

SERMON NOTES

Sunday, January 26, 2025

Holy and Whole - Soul (Psyche)

May God himself, the God who makes everything holy and whole, make you holy and whole, put you together—spirit, soul, and body—and keep you fit for the coming of our Master, Jesus Christ. 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (MSG)

1. Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness...So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them...God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. Genesis 1:26, 27, 31 (NIV)
 - In contrast to philosophies of Paul’s day (Dualism, Asceticism) and world religions today (Hinduism, Buddhism), the Bible describes the material world, including the body and its desires and pleasures, as very good.
2. You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother’s womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. Psalm 139:13-14 (NLT)
 - Your body is wonderfully complex and marvelous! It is a gift to be celebrated!
 - Your five senses were created by God not just to navigate the world but to experience delight and pleasure and to connect with others.
 - “I didn’t want to come to the end and think, ‘So many things happened to me. I wish I’d been paying attention.’” Gretchen Rubin, *Life in the Five Senses*
3. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. Genesis 3:7 (NLT)



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- When they sinned, Adam and Eve immediately felt shame about their bodies. Most of us, if not all of us, carry body shame. We all dislike, get frustrated with, or experience shame about certain parts of our body.
4. Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies. 1 Corinthians 15:43-44 (NLT)
- The promise of scripture is that one day our broken bodies will be transformed into eternal spiritual bodies that will experience delight, pleasure, and connection with God and others for all eternity.
5. Our bodies were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies...You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. 1 Corinthians 6:13, 19-20 (NLT)
- Practical ways to honor God with our bodies:
 - Don't use any part of your body to sin - take seriously the process of becoming more like Jesus (sanctification) with the help of a loving community and the power of the Holy Spirit
 - Live sensuously - don't take your senses for granted, focus your senses on the things that matter most, "are you sniffing life to the full?"
 - Honor your physical limits (care for your body) - pay attention to diet, movement, sleep/rest, play, screen time and healthy boundaries
 - Seek healing for shame - treat your wounded parts with curiosity and compassion, not harshness and judgment, and invite Jesus to see and speak to the parts you are most ashamed of

"In Christ our bodies are no longer identified by what we do with them or by what others have done to them but by what Jesus has done for them." Sam Allberry, *What God Has to Say about Our Bodies*



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But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. Isaiah 53:5 (NLT)

Questions for thought and discussion:

1. Dualism is the idea that the material world, including the body and its desires, are inherently bad while the spiritual world is good. In contrast, the Bible sees the material world and the body as distorted by sin but inherently good. Were you taught that the body and its desires are inherently good or bad?
2. God created your five senses to help you navigate the world but also so you could experience delight and pleasure. What does it say about God that God would intentionally create the body to maximize delight and pleasure?
3. Spent time this week intentionally thinking about engaging your five senses.
 - What are some of your favorite sights? What are some things you would describe as beautiful?
 - What are some of your favorite sounds? What is one of your favorite songs? When was the last time you felt truly heard?
 - What are some of your favorite smells? What smells bring back fond memories from your childhood or other significant times in your life?
 - What are some of your favorite tastes? What are some of your favorite memories of shared meals?
 - What kinds of touches mean the most to you? How could you incorporate more meaningful and loving touch into your life?
4. Take some time to evaluate how well you are caring for your body. Give yourself a rating from 0-5 (with 5 being excellent) when it comes to diet, movement, sleep/rest, play, and screen time. What steps can you take to move in a healthier direction?
5. Are there parts of your body that you associate with shame? Where do you think it comes from? What does it look like to approach those parts with compassion and curiosity? (NOTE: IF YOU GOING THROUGH THESE QUESTIONS IN A GROUP, BE CAREFUL ABOUT ASKING PEOPLE TO TALK ABOUT EXPERIENCES THAT MIGHT BE TRAUMATIC)
6. Spend some time inviting Jesus to talk and interact with the parts of your body most associated with shame. Write down what he says and does.
7. Activities to boost your sensuality*
 - Spend four minutes looking tenderly into a loved one's eyes without speaking.
 - Give your loved ones a minimum of two 30-second hugs per day.
 - Create a playlist of mood booster songs and listen to it at least once a day.



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- Spend time in silence (silence helps to sharpen our senses).
- Eat a meal blindfolded (eating blindfolded helps to enhance taste).
- Create a taste timeline by documenting common tastes from different times in your life.
- Host a taste party where you try different brands of the same food or drink or sample foods that simulate different tastes (e.g., sweet, savory, sour, bitter, salty).
- Ask your family and friends to share about the smells that they remember the most growing up.
- Start a Five Senses journal and track the different sensory experiences that stand out in your day (this could involve pictures and/or written comments).
- Create a Five Senses Portrait of someone you love (when I think of ____, I think of seeing/hearing/smelling/tasting/touching ____ or what are some of their favorite sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches).

* Several of these ideas come from *Life in the Five Senses* by Gretchen Rubin

