

# Tending to Our Inner Life

January 15, 2017

WONDERFUL MERCY CHURCH

## Our Ministry Theme for 2017: Inviting

- God is the ultimate inviter and what He does is what we're to do
- A ministry theme governs our actions; it's the grid against which we evaluate what we do as a body

Our  
Prophetic  
Word for  
2017

- “It is well with my soul”
- This word is to govern our hearts even as the ministry theme is to govern our actions

## Soul Care

- **Deuteronomy 4:9** NAS  
“Only give heed to yourself and keep your soul diligently...”
- **Proverbs 4:23** NAS  
“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”

## What Is the Soul?

- “My soul is my inner man. I don’t distinguish among heart and soul and mind. Soul is the essence of a person.” [Pastor Graeme’s spiritual director]
- Dallas Willard: the soul “is the life-center of the human being.”  
[*Renovation of the Heart*, p. 199]

## Why Care for the Soul?

- If our soul is well-tended, then no matter our lot we will be able to say, “It is well with my soul.”
- Good and bad things will happen to us, and how we do life in the midst of them will be a reflection of what we’ve become in our soul

Just Last  
Thursday...



## Why Care for the Soul?

- “The life we live out in our moments, hours, days, and years wells up from a hidden depth.”  
[Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, p. 16]
- Faulker’s redneck in *Absalom, Absalom!*: “They might have kilt us, but they ain’t whapped us yet.”



## Why Care for the Soul?

- The physical side of the human universe cannot sustain our existence even though our consumer-driven, celebrity-worship culture insists otherwise
- **Matthew 4:4** ESV  
“Man shall not live by bread alone..”
- This could be rendered, “Men and women *cannot* live by bread alone,” and when we attempt to we place our soul in peril

## Why Care for the Soul?

- **Matthew 16:26** NKJV  
“For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

## What Does It Mean to Lose Your Soul?

- “Well, what it means is that your life is no longer under the direction of your inner stream of life, which has been taken over by exteriors.” [Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, p. 206]
- It's the bargain Satan tried to drive with Jesus in the desert while tempting him (Mt. 4:8-9)

Have you ever seen  
anything  
in your life  
more wonderful

than the way the sun,  
every evening,  
relaxed and easy,  
floats toward the horizon

and into the clouds or the hills,  
or the ruffled sea,  
and is gone—  
and how it slides again

out of the blackness,  
every morning,  
on the other side of the world,  
like a red flower

streaming upward on its heavenly oils,  
say, on a morning in early summer,  
at its perfect imperial distance—

and have you ever felt for anything  
such wild love—  
do you think there is anywhere, in any  
language,  
a word billowing enough  
for the pleasure

that fills you,  
as the sun  
reaches out,  
as it warms you

as you stand there,  
empty-handed—  
or have you too  
turned from this world—

or have you too  
gone crazy  
for power,  
for things?

—Mary Oliver, “The Sun”

## Losing Your Soul

- Ever a threat against the soul:  
“or have you too gone crazy for power, for things?”
- **Luke 12:19** ESV  
“And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’”

## Soul Care

- Mary's soul magnified the Lord  
(see Luke 1:46)
- This is the year we tend to our inner life that we might say, "*It is well with my soul.*"

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