

The Battle in the Soul – a study for the College and Career class
at Gulf Coast Baptist Church
July 8, 2018 by Steve Thomas

Man is made up of Body Soul and Spirit.¹ The soul and body of all individuals is unregenerate, having the curse of sin upon it. However, the believer has received a new life – a God-quality of life in the realm of His Spirit. In order to have victory, and to be aware of and accomplish the works that God has set aside for him to do², the believer must learn to filter information through his Spirit which has been regenerated.

- I. **Man is made up of body, soul, and spirit.** ¹ Thess 5:23, Heb 4:12
- A. There are parts that have not been given life yet. Paul expresses in the first aorist active optative, a wish for the future. The addition of the word “wholly” or through and through, lets us know that we are not complete yet. There is work to be done.
 - 1. The believer has received the Spirit of God. ³
 - 2. The Spirit abides in us, but the body is dead.⁴
 - 3. Our body, like the creation, is awaiting future glorification, which will happen at the return of Christ.⁵
 - B. The presence of the Godhead (Spirit) brings the life.
 - 1. Peter calls it the divine nature. ⁶
 - 2. Paul reveals the mystery – Christ in us the hope of glory. ⁷
 - 3. Paul gives the key to transformation as the renewedness of our mind.⁸
 - C. The soul is unregenerate, it is awaiting its salvation.⁹
 - 1. The believer will be complete, absent of all suffering, at the coming of Jesus Christ. *At the revelation of Jesus Christ (en apokalupsei Iēsou Christou).*
 - 2. When Christ returns we will be completely regenerated. ¹⁰
 - 3. Because of its unregenerate state, the soul is the stronghold for the sin nature. 1Pe 2:11 *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;* Fleshly desires are at war against the soul. The apostle reminds the believer of positional truth in verse 9 which then leads to the

¹ 1 Thess 5:23 Hebrews 4:12

² Eph 2:10

³ 1 Cor 2:11-12

⁴ Rom 8:9-11

⁵ Vvs. 18-23.

⁶ 2 Peter 1:4

⁷ Col 1:26-29.

⁸ Rom 12:2, Titus 3:5

⁹ 1 Peter 1:5-10

¹⁰ 1 John 3:2

warning that there will be things that will interfere with the living out of this truth in front of the Gentiles. There are enemies that will seek to do damage waging a military campaign against our soul, causing interference with the good works that we are supposed to carry out.

II. In Christ's temptation in the garden, we see a picture of the struggle of the three realms - Body, Soul, and Spirit.¹¹

- A. Christ was in all points tempted like we are, but without sin. He has a human nature, but not a depraved, fallen human nature (virgin birth).
- B. In the Garden before the cross, Jesus revealed his struggle with the body and soul. *Mat 26:38-42 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. Mat 26:41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*
 1. Christ's soul was sorrowful. The soul was full of sorrow because of Jesus being left alone (the failure of the disciples) and knowing he would be further alone soon (separation from the Father).
 2. The flesh was weak. It did not desire to bear the cup of suffering that was before it. Our bodies have a survival instinct. Flesh did not want to undergo the "cup" that was before it. *Except I drink it* (ean mē auto piō). Condition of the third class undetermined, but with likelihood of determination, whereas *if this cannot pass away* (ei ou dunatai touto parelthein) is first-class condition, determined as fulfilled, assumed to be true. This delicate distinction accurately presents the real attitude of Jesus towards this subtle temptation.¹²
 3. The spirit remains willing to be obedient and says not my will but thine be done. The interaction between the three parts of man is put on full display here. [I don't believe that Jesus is talking about the disciples here because their spirits were not regenerated at this time.] Jesus would have liked to have their prayer support while he was facing this temptation and trial.
- C. Jesus overcame this temptation, by submission to the Father. *Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*
 1. Christ endured the cross. The physical aspect did not deter him from what He was called to do.

¹¹ Hebrews 4:14-16

¹² A.T Robertson's Word Pictures

2. Christ despised the shame. He did not give in to the temptation in the realm of the soul.
3. We see deliverance from Christ's example. "*The joy that was set before him...*" Christ framed his mind on the future: our salvation, His exaltation, most importantly, the glory brought to the Father through His obedience.

III. The soul is the battleground for the believer.

- A. The Sin nature will use sorrow (among other emotions) to divert the believer from what He should be doing.
 1. Sin is conceived when the lust entices the believer away, enticing him.¹³
 2. There is a godly sorrow for the individual that leads to a change of mind.¹⁴ Both believers and unbelievers are listed in this passage.
 3. Christ graciously told the disciples that their sorrow would turn into joy.¹⁵ They however, allowed their sorrow to divert them from what could have been a glorious three days.
 4. Death brings a sorrow for the unbeliever because it is unaccompanied by hope.¹⁶ The believer turns the sorrow of death into hope... how? By a framing of the mind on the truth expressed in God's Word. God's revelation gives the believer an alternative where he reveals His mind to us. We have the mind of Christ in us, and can view each situation through the filter of the spirit if we choose. This is one of the reasons that death should hold no fear for the believer.
- B. The soul can be affected by the behavior of the believer.
 1. The believer can be adversely affected with an improper focus and behavior.¹⁷
 - a) "Consider" is *analogiziomai* - contemplate, or estimate. Come to the same conclusion that God has.
 - b) Even chastening can be endured with a proper focus, it comes from a loving Father. How many times have we allowed chastening to make us bitter?
 - c) We are to keep a proper focus, so that we are not turned out of the way.

¹³ James 1:13-15

¹⁴ 2 Cor 7:9-10

¹⁵ John 16:20

¹⁶ 1 Thess 4:13

¹⁷ Hebrews 12:3-13

2. Lot was vexed by being surrounded by improper behavior.¹⁸
“Vex” means Lot suffered pain and turmoil, and loss.
3. Proper behavior can have a positive effect on the soul.¹⁹
 - a) The first love (unfeigned) is *phileo*, and the second (that from a pure heart) is *agape*. *Agape* love is only possible from the character of the Son, that life which was placed in us, that resides in the Spirit. The obedience of loving the brethren has a purifying effect in the soul, wrought by the Spirit. But this leads to *agape* love coming from a pure heart (*kardia*). Brotherly love is connected to the soul while the *agape* comes from the regenerated spirit.
 - b) “The bowels of the saints are refreshed...” word for bowels is our word for “spleen”. Philemon’s faith toward God and love to the saints causes joy, comfort, and refreshment. These effects are felt in body, soul, and spirit.

Conclusion:

So how does the believer experience joy, comfort, confidence, hope instead of sorrow (earthly)? It takes a future focus, like that of the Savior to filter the input we receive through the Spirit.

It takes faith to look past present circumstances to what lies beyond. Think of Christ’s admonition and illustration to the disciples about the travailing mother. Pain and anguish now but all this is forgotten when the child is delivered. The believer has the ability and option to “dwell” in the Spirit.²⁰ To frame his mind on future glory, present possession, and even the past achievement of the godhead interacting in his life.

The body will seek things to benefit itself and avoid that which will bring it inconvenience and discomfort. The soul is the battle ground where the sin nature will attempt to draw our focus to things that will drag us into sorrow and ineffectiveness. The believer will be led to a place where we are not seeking the Masters will for those good works we should be working through the power of the godhead, but seeking temporary relief from present circumstances. The believer must reckon the sin nature dead and powerless, and frame the mind on present possessions and future glory.²¹ Like Jesus tells his disciples at the end of His time with them, there will come a time when you will remember what I have told you. He is letting them know that these words will bring them relief and power.²²

¹⁸ 2 Peter 2:8

¹⁹ 1 Peter 1:22, Philemon 1:7

²⁰ John 14:1;15:4-5

²¹ Hebrews 11:25-26

²² John 16:4