

Is It Well With Thee?

Bringing our Brokenness and our Bad Habits to Christ

IS IT WELL WITH YOUR SOUL? (THE WILL - PART 1)

This is part 42 of the Is It Well With Thee Sermon Series

SUMMARY

We live in a world of facades, false fronts, and covered realities. We want to be happy all the time and we want others to think that we are, but underneath the harsh reality is that the bad days, the difficult things, and the high level of stress are all weighing us down. Oftentimes, they leave us feeling discouraged, depressed, and like there is simply no hope, but **THAT ISN'T TRUE AT ALL**. While our enemy wants to use the realities of life against us, God wants us to bring our brokenness and our bad habits to Him so that in the midst of life's very real struggles we can still answer, "It is well."

REVIEW

For a few weeks now, we have been considering the second component of our soul – the **HEART** (emotions). We began by establishing the fact that while the mind and the heart are two separate functions that are so intricately connected that they **INFLUENCE** and **IMPACT** each other.

1) The **DESIGNING** of the emotions

We found that our emotions are a good gift from a good God for the purpose of helping us **ENJOY** right relationships (with God and others) and **ACCOMPLISH** a good purpose.

2) The **DISTORTING** of the emotions

Because of sin, our emotions want to **DOMINATE OUR MIND** and they want to **DICTATE OUR WILL**, and they seek to accomplish that through emotional **TYRANNY** and emotional **TRAUMA**.

While we cannot control when our emotions show up or what emotions show up in our heart, we are responsible for how we express them and for how long we entertain them. Emotions are meant to be **MOMENTARY HELPERS**, not **LIFELONG MASTERS**.

3) The **DEVELOPING** of the emotions

As a society, when it comes to our emotions, we have done two really bad things: we have given our emotions too much **POWER** and we have embraced the idea that we are not **PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE** for how we feel. Emotions are a **PART** of our life; they are not meant to be the **PRIMARY FOCUS** of our life.

This is where our third emotional “T” comes in - **EMOTIONAL TRAINING**. As we have already discovered, emotions happen, and while I cannot always determine what emotion will show up when, I can develop a **PERSONAL DISCIPLINE** and a **PRE-DETERMINED PROCESS** that I can rely on to stay in or to gain control of whatever emotion decides to show up next.

A) We need to **IDENTIFY EMOTIONAL TRIGGERS**

We can't always get rid of what makes us feel bad. Sometimes, we just have to learn how to trust Christ to give us the peace through and the strength over the emotions that are triggered. If I am going to gain victory over my wrong emotions, then I first have to gain an understanding as to what and when they are triggered so that I can be prepared with a pre-determined response when they show up.

B) We need to **IDENTIFY EMOTIONAL TENDENCIES**

(1) When our emotions are triggered, we tend to **RUN** and **HIDE** (lick our wounds).

(2) When our emotions are triggered, we tend to **RAGE** and **HOWL**

“Hurt people hurt people.” A person with a wounded heart tends to lose control of their tongue.

(3) When our emotions are triggered, we tend to **REEL** and **HOLD ON TIGHT**

We allow whatever was done and whatever was said to consume our thoughts and conversations. In doing so, we allow our emotions to increase to the point that everything hurts, everything is an attack against us, and everyone is out to get us. We then spend more time trying to **RATIONALIZE** and **JUSTIFY** our emotions rather than **TRANSFORMING** and **TRAINING** our emotions.

C) We need to **UNDERSTAND PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

While it is wrong for others to be disrespectful and treat us wickedly, it is just as wrong for us to blame everyone else for how we feel. While individuals and circumstances can indeed serve as emotional triggers, we are responsible for the emotions that we allow to remain. The only person responsible for your emotions is you. You can control them, and you can change them, but you have to make the choice to do so.

D) We need to **ESTABLISH A PERSONAL PLAN**

(1) **PAUSE** and **BREATHE**

(2) **PRAY**

(3) **POUR YOURSELF INTO THE WORD OF GOD**

(4) **CHANGE YOUR THOUGHTS** and **RESTRAIN WRONG EMOTIONS**

(5) **PARTNER WITH THE PEOPLE OF GOD**

And that's really where we pick back up.

MESSAGE

1 Thessalonians 5:14-24 says, *"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."*

If you're in the habit of marking things in the word of God, I want to draw your attention back to verse 23 where the Bible says, *"And the very God of peace sanctify...your whole spirit..."*

For a few moments, I'd like to begin to consider this thought: **IS IT WELL WITH YOUR SOUL? (THE WILL – PART 1)**

Disclaimer - I am not a doctor, and I am not approaching these topics from the standpoint of one. I am simply attempting to help us gain an understanding of what the Bible has to say about our mental, emotional, and physical health.

We are now making yet another transition within our study of our soul. As we do, I think that it is important for us to be reminded of some key truths that we discovered about our soul in general so that we can approach our study of our will appropriately.

We found that our **SOUL** is where the biggest battles of our life will take place because it is **EASILY INFLUENCED**, and because it is **DEEPLY IMPACTED**.

We found that there are four components that make up our soul: (1) our **MIND** (intellect), (2) our **HEART** (emotions), (3) our **WILL** (choices), and (4) our **CONSCIENCE**.

We found that a healthy soul is made up of the following:

A **SECURED, SET, SATURATED**, and **SKILLED MIND**,

A **CONTROLLED HEART**,

A **SURRENDERED WILL**; and

A **STRONG CONSCIENCE**

In our study of the soul, one of the statements that I have consistently made is that the components of our soul are designed to work in tandem with each other. So far, we have seen that as we considered our **MIND** and our **HEART**, but now we need to consider our **WILL**, because it is also a part of the equation.

Truth be told, all of us have most likely heard more about our mind and our heart than we have our will. And, if we do hear anything about our will, it is more focused on what we are to do with our will – surrender it.

James 4:7 says it this way, *“Submit yourselves therefore to God...”*

Now that is exactly what we are supposed to do, and the reality is that there are many wonderful blessings, and opportunities, and victories that are the result of us surrendering our will *for* and *to* the will of God, but, if we’re going to do that perhaps we should understand how our will works, why we were given a will in the first place, and what is so wrong with our will that it has to be both **DENIED** and **SURRENDERED**.

1) The **DESIGNING** of the will

When God created man, He created man and woman in His image and after His likeness.

Genesis 1:27 says, *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”*

Now, I know that we have already established that fact, but it is highly important that we understand just what that means. God created us with the ability to **THINK**, to **FEEL**, and to **CHOOSE**. Thinking, or reasoning, has to do with our mind, feeling has to do with our heart, and choosing has to do with our will.

It’s important that we understand that we weren’t just created like all of God’s other creations (with the exception of the angels), to be creatures of instinct. Now we possess

instinct, but, unlike the majority of God's creation, we were also given the ability to **CONSIDER** and to make **CHOICES**.

In Luke chapter 19, Jesus was riding into the city of Jerusalem on what we call Palm Sunday, and as He made His way into the city, the people made the choice to rejoice and to praise God saying, *"Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest"* (Luke 19:38).

Now, what doesn't often get focused on is the statement that Jesus gave the Pharisees who had come to Jesus instructing Him to *"...rebuke [His] disciples..."* (Luke 19:39).

In Luke 19:40, the Bible tells us that Jesus *"...answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."*

I remember reading several articles about our universe and how every what they call "planetary body" gives off its own unique electromagnetic vibration. In other words, there is a sound given off by each of those planetary bodies. Why? To give praise to God of course, and they do it instinctively. When Jesus said that the stones would cry out if the people held their peace, He was drawing attention to the very instinct of those stones. It isn't that they would do so in the place of man; it's that they would have no other choice but to praise God, because it is all that they know to do.

The Bible makes it very clear that man was created to know God and to glorify God through **PRAISE**, through **OBEDIENCE**, and through **FAITHFUL SERVICE**.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 says, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man."*

While the day-to-day plans and details of our life may vary and be unique to each of us, our purpose is ultimately the same – to **PLEASE** and to **PRAISE** God.

1 Corinthians 10:31 says, *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."*

What we need to understand about our God-given purpose is that we are not **COMPELLED** to please and praise God; we are to personally and willingly make the **CHOICE** to please and praise God. There is a difference. The former says I **MUST** please and praise God (there is no other option or choice) while the latter says I **WANT** to please and praise God with God my life.

This is what has often been referred to as the freewill of man. So, our first question ought to be: what is freewill. The word *freewill* means that "mankind has been given the ability and the opportunity to make his own decisions and, as such, is responsible for his own actions." We have the freedom to do whatever we want, but we are responsible for, and we will be held accountable for whatever we choose.

2 Corinthians 5:10 says, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."*

Now that truth is contrary to what society says today. Our culture seems to be fixated on this idea that a person is not responsible for their actions. They will examine a person's **GENETIC MAKEUP**, they will examine a person's **ENVIRONMENT**, and they will examine a person's **CIRCUMSTANCES** and they will come to the conclusion that because of who your ancestors were, because of how your parent's raised you, and because of what is going on in your life means that you can't help but speak, act and respond the way that you do and are. Friend, **THAT'S NOT TRUE**. That's nothing more than a bad excuse for a person's bad behavior.

While there are certain tendencies that we might be more or less predisposed to than others, while there are certain conditionings that we may need to gain victory over, and while there are circumstances and conditions that may indeed stir up certain thoughts and feelings inside of us, **WE** make the decisions for what **WE** do and **WE** will face the consequences for what **WE** make the choice to do.

Galatians 6:7 puts it this way, *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."*

Our *will* is where our **DESIRES** and where our **DETERMINATION** reside. It's where our **WANTS** shout from and it's where our **WILLINGNESS** (or what we consent to do) shows up. "I want and I will." We could say it this way:

Our will is where our **PERSONALITY** is formed,

Our will is where our **PASSIONS** reside, and

Our will is where our **PURSUIITS** are chosen.

By God's design, the primary function of our will is to want to please God through our trust, through our obedience, and through our service. What we need to understand is that our will is **STUBBORN**. Now that's a good thing when our wants and our willingness is directed by truth, but that's a bad thing when our wants and our willingness is dictated by anything other than truth.

Psalms 51:6 says, *"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom."*

In Jeremiah 31:33, God tells us what He will do when Jesus establishes His one-thousand-year millennial reign on the earth.

Jeremiah 31:33 says, *"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."*

It was Jesus, in John 8:32, Who said, *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”*

We find this to be just as true for us today.

Psalm 119:11 says, *“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”*

I don't think that it is a coincidence that several times throughout the remainder of the Psalm, the Psalmist connects his delight to doing that which is true – the word of God. You see, delight isn't just an **EMOTION**; delight is an **ACTION**.

Psalm 119:16 says, *“I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.”*

Psalm 119:24 says, *“Thy testimonies also are my delight and my counsellors.”*

Psalm 119:35 says, *“Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight.”*

Psalm 119:47 says, *“And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved.”*

Psalm 119:70 says, *“Their heart is as fat as grease; but I delight in thy law.”*

Psalm 119:77 says, *“Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight.”*

Psalm 119:174 says, *“I have longed for thy salvation, O LORD; and thy law is my delight.”*

This isn't just an Old Testament truth either. We'll look at this passage more another time, but Paul says, in Romans 7:22, *“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.”*