

Ephesians 15-03-15b

Let's pick up our study now, we're in Ephesians chapter 6 and there is a change of plan. I announced last week and I actually started sort of a topical study where I thought it would be helpful for us to look at the biblical testimony having to do with some of the distinctions between the heart versus the spirit versus the soul versus the mind versus the emotions versus the body and that. And I've called it all off, we're not going to do it.

And here's why. When I'm navigating through my day, I don't worry about those distinctions. And as I was looking at the Word of God and assembling all these passages and trying to decide, okay, if you put all these together and look at them, here's the conclusions you can draw and you triangulate and dissect and normalize and average and do a Venn diagram and all the rest of it.

It occurred to me the Bible never does that. And I realized that there's a good reason for that. We don't need to do that, in my opinion.

I don't need to draw some fine distinction. What we can do is generalize very quickly and then move forward in our passage. So let me just say this.

I personally, you can organize this stuff any way you want. The Bible doesn't say, behold, thou art tripartite, thou consisteth of this, that, and the other. It just doesn't say that.

For its own purposes, in its own context, the Bible writers will allude to the soul or to the heart or to the spirit or to the mind. And it is enough to take those statements and those pieces of truth in their context and make of it what you normally would and could in the context. Paul never wrote a chapter in Romans dedicated to the finer distinctions between your invisible components.

And it just seems to me we want to stick with the Word. So here's a couple of quick thoughts about that. Just as a general guide, we are made in the image of God.

God is one in essence. He is three in personality. And you think, oh, I see.

So you're going to explain the invisible essence of man by talking about a real, clear, definite doctrine like the Trinity that people have been arguing over and strangling each other over for 2,000 years and more. Oh, okay. So you're going to take the unclear and explain it with the even less clear, which is the Trinity.

No, the Trinity is not hard. The Trinity is easy. Anybody that says the Trinity is hard hasn't studied enough, in my opinion.

Trinity is easy. Anytime the Trinity comes up and, you know, well, modal monarchism and God is actually one guy with three puppets and he's, you know, he's just modal. He puts on one mask and he's the sun.

He puts on another and it's just one guy. No. Anytime the Trinity comes up, just think this.

God, comma, I-N-C, period. God incorporated. It's a corporation.

It's got a board of directors and there are three members of the board. So when you say Apple has released a new version of the operating system, you're talking about the entity in its entirety, right? Apple has released. Well, Apple is made up of a lot of different people.

It used to be, you know, Steve Jobs and some other guys around there and Steve went to his reward. I almost said heavenly reward, but I really don't know where he stood. I'm not confident that he is going to be available for questions later.

But Apple is an entity that we speak of in a general term. You can talk about the Church, capital C, meaning the Catholic folks in some venue, depending on your context. It can be the Catholics, the diocese in Dallas.

It could be the Pope. It could be, you know, convocation of bishops, whatever. It's God incorporated.

When you talk about God acting and doing, God created, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. That's a corporate statement. All three individuals, and they are distinct and separate individuals with their own minds, with their own thoughts, with their own decisions.

The Lord Jesus Christ made a decision about whether or not to fulfill the plan of God the Father on His own. The Father didn't make that. It wasn't just, you know, a guy running back and forth talking to himself.

They are three distinct and utterly separate, totally different people. Jesus said, I'm going away and I'm sending you another Comforter. He will lead you into the truth.

He will take the things of me and impart them to you. There is a complete separation and distinction between Jesus Christ and God the Holy Spirit, just as there is between those two and God the Father. But often, especially in the Old Testament, it just says, God or the Lord.

The thing that David did displeased the Lord. Well, displeased who? God incorporated. It wasn't like the Holy Spirit was happy about it and Jesus was kind of on the fence and God the Father was upset.

God incorporated was displeased. Very simple. Trinity, God incorporated.

One in identity, in purpose, in policy, standards, a lot of things all three members have in common. It's God incorporated. But three distinct and separate individuals, this is why Jesus can be on the cross and can say, Father, why have you forsaken me? You can't forsake yourself.

So the reason I bring up the Trinity is I think it is convenient to organize what the Bible says about us along the same lines. And so I wouldn't die for this. I don't really care if you want to say I'm dual, I'm tri, I'm quad, I'm quintuplets, there's six members sitting on Sam incorporated.

You can do it any way you want. But it is convenient to realize that when the Bible says we are made in God's image, we can similarly organize how we understand ourselves in three parts. Okay? The Lord Jesus is, what does John say about the Lord Jesus? He's the Word and the Word became sarks.

The Word became flesh. The Word became soma, it became a body, it became incarnate. You know what carne is, right? In Latin, this is where the Spanish get chili con carne.

This is your meat, this is your physical incorporeal, actually corporeal form. You've got substance. Which member of the Trinity has substance? It's the Lord Jesus.

Now, you don't count, they've recently resurrected some controversy about some gal that was pregnant and she was brain dead, but they kept her on the machines and she had one of these living will things that says, DNR, if I'm not compost mentis, then unplug me and let me go. And they overrode her wishes because she was pregnant and her was another life involved. And so they made the decision to keep her alive because there was another life at stake.

Well, so my point being, you can have a body, and I have witnessed this at first hand, you can have a body where, you know, the power may be on, but there's nobody home. The flesh can be kept alive by various mechanical means, but the person is not going to open their eyes and say, whoa, how long have I been out? They're permanently gone. PCS, permanent change of station, not there.

But the body, the heart beats and the respiration takes place. So it's not body alone in the same way that Jesus is not just flesh. He is a personality incarnate.

And there is personality separate from flesh separate and distinct from the incarnation. Jesus existed, Jesus Christ existed, the second person of the Trinity, whatever you want to call him before he became Yeshua, Mashiach. But there was a point at which a body thou hast prepared for me.

And once he united with that body, he has a body from now on. In the same way, we have a corporeal existential part material, substantial. It's interesting to watch it change over time.

But if this quits, I'm not gone. Jesus existed independently of a body and then was given a body by his father and he has it forevermore. We have a body now and we are going to be transformed and have a body and go forward.

So in thinking about a tripartite person, you can think, well, my existence in this life, my

interaction via senses and perceptions with the material world that God has constructed as a testing ground. This is our extended story problem here. It provides input, test, instruction, opportunities for growth.

We are living inside the book. We are living inside the scenario. This is a training place for our invisible selves.

But you've got to have some means of communication, of input, of testing and training and preparing. And so the physical world is what God put together for that. And it is trivial for him to fling the stars into space and to have an infinitude of constellations as a giant.

This is kind of like if you take a wad of cash and you go down to Fry's and you buy a computer and bring it home and it's got a 4 terabyte hard drive and it's got 64 gigabytes of RAM. It's just, it's a big machine. It's got all kinds of capacity.

And you bring it home and you play Solitaire on it. You take a \$1,600 computer and emulate a \$1.95 pack of cards with it. Now this is your genius.

This is what it is to be human. I could get a deck of cards for two bucks, but no. I'm going to spend \$1,600 and \$1,700 and get a state-of-the-art crusher of a machine and I'm going to play Solitaire on it.

Or I'm going to browse the web. It takes just a tiny fraction of the resources, right? Well this somehow mystifies atheists and materialists and people who are of the pseudo-scientific bent and they say, well, you know, it's just absurd that God would make the entire universe and then just have humans on this little planet. I mean, come on, economy of scale.

Why would he do this? Go home and look at your computer there, Mr. Atheist. You're telling me that you've used every megabyte of space on your hard drive and you use all of your RAM all the time and all of your CPU crunching power and your four cores and your 16 threads and all the rest of it? You're just using all of that to the max all the time? No. You're, you know, on a good day you're reading the news on your computer with a browser that you could do with an 8086 machine and a text-based browser that has no resources at all.

And who's to say that in other galaxies God's not doing things that He hasn't chosen to impart to us? I seriously doubt that this is the only game in town, that this is the only thing God is doing. He's got a lot of pre-history that we know nothing about, the angels, and we know nothing about that civilization, that God's purposes, God's other projects. I don't think God is a one-hit wonder.

I don't think that He just wrote one song called Earth and that was it. I don't think there's necessarily, you know, Mount Calvary's on many, many planets, many places. I think that there, as with anything God does, there are uniquenesses here that are unlike anything else.

But we're so puny, we're so earthworm-like in our brains, we don't limit God in what He may be

doing in other places. It doesn't have to involve sin. It doesn't have to involve failure.

He's creative. He can be doing all kinds of fantastic things that are above and beyond what we could even conceptualize in our wildest fantasies. That's why the universe is big.

He's got a big place. He can do whatever He wants, just like a computer can run more than one program. I say all of that to say that it is convenient to organize our understanding of ourselves on the model of the image of God.

So there is a corporeal self, which is the residence for our identity in the same way that the body of Jesus Christ was the residence for His personality, His essence, His essential self, which is single, which is distinct from God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. But it now on this earth and forevermore has an interface with physical reality and with those of us who were born into this reality and have claimed Him by faith. We have that in common.

So, the body. Now, if you focus too much on the materialistic side and not see it as the means to an end that it is, you are a sarkikos man. You remember in Corinthians Paul talks about the carnal man? Flip over to 1 Corinthians chapter 2 real quick.

It's back a few pages from where we are. 1 Corinthians chapter 2. This will make a little more sense, I think, coming directly from Scripture. I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God.

I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Guess what? You cannot crucify a concept. You can't crucify an immaterial personage.

There has to be a body if you're going to nail it to wood. Jesus and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear and trembling.

Where is Paul's fear and trembling coming from? What did we just see in Ephesians 6? Bondservants serve with fear and trembling. Fearing and trembling on account of whom? The ultimate master. Master capital M. It's the same thing with Paul.

He's saying the same thing here. He came to the Corinthians. Why? It's a tough audience.

This is a hard group to teach. And he wants to please God in heaven. He wants to represent Christ.

But he is in fear and trembling in that mission. He wants to do well and there is some uncertainty as to whether he can do it. I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ, Him crucified.

I was with you in weakness. This is physical bodily weakness. In fear and trembling my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstrations of

the Spirit and of power.

So that your faith would not be based on wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Warning to those who want to reason people into salvation, who want to reason believers into pursuing a life of faith and growth. There are severe limits on what you can convince someone of with reasonable arguments.

It is a matter of authority. It is a matter of power. It is a matter of motive.

We speak wisdom among those who are mature, not the wisdom of this age, nor the rulers of this age who are coming to nothing. We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden, and notice wisdom is in italics there, the hidden thing which God ordained before the ages for our glory which none of the rulers of this age knew. God has outfoxed Lucifer, the imp of darkness.

Had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Oops. I was teasing somebody the other day.

They were quoting Christopher Hitchens and talking about what a smart guy he was. I said every single thing he said was wrong. He said what kind of a God would send Jesus to a bunch of uneducated illiterates in the desert instead of sending Him say to China where everybody was educated and could have really understood the finer points, which is just nuts.

There are 40 million peasants in China in the first century AD and none of them had an education. There was education among less than 0.1% of the people in China in the first century in contrast to Judea which was not a desert. It was a province, a Roman province that had the fruits of Greco-Roman culture for over 400 years, had the Persians before that, one of the most sophisticated civilizations ever.

And by definition all of the children went to school and were trained by the rabbis and steeped in the law and taught through the Bible in the same way that in the early decades of our country and in England before that people taught their children out of the Bible, out of the Word of God and used it to teach people to read and to think and to develop vocabulary. Well, that was what was happening in the first century. So Christopher Hitchens is just nuts.

And I said, look, him, and then he went on and he said something about vicarious redemption. He says, well, you know, the central tenet of Christianity is vicarious redemption, which is just silly. You know the difference between reconciliation, redemption, and propitiation.

And well, I'm trying to get to atonement. There's reconciliation, redemption, propitiation. There is atonement.

These are different theological categories and they have very specific things. It is the atonement that is vicarious. Atonement is making it right.

I saw a thing last night where a guy who was a former army and claimed to be a ranger but wasn't, went out in the woods and had a little cabin and had his family up there, a couple of daughters and a little boy out there with his wife. And some teenagers were out on a lark and started messing with his stuff and pulling up his Christian preserve signs and stealing his solar lights and apparently popped off a few caps. And this guy kind of went off and went after him with a pistol and an AR-15 and shot them all up and disabled their car and ended up killing the driver of this car.

And so the lady who was the mother of this guy was saying, you know, yeah, justice was served. The guy was convicted. He's been put in prison for 84 years to life.

But it can never make it right. A preacher on the radio this morning talking about people who come and ask for forgiveness and what's the nature of forgiveness. And if there's been a situation of incest, you know, somebody can come and ask for forgiveness.

And it may even be granted if that person has a genuine change of heart and genuine, all these other conditions. But can it ever be made right? Well, atonement is a supernatural thing whereby we are made right. It isn't something within human power.

We can't make things right that go terribly wrong. You can do a lot of patching and you can do a lot of forgiving and you can do a lot of overlooking and covering over and letting go of things. That's what remission is.

That's what forgiveness is. You let go of some obligation you would otherwise hold the perpetrator to, but it doesn't necessarily make it right. Atonement is the right making.

Well, we can't even do it among ourselves. We certainly can't make things right with God for who we are and what we do and how we think and our just innate corruption and all of its expressions. The Lord Jesus Christ on the cross did that for us.

That's what vicarious means. It means on behalf of someone else or in the stead of someone. You can't go to Paris, but you know somebody who went and when they come back and show you the slide show they created, you can enjoy it vicariously, at second hand.

Somebody else did the visiting and the tourism for you and you sort of in a second hand way experience it. Well, that's vicarious atonement. Redemption is the paying of a price.

We cannot pay the price. We cannot redeem ourselves. So there's no such thing as vicarious redemption.

So I was pointing this out and I said, well, it's basically like somebody in chess. You can talk about, well, I sacrificed a pawn in order to get a tactical advantage. I went down a point initially, but it gave me such a positional help that I didn't miss the pawn.

Or I sacrificed a rook. I sacrificed a bishop. Sometimes you'll even do what they call a queen sack, where you put your queen out there and by moving a piece to take the queen, you run your rook down to the last level and it's checkmate.

Yeah, you took the bait. You killed my queen. Hooray for you, but you just lost the game.

Queen sack. Well, the one thing you never do in chess is a king sack. You don't sacrifice your king because the whole point of the game is to put the king in a position where the next move would take him out.

You never sacrifice your king. But there is a case here that Paul is talking about where he says the wisdom of God in a mystery. None of the rulers of this age knew had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

God, because He is God, did a king sack. He sacrificed the king. He sacrificed the Messiah, the son of David.

Sacrifice Him. Let Him be killed on the cross. Satan did not see that coming.

Wait a minute. You can't do a king sack. That's not how the game is played.

Well, look, he's the smartest creature that ever came from the hand of God, but he's not as smart as God. And God did a king sack on the cross, and Lucifer never saw it coming. He's still trying to come back from that, and he can't.

It's game over. Because oddly enough, in the act of sacrificing his king, God wins the game and demonstrates to all of His creatures His grace, His glory, and His absolute plumb line standard of righteousness. We saw that plumb line in Amos Friday night.

So we're getting to the rest of this. God has revealed these things in verse 10 to us through His Spirit. God has revealed them through His Spirit.

Now did He not also reveal them through Jesus? Isn't Jesus the Word made flesh and dwelled among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace, full of truth? Yes, but it's a different kind of communication. The Lord Jesus is the physical communication. The Holy Spirit communicates these truths.

Now, what verse did I skip here? What does verse 9 say? "...Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him." We quote this often thinking about what is beyond death, what is beyond the grave, what is beyond the judgment seat of Christ, what is beyond the millennial kingdom. And we say, you know, we just have no concept of what God has prepared for those who love Him. However, what does verse 10 say? "...Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, it hasn't entered into the heart of man." This is our material corporeal existence down here.

And what God has prepared for those who love Him cannot be attained, can't be grasped, can't be understood, can't be digested through eyes, ears, and heart. And we say, well, it's just beyond me. You know, God's ways are higher than our ways.

What does verse 10 say? "...But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. So, what eye has not seen and ear has not heard and what hasn't entered into the heart of man is available to us through the Spirit, because the Spirit searches all things, the deep things of God. What man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him." The spirit of a man.

This is what defines us as a man. There's a spirit of God and that's sort of definitional expression of God. Spirit of man is the definitional expression of a man.

Even so, no one knows the things of God except the spirit of God. And our spirit has to be upgraded. It has to be renovated.

Everybody has a spirit. But the unbeliever, those who are separate from God, their spirit is dysfunctional. It's essentially dead.

It can produce no fruit. It is a withered, stunted, blighted thing. And it is limited to what the eye can see and what the ear can hear and what it might be able to imagine in its science fiction wildest dreams.

Oh, if we could only travel in space with Captain Kirk or Captain Picard or Princess Leia or somebody, we could achieve utopia. That's the spirit of man. It's limited and it's dopey.

It can't think about causes and conditions and successions and relations. It can't predict outcomes. Oh, we think thalidomide is a wonderful thing.

We'll give it to these pregnant women and it will really help them. Little do we know the unforeseen consequence. Oh, we're going to give food to the world.

Let's ship food all around the world and feed the hungry. That can't be bad. Oh, guess what? The increase of food is just a slight upward slope on how productive we can make our fields.

But because we're shipping it all over the world, the population is growing exponentially. Now we have created even more people who are starving because we fed their grandparents and great-grandparents. And now there are ten times as many starving children because when we fed them, we didn't account for the fact that the population would exponentially increase and we didn't allow for that and we didn't provide for it.

Now instead of a hundred starving people, there are ten thousand starving people in exactly the same region. We didn't solve the problem. We exacerbated the problem.

We amplified the problem. We exponentially magnified the problem because we're stupid

humans. That's what the eye sees.

That's what the ear hears. When we are saved, when we trust Christ and we are regenerated and God's Holy Spirit comes in and changes our human spirit, we don't go from dual to tri. There's a lot of people who say, well, you were just soul and body.

Now you're body, soul and spirit. You become, you're spiritually born. No, you have a spirit.

It's just a train wreck of a spirit. It's a dwarfish, mutant, corrupted, twisted, smelly, downward spiraling, indefinite, amorphous, ugly thing. And God the Holy Spirit regenerates it, renews it, remakes it in the same way, by the way, that our degenerating, crumbling body is going to degenerate.

To be not done away with, but transformed. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. It doesn't say we shall all be replaced.

We shall all be changed. We will be transmuted, transmogrified. It's an upgrade.

We get the 2.0 body. This body is changed. So it is helpful to think in those terms of body, soul, and spirit.

And when you read the passages that refer to the body, soul, and spirit, that's sort of the, you could say physical, but that's kind of the organization of functional parts in more of a definitional sense. We have a soul, we have a spirit, and we have a body. And you can draw lines of distinction between them.

Now the operation and function of those parts are expressed in other terms. So what goes on in the soul, we call it the mind, the noose. What goes on in the spirit, we call it the heart.

And what goes on in the body, that is typically linked to the emotions. Emotions are very often chemically defined and chemically expressed. And so when the body runs away with us, you know, when lust is conceived, it brings forth sin.

We have these bodily urges. We have these things that don't seem to be controllable with thinking or with willpower. So I'm encouraging you just, and you don't have to, but this is the way I think of it.

Here is the soul, and that is, the function of the soul is what we call the mind. You think in your soul. Remember the rich man? Soul, you're doing really well.

I say to my soul, soul, that's where you think. So the mind corresponds roughly with the soul. The heart corresponds to the spirit.

As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. These are not discreet. You know, a car has got an engine, tires, seats, and a steering wheel.

You can't separate one from another. You can't say, well, I'm just going to turn the steering wheel, if you've got no car. You know, you could be in a skit maybe with a steering wheel and nothing else, and you've got an imaginary car.

But in real life, these things are integrated. Your computer's got RAM and a hard drive and a processor and input output. Well, you don't just hold the hard drive in your hand and say, well, you know, this hard drive retrieves and runs and stores my programs and data.

Well, not unless you hook it up to a processor and you've got some input. You know, they all are integrated. So you can talk about thinking in the heart.

You can talk about thinking in the soul. But the seat of it, the origin of it, the place where it resides, just like your data and programs reside on your hard drive until they're loaded into RAM, that's your thinking. That's the soul.

Your motives, your motivations, which of course compose a part of thought, but that's in the heart. The heart is your spiritual center. The heart is your spiritual center.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart. The unregenerate heart doesn't love God. Love resides in the heart.

Love from the heart. Serve from the heart. And that's why in this passage, and this is my whole final point here, why are we talking about all this? When it says, serve from the heart, obey your masters from the heart, this is your regenerate heart.

Your spirit has the capacity to appreciate, love, and serve God. And so the seat of it, the origin of it, the way it works isn't by reasoning yourself into it. It isn't a soulish thought process.

It is the heart with which we worship. It is the heart with which we appreciate. It is the center of our spiritual life.

Heart and spirit closely associated in the same way that the soul and the mind are closely related. And then you have the body and its emotions. And you've got to be really careful and suspicious of impulses and of emotional reactions.

These things are chemically controlled. They can be chemically changed. Sometimes we do that on purpose and it's needful.

You've got a deficiency or an overage of something and we need to regulate it. This is why there's very healthy medicine you can take to keep your physical plant on an even keel. Replace what's missing.

Damp what's excessive. There's nothing wrong with that. But we recognize that this largely

provides input to the soul and the spirit by way of the emotions.

Depression is an emotional state. Exhilaration, hilarity, overjoyedness, ecstatic excitement. These are the emotions.

So if you line those up, then when we come to passages like this where it says, serve from the heart, we say, well, I know how to get the heart in line. This is where the Word of God does the majority of its work. It is a judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

It's not a judge of the rationalizations and arguments of the mind. It's the heart. The heart is the seat of our relationship with God.

It's where love is expressed. It's the motivation center. And we get inputs from the mind and we get inputs from the emotions, the body and the soul.

But the seat and the center for us as believers with a regenerate heart, that's where we make our money. That's where we invest in our inheritance. That's where we love and serve God and we love and serve one another from the heart.

Make sense? Well, we'll be ready to move on in chapter 6 of Ephesians next week with that background, but let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank You for the truth of Your Word, how clear and pertinent it is in not only illuminating the past, but the present and the future. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will witness with our spirit that we are Your children, that we therefore have the obligation of children to observe and respect and obey and function under the perfect structure and the perfect plan and purpose that You have defined and laid out so clearly for us.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.