

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday July 7, 2019. "Soul Keeping: What is a Soul?"

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 Sunday.

NEW SERIES!! Sorry, we got a little excited.

Just a little 'behind the curtain' peek. Most of the time in the middle of one series we're heavy into planning the next series. And our hearts are already in the new series as we're finishing off the one we're in. So we're just excited to share this new series "**Soul Keeping**" with you. It's from a book by John Ortberg, the lead pastor of Menlo Park Church in California. "**Soul Keeping**" is a pretty deep dive into this thing scriptures called the soul, what it is, how it works, and how it connects us to God. We skip around and cover as much as we can about the book, but not everything. If you're interested in diving even deeper, we're looking at offering a Grow Team series covering it in more detail in the fall. Stay tuned.

As always some questions first. Think about each of those some as we just cover the basics of what a soul is.

What is a soul?

What is on the line, at risk, if I don't do this well?

What's in it for me to actually invest in caring for my soul?

III Scripture.

A good bit of scripture was used, but we'll stick to just a few passages. **Luke 10:25-28**, mentions the soul in context with other places deep within us that drive our thoughts, choices, and behavior. Read this passage, we'll talk about those places, and then we'll hit the second passage.

What jumped out at you about this scripture?

How do you view each of the places we are to love; heart, soul, strength, and mind?

Let's talk about each of those briefly.

1. WILL/HEART.

This is where the human capacity to choose is. It's what makes you a person and not a thing. It's an awareness of awareness, when presented with options or choices. And because repeating behaviors, create these things called habits, a lot of things we do, the choices we make, are without even thinking, or being aware of. The will is where our willpower is located, (duh!!! right), and where you try to control the demands and urges of the body.

2. MIND.

It's our thoughts and feelings. The mind is where we hold and weigh our options while considering the different pros and cons. The mind seeks balance and peace. *"Just get the decision decided"*. The mind is the place, room, where we ruminate, obsess, entertain, ideas and possibilities. So you decorate this room, set the mood, by what you think about, watch, listen to, consider. As in our homes, the mood of a room based on how it's decorated. The mind is an important place.

3. STRENGTH/BODY.

This is where those appetites and drives, desires and cravings, reside. The body **craves**, and seeks satisfaction to quench that need or want. It is the machine that runs everything, and the mind and the will seek to bring the body under control. So there are constant battles between the will and the mind to handle all of the stuff going on within the body.

4. SOUL.

We have to admit the soul is a very difficult thing to describe.

Genesis 2:7. *Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

Hebrew word for "living being" is 'nephesh' or soul. It is the energy, the essence that holds the will, mind, and body together. The soul is NOT the little wispy ghost that floats up out of the body when we die. ALL of the references to the soul talk about this essence of all of who we are, our personhood. The soul is the integration, or thing that encapsulates all of those other aspects of who we are. It is the place where all of these other urges are integrated, worked together in this perfect dance, harmony, oneness of function. It is the divine presence of God, that makes all of the other areas healthier. It helps us determine if we're letting our feelings, emotions, undisciplined thoughts, or incorrect beliefs control us.

I realize this all sounds a bit woo woo, (look that up). Basically the soul pulls all of these together, connects them with God, and moves us towards a united unified life. There is this inexplicable feeling when everything is working just right. It's called Shalom, peace, united, undivided. When it's not we call it disintegration, sick, divided, lost.

And the conversation about the soul brings us to the second passage, **Matthew 16:24-26**. Read that and think about the significance of the soul.

What do you think this passage states about the importance and role of the soul?

IV Challenge.

There are signs of an unhealthy soul and healthy soul. Review each list, and see where you might be in the health of your soul.

1. Signs of an unhealthy, disintegrated soul.

- A soul apart from God mistakes itself for God.
- We are dead in our sins, and blinded by the images and beliefs of the world.
- We are displaced and disoriented. We don't know where we are or how to get where we want to go.

- In constant self struggle and destruction.
- Constant conflict in our life.
- We cannot manage the demands of life. We just can't seem to get it together.
- We get caught up in the performance mentality.
- We never feel 'rested'.
- We cannot trust, ourselves, others, or our understanding of God.

2. Signs of a healthy integrated soul.

- All of who we are, what we're about, hold dear, is centered in a oneness with God.
- We are settled and content in our life, and actually want for little.
- We seem to be able to handle the difficulties and demands of life.
- Our patience for the movement of God allows us to 'wait', (be about the work with confidence God is...God).
- We seem to have this intentionality about our life. We know where we're headed.
- We don't have to look out for ourselves, or be self-absorbed. God is in charge of our life.
- We live in full on pursuit of knowing Jesus...personally.
- Our efforts and purpose are found in what we can do for Jesus, eternal things. That's what brings us purpose, meaning, and joy.

The opening video declared; "*we are the keeper of our soul*". The control we have over our hearts, mind, and strength all depend on the health of our soul. An integrated healthy soul gives us more control over these other areas of our lives. A disintegrated soul creates chaos. And that work is on us.

What can you do to begin to understand what the soul is, how it works, and how to care for it?

Your future depends on it.

And your present does too!