

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Thessalonians 5:23**.
- B. I want to challenge your thinking in one distinct area tonight. And I want to talk about something that we all need to do in order to live the Xian life.
- C. Let's talk about the spirit, soul and body and specifically the transformation of the spirit.

I. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUL AN SPIRIT.

- A. In our scripture text Paul says that man is made up of three things; spirit, soul and body. Many times we refer to these three in reverse order because in our life we place the greater emphasis on the body and the lesser emphasis on the spirit.
- B. But what is the difference between the soul and spirit? Hebrews 4:12 says that the word of God can divide the two, so let us look into the word tonight and see if we can do the same.
- C. To answer the question above we need to go back to Genesis 1. In 26,27 we see that an was created in the image of God. But notice also that the animals were created with "life" "the breath of life" or a "soul." "Soul" means breathing creature (Gen. 1:30; 7:15).
- D. Both man and the animals then have a soul and a body. But the animals have something that man has very little of...instinct. By this instinct much of how animals live is not a learned response. Knowing where to find their mother's milk, the migration in herds, the self-defense mechanisms, and the reproductive process all come by instinct.
- E. But the great interlink between man and God that allows man to have communion and communication with God is that of the spirit. As the animals are body, soul and instinct (Jude 10), so man is as Paul said, body, soul and spirit.
- F. This spirit however, has been corrupted by sin. Notice the difference in the account found in Gen. 5:1-3 in the man before the Fall and after the Fall. One is made in the image of God (a perfect spirit, soul and body), while the other is after the image of Adam (a corrupted spirit, soul and body). Seth is in the image of Adam, not God.
- G. To my knowledge man is never said to be in the image of God after Gen. 5:1. The next time we see the possibility to be in His image is in 2Cor. 3:18. And this is done by the process of transformation.

II. TRANSFORMATION OF THE SPIRIT.

- A. So what is the transformation of the spirit? First of all, transformation is not conversion. There is a big difference in the realm of electricity between a converter and a transformer. A converter changes the kind of current, while the transformer increases or decreases its power. Paul says we need power to live the Xian life and this comes by being transformed into the likeness of God.
- B. Probably as we view ourselves we have one life (self) at work, another at church, another at home, and still another at recreation. Our spirit is dis-integrated, it is not whole, and needs to be integrated.
- C. Our spirit needs to be transformed. Transformation involves "mind—renewal" (Rom. 12:2). We are to participate in a metamorphosis of the mind. This is done by leaving the pattern of the world, and to begin thinking along an entirely different line of reasoning. If this is not done after our conversion our case is hopeless (Lk. 11:24-26).
- D. So, since we do not live by instinct, and life becomes a learned response, we must learn again by transformation how to live life. In doing this we become like God again, made in His image through the power of Christ. Which brings us back to 2Cor. 3:18.

III. TRANSFORMATION: HOW IT'S DONE.

- A. 2Corinthians 3:18 says that we are to behold God with face unveiled. In the context we see that we are to be like Moses who saw God without his face being covered so that he could "soak-up" the glory of God. We are to see God in Christ in such a way as to get all we can get.
- B. Paul then goes on to say that by seeing God clearly and by being in the transforming process (getting power for daily living), we go from glory unto glory. In the context, the first glory is the Law of Moses and the second glory is the new covenant. The lesson is that no matter what glory we had before, the power and glory of the new covenant (in Christ) is far greater.
- C. We have not been created to sin, but for glory.
- D. Transformation, the acquiring of power to live the Xian life does not come from worship services, gospel meetings, and/or fellowship events. That may be a part of it, but to be the ever changing mirror takes daily devotion to God.
- E. We are the mirror in 2Cor. 3:18 trying to reflect God's glory to the world. When we don't do it well, we are called hypocrites. As we do it better and better we become more like God's image, then we are what we are supposed to be.
- F. Proper transformation cannot be done in worship services alone. To have the power to live the Xian life one must spend time daily in Bible study and prayer. To allow the glory of God through Christ be part of your life by knowing His will and communicating with God often.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Paul wants us to be sanctified in spirit, soul and body--in that order. And why not, when the spirit is right then it only naturally follows that the soul and the body will be right too (1Th. 5:23).
- B. To those who need conversion, the plan of salvation for non-Xians.
- C. To those who need transformation, the plan for erring Xians.