the sword of Scripture has the ability to divide soul and spirit, doesn't that make them two separate things?**

I know I spent a little time on this but it is important – I believe we are not biune beings and spirit and soul are the same. There are some that say soul and spirit are the same (not me) I am a tri-chotomist – I believe that we are **Body, Soul/mind/will, Spirit**

10 years ago the Lord asked me to start a pornography accountability class (still ongoing) As I was beginning to understand about the brain and the importance it has in the addictive process, I was reading in Romans and chapter 12:1-2 Jumped out at me, All 3 one's are here

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 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.
Offer your Body as a living sacrifice
Be transformed by the renewing of your Mind
Test and approve what God's will is - Spirit

The church has done a poor job in helping us address change in our lives in this way.
The church said, **“Read more – Pray more – stop doing that!”**
The question really is, “How do we stop doing that ?” (coming in a few minutes)
This is a binary approach - Highlighting the need for all 3 parts to be involved.

All that to get to defining what is SOUL?

Defining Soul

The immaterial essence, animating principle, or actuating cause of an individual life
the moral and emotional nature of human beings - a person's total self
the will and more importantly as creation – our free will to choose

Let's look at it as a math problem

The whole of who we are as creation is 100%

If it is not body, which we know is physical and it is not spirit which we know is eternal

It must be all the other things that make up who we are - the moral and emotional nature of human beings - a person's total self – our will -the seat of our emotions

So the math equation looks like this

100% = Body is a % - minus spirit is a % so the remaining % is soul.

Story of Jeremy and real world math – cabinets and wall building- did mom tell you to ask

I was talking to my neighbor and asked him what he thought soul is. He said “soul” is a good woman that helps light our path and makes us change our childish ways.
Since soul is the essence of who we are; it matters with what we align our soul
My sister-in-law says “show me your 5 and I will show you your future”
This also speaks to community and the need to be in relationship with others of like faith urging each other on to good works and depth in Christ.

Still defining Soul

The Old Testament. The Hebrew word so rendered is *nepes*. two most common renderings are "soul" (428 times) and "life" (117 times). life, person, mind, heart, will, desire

The New Testament. The counterpart is translated as *psyche*
It frequently designates life: one can risk his life, give his life, lay down his life, forfeit his life, hate his life, and have his life demanded of him.
Psyche can express emotions such as grief anguish, exultation, and pleasure

Matthew 22:37) “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind”
Or in Mark 12:30: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.”
Or in Luke 10:27. He answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and will your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”

One commentary theorized that these attributes are not different parts, but synonyms that Jesus was stacking up on each other to make a point about the whole of who we are should Love God.

Let’s break down Soul into some of its parts

In the Matthew scriptures about **Heart** – there is both good and bad alignment that either helps us love the Lord our God with all of them or takes us the other way in opposition to God
This is the “will” part – we have to choose which way to pursue

Matthew 5:8	Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Matthew 5:28	But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart
Matthew 6:21	For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
Matthew 9:4	And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why are you harboring evil thoughts in your hearts?”

Matthew 11:29	Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
Matthew 12:34	You offspring of snakes! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.
Matthew 13:15	For the heart of this people has become dull, and with their ears they scarcely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'
Matthew 13:19	When anyone hears the message of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away that which was sown in his heart
Matthew 15:8	'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.
Matthew 15:18	But the things that go out of the mouth come from the heart, and these defile the person.
Matthew 15:19	For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander

Mind is the brain but also the will is involved.

The mind - the faculty of understanding, feeling, desiring
 Understanding – way of thinking and feeling - thought

I think a lot about this and one of my happy places is the study of brain science – how the brain works and how it effects how we live.

Romans 12 What does it mean to be transformed by the renewing of your Mind?
 For a long time I thought this was talking about salvation – and I still think it is
 At salvation we have a new way of thinking – kingdom thinking, not just body but Spirit
 We are told to put old ways behind us and move into maturity
 But as we will see the mind/brain is also able to change over time

So here is the “Nerd” part of the message about the brain –
 The average brain is about 2% of body mass but uses 20% of our total energy

Until the late 90’s it was thought that the brain was mostly set in its ways. – with limited opportunity for change.

We now know that our brain makes about 5 trillion decisions per second – most of them we don’t think about – now we know that thru neurogenesis and because of neuroplasticity – new neuropathways being created was discovered and it changed the way we think about the brain

Prefrontal cortex – is our reasoning center – it is the **response** part of the brain not the **react** part
Lymbic system fight and flight –our **react** part of the brain - can overpower the cortex
Lymbic assigns value - good or bad - dangerous or pay attention

Changing how we think and our brain patterns means for me that I need to push my thoughts to the pre frontal cortex for a reasoned response
Push the thoughts thru my worldview filters that come from my understanding of who God is.

The brain wants to be happy and will do whatever it needs to to make that happen
Chemical brain – brain finds out what it likes and dopamine is released to get a happy outcome
Where do we go for comfort? – I want my answer to be Jesus but sometimes it is food – exercise – entertainment - relaxing or inactivity (where we go indicates what is important to us.)

Here is where we go “full brain nerd”
God created us to have cortex down releases of dopamine to the pleasure center
Starting in the prefrontal cortex and coming to resolve with a solution
solve math problem – that feels good. Work out – that feels good
God centered pleasure is enough to satisfy

Addiction is a pleasure center up release of dopamine – not God designed way
So it will damage the brain and make it so that God created pleasure is no longer pleasurable
Strawberries vs snickers bar – Gypsy moths and pheromones (natural vs not natural)

A book it read a long time ago said it this way –
You can never get enough of something that almost satisfies

The brain is going to do what it is familiar with if it is not challenged
The Bible challenges us to think differently and change what we want to be

**It is not simply read more/pray more and stop doing that
That is biune thinking and we are triune beings – the brain is the 3rd une.**

Changing our brain comes when at the initial point of “where will I go for comfort?”
As 2 Cor 10:5 says We demolish arguments and **every** pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we **take captive every thought** to make it obedient to Christ.

We identify each thought as strawberry or snickers bar before we proceed down the thought path
If it is snickers bar – not something consistent with God’s being – we stop it early

Am I this body that you see?
Am I the mind and emotions and heart (will)?
Am I an eternal spirit ?
YES is the answer and even though we only see body - we know that spirit is on-going – soul is what defines us and all are integrally tied to each other as God created us in His image

As the seat of who we are; the soul casts the deciding vote (free will) of whether we will join body (temporary, sinful nature) or spirit (eternal) optional Godly nature.
Our soul/mind/will determines who we will become like

Which is why **Matthew 22:37** Jesus replied: ““Love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **mind**.”

Jesus is saying with all of who you are – be in right alignment with me – if we love Him we will be committed to His ways and will know His voice and in being with Him we will become like Him in character and action

Soul is the real me. It does not weigh anything but it defines us

Horizontal response: Be aware of the origin of my thoughts
Work to push thoughts thru the filter of who God is

Vertical response: Worship the creator for the wonder of being created triune

Discussion Questions

Anything that particularly caught your attention?

Is the thought a snickers bar or strawberry?

Where do I go for comfort?

Are there areas in your life that are things that almost satisfy?

(these may not be suitable for large group discussion, but personal prayer and limited sharing)