|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Psalm 40:1-11 Mark 12:28-34 | Soul Keeping (part 2) The Struggle of the Soul | Pinelands – 9am – 11/08/2024Thornton – 10:30am – 11/08/2024 |

Have you ever noticed how the **English language…**

uses the word… **“HEART”**

***For Example…***

 - a person without compassion is described as… ***"heartless"***

and we urge them to ***"have a heart."***
- an evil person is described as ***"black-hearted"***

while godly saints have ***"hearts of gold."***
- Courageous soldiers are ***"brave hearted."***
- Jilted lovers are ***"brokenhearted."***- If we need to speak intimately with someone,

we have a ***"heart-to-heart"*** talk. *(DMC)*- But when we lose our passion for life,

when a deadness sets in or we show apathy…

we confess, ***"My heart's just not in it."***

- Our deepest hurts we call ***"heartaches."*AND…** when we love someone as deeply as we can…

we’re said to love ***"with all our heart."***

In our bible story today **Jesus says…**

that the greatest commandment in all Scripture is to…

***“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and***

 ***with all your soul and with all your mind and with***

 ***all your strength.”* Mark 12:30**

**We often speak of how much God loves us…**

***“For God so loved the world that He gave***

***His only begotten Son…”* John 3:16**

**But** sometimes people fail to think in terms of…

 **…how WE feel toward God.**
We go to church, give our offerings,

 Sing songs,

do all kinds of good works, work for the kingdom.

In our prayers… we talk about our needs and wants.

***Rarely*** do we take the time…

**to tell God… how much we love Him.
*Rarely*** do we spend the time telling Him… **WHY we love Him.**

We’ll do our duty and presume God loves us **BUT…**

for many believers, the idea of emotionally loving God…

 is somehow hard for them to wrap their minds around.

***BUT…*** Hear these verses from Scripture…

**Psalm 42:1… tells us,**

***“As the deer pants for water so my soul longs after You”*Psalm 84:2 declares…**

***“My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the LORD;***

 ***my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”*Psalm 143:6…**

***“I spread out my hands to you; my soul thirsts for you***

 ***like a thirsty land.”*And Isaiah 26:9a…**

***“My soul yearns for you in the night; in the morning***

 ***my spirit longs for you...”***

Each of those passages come from a place of…

**REMEMBERING… and… MEDITATING ON…**

 **Who God is… OR… What God has done.**

**This is…** a love that is an all-consuming passion

a desire for God that goes so deep that

sometimes it hurts.

**Because** it is part of our **INTEGRATED LIFE**

***Remember*** last week… We said…

 **A Healthy Soul…**

Keeps our lives together ***/ INTEGRATED***

**Jesus** also says **that we need to love the Lord our God…**

**with all of our *SOUL.***

This is the idea of **TOTAL COMMITMENT.**

When a person is in love with God with all their **SOUL…**

They **CHOOSE** to Love God with **ALL** of their lives.

We do not compartmentalise God – *(last week)*
 God is part of everything – **Integrated**

**Our SOUL… Holds everything together**

**Therefore to Love God** with all our **SOUL…**

 ***IS TO…*** Love God with **ALL** of our lives.

**King David…** we are told… was a man after God’s own heart…

and that was reflected in loving God with all of his ***SOUL.***

In **2 Samuel…**

We are told of an Israelite who offered to supply

David with the wood and animals for Worship.

***But*** **David** responded… **(verse 24)…**

***“I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God***

***offerings that cost me nothing”***

David ***loved God so much*** that he…

was committed to giving something to God…

that actually cost him something.

 David made the **CHOICE**

**Martin Luther** once said….

***“A religion that gives nothing, costs nothing,***

***and suffers nothing,… is worth nothing.”***

**Loving God** with all my **SOUL…**

Is a love that leads me to give of myself ***because…***

***I love Him …*** not because of duty or obligation.

 ***BUT…*** **out of Choice to LOVE.**

**Loving God** with all my **SOUL…**

 **CHANGES US…**

When we **LOVE** in that way…

 WE become **More** ***COMPSSIONATE***

 *(****AND Compassion*** *is a sign of Spiritual Maturity)*

**A sure sign of a Healthy SOUL…**

 Is seen in our ***COMPSSION*** for others

And our ***COMPASSION*** is expressed in so many ways…

 In a willingness to ENGAGE with others

 In ACTS of SERVICE and GIVING

 In an UNDERSTANDING Attitude

 In Recognising the DIGNITY of others

**The Choice to LOVE always bears the Fruit of COMPASSION**

**LOVE is always a CHOICE…**

 To love with **ALL our SOUL…** Begins with a **CHOICE**

**A true story from WW2…**

A young soldier…

who had no family was preparing to ship off to Europe…

 He found a book in a second hand store…

 In the margins were written some insightful

 Comments and observations.

Upon investigation he found the name and address of the donor

He wrote a letter explaining how he found the book…

 How impressed he was with the comments…

And asked… If they could correspond while he was in Europe.

 She replied that she would be happy to do so.

Throughout the war, the soldier and the woman…

exchanged constant letters…

Eventually the young soldier found that…

he was falling in love with her.

He said as much in one of his letters.

She responded that she was feeling the same for him.

He sent her his picture.

She wrote back and said that if he truly loved her...

a picture would not be necessary.

At last, he was to return from the War and wrote her that his ship would be docking at NY, not far from where she lived.

If she could come and meet him at the dock,

he would bring the book and she could wear…

a red rose on her lapel to help him identify her.

To this… She agreed.

When his ship docked, he descended the gangplank…

and searched the crowd for the woman he had written to for so long.

Suddenly he was approached by a stunningly beautiful…

blond woman, dressed in a crisp green suit and eyes

twinkling as she looked at him and walked up to him.

In the wonder of that moment, he neglected to see that…

she was not wearing a rose on her lapel.

She spoke: ***"Hi soldier."*** She winked and walked on.

For a moment he was tempted to follow her and ask her name,

but just then he noticed a woman standing alone,

wearing a red rose on the lapel of her brown suit.

The woman was… quite a bit older than him…

very plain and Homely lookling…

He struggled for a moment with his dilemma, but then…

he realized that this was the person who…

had given so much of her heart to him and

had given him strength in very difficult times.

Perhaps he could not feel romantic love for her,

but the very least he could do was ask her out to eat and

 explain how much her letters had meant to him.

Straightening himself, he crossed to her and saluted.

Taking her hand, he introduced himself and asked…

if she would do him the honor of eating with him.

With a startled look, the woman said,

***"Look, Mr. I'm not sure what is going on here, but***

 ***that blond woman that just passed you gave me this rose***

 ***to wear on my suit and said that if a soldier were to ask***

 ***me out to eat, she would be across the street in the***

 ***restaurant waiting on him."***
**That soldier made a CHOICE… ABOUT LOVE…**

**that affected his entire future.**

***…IT IS ALL ABOUT CHOICE.***

**What choice will you make?**

**Will you choose to…**

***“Love the Lord your God with all your heart,***

***with all your SOUL, with all your mind,***

***and with all your strength.”***

**AND…** **Will we see the Fruits of *COMPASSION* in your life?**

**Psalm 40:1-11** A Song of Praise

I waited patiently for the Lord's help;

 then he listened to me and heard my cry.

He pulled me out of a dangerous pit,

 out of the deadly quicksand.

He set me safely on a rock

 and made me secure.

He taught me to sing a new song,

 a song of praise to our God.

Many who see this will take warning

 and will put their trust in the Lord.

Happy are those who trust the Lord,

 who do not turn to idols

 or join those who worship false gods.

You have done many things for us, O Lord our God;

 there is no one like you!

 You have made many wonderful plans for us.

I could never speak of them all—

 their number is so great!

You do not want sacrifices and offerings;

 you do not ask for animals burned whole on the altar

 or for sacrifices to take away sins.

Instead, you have given me ears to hear you,

 and so I answered, “Here I am;

 your instructions for me are in the book of the Law.

How I love to do your will, my God!

 I keep your teaching in my heart.”

In the assembly of all your people, Lord,

 I told the good news that you save us.

 You know that I will never stop telling it.

I have not kept the news of salvation to myself;

 I have always spoken of your faithfulness and help.

In the assembly of all your people I have not been silent

 about your loyalty and constant love.

Lord, I know you will never stop being merciful to me.

 Your love and loyalty will always keep me safe.

**Mark 12:28-34 The Great Commandment**

A teacher of the Law was there who heard the discussion. He saw that Jesus had given the Sadducees a good answer, so he came to him with a question: “Which commandment is the most important of all?”

Jesus replied, “The most important one is this: ‘Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ The second most important commandment is this: ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’ There is no other commandment more important than these two.”

The teacher of the Law said to Jesus, “Well done, Teacher! It is true, as you say, that only the Lord is God and that there is no other god but he. And you must love God with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your strength; and you must love your neighbor as you love yourself. It is more important to obey these two commandments than to offer on the altar animals and other sacrifices to God.”

Jesus noticed how wise his answer was, and so he told him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.”

After this nobody dared to ask Jesus any more questions.