

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday July 14, 2019. "Soul Keeping: The Soul Restored"

I. Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message this past Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk.

Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

II Recap.

Last week we began a walk thru of the book, "***Soul Keeping***" by John Ortberg. It's a study of something we don't think about a lot, or most likely haven't really considered in our Christian journey...our soul.. In this opening Sunday, we talked about the soul actually being the essence of all of who we are, rather than something inserted in us. And we learned the soul helps keep our hearts, minds, and body in check. Those three are the center of everything we do and decide. And a healthy soul helps each of those work together, and in an 'integrated', unified, whole, way.

The soul is also vitally important in our relationship with God, and connecting to community. So, for four weeks we will do a deep dive into what the soul is, and how to care for it.

III Sunday.

A little disclaimer here. Sunday was our third venture into looking into suffering and struggle in our lives. Back at the end of March, we talked about not letting bitterness take root in the midst of our suffering. And then in our walk thru James just last month, we spent some time talking about suffering, and the path out of it. It seems like we talk about this a good bit, and we don't want to beat this topic to death. But we know the issue of evil and suffering is the greatest struggle for both Christians and especially non-believers. And hopefully we took different angles on this topic to give a well-rounded full perspective on suffering and the damage it can do to our soul.

The scriptures are full of people who were honestly and vulnerably expressing their feelings and struggles when going thru their own hard times. Several passages were given as examples, and they talk about the feelings of abandonment by God in those difficult times. Because we know the source of our deepest joy and pain comes from the soul, we realize this is where we experience the most intense feelings during suffering.

So...we start with some really hard questions.

What causes struggling, suffering for you?

How do you react to it?

Where do you wish you could be better at handling difficult times?

After a lot of scripture about suffering was shared, a passage was used as a jumping off point into how we can best care for our soul in the midst of suffering. So read **Hebrews 6:16-19**, and we'll have our usual starting questions.

What spoke to you about this passage?

How could it encourage you in the care for your soul?

There were a few truths Kal pulled out of this passage that are basic understandings about dealing with our own "*dark night of the soul*" times of suffering.

1. We all need an anchor. An anchor holds a ship in place in the middle of the storm. AND... you cannot wait until the storm hits to get an anchor. You have to have that anchor in place before, then you throw it out when the storm hits. What is your anchor?

2. Often you just have to ride out the storm. When those bad times come. When you're in the middle of the struggle, most of the time there is nothing you can do but ride it out. To wait in that 'in between' time. Between, before it hit, and when the storm blows itself out.

3. The anchor HAS to be God. We have a tendency to place the responsibility of our well-being on other people or things in our life. As important as it is to be in community, to have people around us we can lean on and even be carried by in those tough times, they simply cannot be our anchor. We would crush them under the weight of our expectations of what we need during those difficult times.

What have you learned, experienced with each one of these truths from the passage?

Where is it you may have to do some work?

Kal then shared a list of what a secured, anchored soul looks like in the midst of suffering.

-Confidence and assurance without earthly evidence.

-Other people's opinions or thoughts cannot shake your faith.

-Generosity. The more you trust, the less you have to hold onto or protect your 'stuff'.

-Observation without judgment.

-An unshakable contentment.

-Little things don't unsettle you.

-Have an intentionality about your life. This is who I am, and what I'm about.

-You're not trying to keep up with anyone. You can actually rejoice with those who rejoice.

-Purpose and meaning are found in eternal things not the things of this world.

-Live in full pursuit of Jesus.

Which of these could you use some work on in boosting the care of your soul?

The final scripture; **2 Corinthians 2:7-8** talked about being in those storms, but not being defeated or losing hope. Read this passage and contemplate some truths from it that can help you maintain the care of your soul, restoring it, even in the middle of really difficult times.

How can this passage help frame some of the tough things you're having to deal with?