



The following is the summary of the Sunday sermon that is sent to the body at Steadfast in an email called "The Weekly"

You Are a Body and a Soul

You are Fearfully and Wonderfully Made

One of the great challenges throughout church history has been the challenge of dualism, that the physical, material world is evil and that only the spiritual, immaterial world is good. Dualism was a major tenet of the Greco-Roman world; the world of Jesus and the world of the early church. As the church spread throughout the Mediterranean world, it constantly faced this challenge of dualism. Indeed, you see this challenge in 1 Corinthians where the Corinthian church still held on to aspects of this dualism. It affected their view of sexuality, their liberty in Christ and their struggle to understand the literal, physical, bodily resurrection. They believed that since God valued the spiritual world more than the physical world, they could do anything they wanted with their bodies. They were free in Christ to be near libertines in how they lived. Paul came down hard on their ethical and moral behavior (see chapters 5, 6, and 8-10). He capped off his critique of their perverted dualism with the most powerful, biblical defense of the literal, physical, bodily resurrection in chapter 15. The human body has eternal significance to God and it therefore should for us as well. The future reality of God's promise to resurrect our bodies, should affect how we live now in this body.

In our Postmodern, Post-Christian world, many are living their lives as if they embraced a dualistic worldview as well. Much of our culture's energy, focus and passion is on the body—satisfying its passions, meeting its desires, feeding its perversions, all the while ignoring the spiritual aspect of humanity. For millennia, humans have defined human identity as material and physical. For that reason, humanity has tried for millennia to solve the challenges of the human condition politically, socially, financially and economically. The depravity and desperate condition of the human heart is rarely considered.

HUMAN BEINGS ARE A SOUL-BODY UNIT

The *imago Dei* that defines the identity, value and importance of the human race includes

both the material and immaterial dimensions of humanity—the body and the soul. God not only redeems our soul through the substitutionary death of His Son; He also redeems our bodies. Indeed, Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” [ESV]. Furthermore, the body is so important to God that He promises to resurrect it. What occurs at death?

- Jesus said to the thief on the cross, “Today you shall be with me in paradise?” [Luke 23:43]
- In 2 Corinthians 5:8, Paul declares that “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.”

When we die, our soul goes to be with Jesus in heaven. Our bodies go into the grave. [Death is a separation of the body and soul.] The resurrection is the rejoining of the human soul with the reconstituted, resurrected, glorified body (1 Corinthians 15:50-57). This all occurs at the event described in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

What will our resurrected, glorified bodies be like?

- To be “imperishable” means that our bodies will not wear out, will not grow old and there will be no sickness or disease that could ravage our bodies.
- In Matthew 13:43, Jesus declares that “the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father.” [Also see Daniel 12:3 for similar language.] Because our bodies are raised “in glory,” our new bodies will have a beauty and attractiveness that is associated with the glory of God Himself. Since we will continue to be God’s dominion stewards in the eternal New Heavens and New Earth, it makes sense that we will reflect the glory of our Sovereign.
- Our new bodies are “raised in power” (1 Corinthians 15:43). Our bodies will have the fullness and strength God originally intended His image-bearers to have.
- Our new bodies will be “spiritual” (*pneumatikos*), which in the NT means consistent with the character and activity of the Holy Spirit (see Romans 1:11; 7:14; 1 Corinthians 2:13, 15; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 5:19 on the meaning of “spiritual”).
- In terms of our uniqueness in abilities, looks, giftedness, etc., the NT affirms a continuity between our present bodies and our new, resurrected bodies (see Romans 8:1; Philippians 3:21 and 1 Corinthians 15:37-38).

As a corollary to this marvelous truth, the NT declares that there is a cosmic dimension to the resurrection. When sin entered the human race, all of God’s creation was cursed (see Genesis 3). With the resurrection of our bodies and the return of Jesus, that curse will be lifted. Indeed, Romans 8:21-22 declares that “the creation itself will be set free from its bondage of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (ESV). The result of this freedom will be an abundant earth during the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ (see Isaiah 11, 35, 60; Psalm 72; Zechariah 14).

A word about the term "soul." [The term "soul" is used 450 times in Scripture.] Soul is the biblical term for the immaterial dimension of a human being that is united with the physical body to produce life. Thus, at conception, God creates the human being as a soul-body unit that will live forever. As stated above, at the point of physical death, the believer's soul goes to heaven to be with Jesus, while the physical body goes into the grave. Thus, the human soul continues to exist consciously in heaven. The Bible gives clear evidence of the conscious existence of the soul in heaven (e.g., the narrative of Lazarus and the rich man in Luke 16:19-31 stipulates this quite clearly; the Tribulation saints, as conscious souls, who have died, cry out to Jesus in heaven to avenge their death [Revelation 6:9-11]). The term "spirit" in reference to a human being is used 378 times in Scripture; often soul and spirit are used interchangeably as synonyms.

When unbelievers die, Scripture teaches that they are in conscious woe (see Luke 16:22-23; Mark 9:43-48, Revelation 19:20). Scripture also teaches that God will resurrect all unregenerate humanity for the purposes of judgment at the Great White Throne (see Revelation 20:11-15).

Scripture uses other important terms to describe a human being:

- The human "heart" is a comprehensive term covering all aspects of the immaterial aspect of humans (e.g., Matthew 15:19-20; Psalm 37:4; Romans 9:2; 10:9-10). But the primary emphasis of the "heart" is the center of the spiritual life and human will (Exodus 7:23; Hebrews 4:7).
- The "mind" of a human being is distorted and twisted by sin (theologians call this the noetic effect of sin). Sin produces a mind that is reprobate (Romans 1:28), defiled (Titus 1:15), darkened (Ephesians 4:18) and blinded by Satan (2 Corinthians 4:4). Wonderfully, when someone trusts Christ, the mind is renewed (Romans 12:2), can love God (Matthew 22:37), can understand God's will (Ephesians 5:17) and can praise God (1 Corinthians 14:15).
- The human "conscience" (used 31 times in the NT) is a witness of God, an aspect of his revelation to humanity (see Romans 2:14-15 and 1 Timothy 4:2). For the believer, conscience becomes an important way the Spirit guides and leads us.

A word about the Steadfast Mission Statement: "We exist to see Jesus transform lives through His Word, Prayer and Loving Relationships." Transformation is at the core of Galatians 4:19, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18—to be "transformed into the image of Christ." It involves the mind (the way we think), the heart (the center of our spiritual life) and the will (the center of our desires, intents and purpose for life). Therefore, transformation involves the renewing of: the Mind (Ephesians 4:23; Romans 12:2); the Heart (1 Peter 1:22, 3:15); and the Will (Philippians 2:13)

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