

Battle for Your Soul #1: Getting Ready for the Fight of your Life

Battles of the Soul

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Today we want to begin a study of messages on the battles for our souls. And I am going to, over the next few minutes, acquaint you with the fact that the seven battles of the Promised Land represent seven different battles for our soul. And we are going to be looking at a variety of Scriptures and things this morning. And now I am reminded of a mourning one time when I was working in my office at a church I pastored in east Dallas and while I was working all of the sudden the fire alarms went off at the church, a rather loud, annoying thing. I very quickly grabbed a fire extinguisher, ran throughout the whole church and looked up upstairs and downstairs both and could never find any sign of a fire. It was a false alarm. It had gone off about a trouble that didn't exist.

But I want to assure you that I am going to sound an alarm today about a very real problem and that is that if you are a Christian, Satan has lost the battle for the possession of your spirit, because the Holy Spirit has come to live inside your spirit. Your spirit is that part of you which communicates with God.

Now, I will tell you right up front here is a great theological controversy and that is about whether man is a dichotomy, that is made of two parts, basically body and spirit, or if he is made of three parts, that is, is he made of spirit, soul and body? And I happen to fall in the camp of those that believe that God made man in his image and since he is a trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, he made us a trinity, that there is a spirit, a soul and a body.

And, by the way, just so you know, there are versions of the Bible that do not translate the word soul when the Greek word ψυχη (psoo-khay') from which we get psychology occurs and they ignore it. And if you want to know if your version is one of those, turn over to James chapter one and look at the verse that says, "and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."¹ And if your Bible doesn't have the word "soul" there, then the translators of your Bible have chosen not to translate the Greek word that is there, ψυχη (psoo-khay'), for soul, because they didn't believe in the existence of a soul. They believe basically you are just body and spirit or they might even say body and soul, but they don't admit to a trichotomy.

¹ James 1:21.

And if you have a Bible like that, I recommend you find another Bible to use. And so that is a good test is look at James chapter one. Look for the verse that says, “receive with meekness the engrafted word,”² and if you have a poor translation it will say, “which is able to save you.” But if it says, “which is able to save your souls...”³

Now, why is it important that you know whether that man is a two part being or a three part being. Well, it is for reasons like that Scripture verse. You interpret Scriptures differently based on your understanding of man.

For example, if I believe that engrafting the Word of God into my heart saves me, but I just think it saves, then I might come to an erroneous conclusion that engrafting God’s Word in my heart would actually be the way that I would go to heaven because some translations just say, “receive with meekness the engrafted word,” or “grafting God’s word which is able to save you,” and that could mean anything. It could mean that the only way I am going to go to heaven is to memorize and meditate on Scripture.

But if I understand that man is a trichotomy, I understand that when James tells me that I am to memorize and meditate on God’s Word, which is what it means to engraft Scripture, I do it for the purpose of putting it into my life so that it affects my soul which is my mind, my will and my emotions. So engrafting Scripture, while it won’t get me to heaven, it will help me think more clearly. That is my mind. It will help me feel more correctly which is my emotions. And it will help me make better decisions which is my will. So my soul, then, gets the benefit of meditating on Scripture. I did not have to meditate on Scripture to get to heaven, to live with Jesus forever. I simply invited him into my heart as my Lord and Savior.

So it is important for you to understand that man is a trichotomy. When God said, “Let us...” talking to himself, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, “Let us make man in our own image,”⁴ that he made us a trinity of spirit, soul and body. And the Bible often refers to all three components of you and some often in one verse where I pray your whole spirit and soul and body.

So you need to understand that God made us a trinity.

Interestingly enough, let me give you a little quick statistic. For every one time the Bible refers to your body in the New Testament, it will refer three time to your soul, you mind will and emotions. It will refer six times to your spirit. So God looks at you as though you are about 10 percent body, about 30 percent mind will and emotions and about 60 percent spirit. To put it another way, that is important for you and I to understand because we are primarily spiritual beings. We are not human beings on a spiritual journey. We are spiritual beings on a human journey. And what that means for you and me is that we need to remember our primary focus is to have intimacy with God. And that is the main

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Genesis 1:26.

focus. This, by the way, applies to the whole concept of dating versus courtship. So in dating there is a physical attraction that often happens first and then when a couple, you know, starts getting a little further in the relationship and get engaged they start talking about where they want to live and they want to do all these things together and they start developing a little soul harmony and very often when they get married they never develop the spiritual component because they got married for physical reasons. Sometimes there is physical intimacy before there ought to be.

But God's design was during courtship for a young man and a young woman to develop a spiritual intimacy with one another, to pray together, to study God's Word together, to get the plan and the purpose that God has for their lives together. And then when they get engaged they are supposed to start thinking about, ok, what jobs are we going to have. Where are we going to live? How many kids are we going to have? Is momma going to stay home and take care of the kids? What church are we going to go to? Where are we going to spend Thanksgiving every year, your family or mine? And that is developing soul harmony.

And the physical intimacy waits until after the wedding vows have been taken.

So you need to really understand this issue of that man is a trichotomy or that he is a three part being so that you can correctly interpret Scripture and apply it to the life and so that you correctly know how to order your life.

So with that said, we want to get in and I want to introduce what I think is going to be one of the most important series of sermons I have ever preached. Recently we have completed the 49 commands of Christ and that, certainly, is a most important series of lessons I think I have ever taught. But here in the regular services we are going to begin preaching through the seven battles of the Promised Land and I think that these will be far and away the most important series.

Now I don't know about you, but I have often struggled with the same dilemma that Paul struggles with in Romans chapter seven. And just turn your Bibles there for a minute and see if this doesn't sound like you, because I think sometimes that I struggle with this same problem that the apostle Paul has. And basically if you jump down to Romans chapter seven down to, let's just say verse 17. We will start there.

Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.⁵

Have you ever know that you were doing wrong, but you did it anyway because it was almost like you couldn't help it and yet the things you knew you were supposed to do, you couldn't seem to quite get around to it.

⁵ Romans 7:17-19.

He says:

Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?⁶

Now, by the way that is an important concept, once again, to understand that you are a three part being. What Paul is saying is that in his spirit he knows to do the right things. He knows what in his spirit because the Holy Spirit of God has instructed his spirit. Not only that, but the Word of God has come into his mind and he knows in his mind what he is supposed to do in order to please God.

The problem is that in his flesh, that is his body, there is another law.

Scientists tell us that every time you make a memory there is a crease that is put on your brain, an actual physical change to the surface of the brain. And the thing is, when you do something wrong it puts one of those little wrinkles there. You do the same thing wrong again or are given the same temptation again, you get another wrinkle there. If you do the same thing wrong enough again the wrinkle turns into a dirt road. The dirt road turns into a paved asphalt road and eventually it will turn into a four lane highway and you now have a thoroughly well established process of sin that you are going to head down that process of sin every time because it is the easiest route to take.

When we became a Christian, our spirit was reborn. We were no longer the same men and yet we still live in the same body, the body that Paul calls in Romans chapter seven this body of death. And he says there is a law in my members. That is, I still have the old seven lane highways that I built with my sinful habits. He says, but now I have the law of God in me and I want to serve God and so he says, "With my mind," he goes on to say, "With my mind, therefore, I serve the law of God."

Verse 25.

"So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."⁷

So he says, "There is a war in my members," verse 23, "warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."⁸

So Paul says the old sin nature is thoroughly established patterns in a physical body.

⁶ Romans 7:20-24.

⁷ Romans 7:25.

⁸ Romans 7:23.

And guess what? It is our physical body that opens us to most sins. David didn't go to battle one day with his men. He is walking along the top of his place when he looks down and he sees Bathsheba and he lusts after her. He saw her with his eyes as part of his body. He looked at the fruit and saw that it looked good to eat so he saw that with her body.

So it is the physical sensations that often lead us to temptation. You see the chocolate cake. You smell the stuff cooking in the kitchen and you might be tempted to gluttony.

So it is through the avenue of our sense that temptations often come. And what happens is the soul sits in the middle of the spirit and the body. It hears God's input from spirit, but it hears the world's input from the body and in the middle is the battleground. That is the soul. That is where decisions have to be made. That is where lives are forged is in the battle of the soul.

Now when you became a Christian, Satan lost any rights to your spirit. He can't have you. You are forever and ever belong to Jesus Christ. Now I know there are people who believe that salvation is not forever. I just want to give you two verses of Scripture to write down next time someone says that.

Hebrews chapter 10 and verse 14.

“For by one offering,”⁹ and it is talking in Hebrews 10 about Jesus dying on the cross, “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.”¹⁰

So he has perfected us how long? Forever. Now that doesn't mean that we have a practical perfection. In other words, you and I still sin at times. But positionally, we are perfected forever.

And then another verse of Scripture I would encourage you to write down it comes from the book of Ecclesiastes chapter 3:14 is another verse. Both these, Hebrews 10:14, Hebrews 3:14 end in 14 so it makes it easy to remember.

But Ecclesiastes 3:14.

“I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.”¹¹

When I was saved I can't add anything to it. I can't take anything away from it. God did it all and he did it forever so he alone gets the glory for my salvation. And he is keeping it because he knew that if I could lose salvation I would because I will mess up. But he knew that he wouldn't mess up. That is why God the Father made a covenant with God the Son in the book of Genesis. The smoking lamp and the burning furnace passed between the animals that Abraham had divided and God stood in for Abraham who he

⁹ Hebrews 10:14.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ecclesiastes 3:14.

put to sleep and God the Son made a covenant with God the Father on behalf of Abraham and it was an eternal covenant. In the same way God the Son stands in for me and he makes an eternal covenant. I inherit the eternal covenant with the Father by virtue of my relationship with his Son. I am not going to lose that.

Now I could spend a whole sermon just on why we know we are eternally secure in Jesus Christ. But let's go one because I have a whole new appreciation of Hebrews 13:17 where it says you obey your leaders, submit to the authority "for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you."¹²

What I want to do is I want to give you some weaponry or give you an understanding of the battle for your soul because ultimately I am partially accountable for your souls that I give you God's truth. And I want us to pray together that God will bless this series of messages in the book of Joshua as we look at the seven battles for our soul.

Let's got to the Lord in a word of prayer.

Father, help us to understand and appreciate the great detail you put in the book of Joshua to tell us precisely what we needed to know about the battles we fight daily, how each of these seven battles in Joshua represent something that we face in our lives. God, glorify yourself as you help us become more aware of Satan's tactics against us and how we might defeat them, for we pray it in Christ's name. Amen.

Well, let me give you the background for the book of Joshua. And it is important you understand this. The children of Israel have successfully left Egypt. Now they were in Egypt and they were slaves in Egypt. Pharaoh wore on his head a crown that actually had a serpent on the crown. And so they were in slavery to the serpent.

Now that is a wonderful analogy right there to understand that when we... prior to accepting the Lord Jesus Christ we were in slavery to the serpent. We were in slavery to the devil. It is not a question of whether or not we are going to be slaves, but whether we are going to be slaves to Satan or slaves to Jesus Christ.

And [?] they managed to leave. They carried away treasure, in fact. They were no longer slaves to Pharaoh. They were able to leave because they had 10 plagues that demonstrated the power of God. Each one of those 10 plagues, by the way, was a demonstration of God's power over one of the Egyptian gods. The Egyptians had a bunch of gods. They had a frog god.

By the way, I think his name was Hopi, H O P I, which is rather intriguing in itself. They had a fly god. They had, you know, the Nile was one of their gods. And so they had all these different gods. The last one was an attack against or showing that Pharaoh himself was not a god and that was the death of the first born.

¹² Hebrews 13:17.

And on that night, we call it Passover because God told the Israeli people, “You need to eat a lamb and if you can’t eat the whole lamb you invite people into your house. Eat the lamb. You paint the blood over your doorpost on the lintels of the doorpost.” And then the death angel will pass over you and he won’t destroy you, but he will destroy the first born throughout Egypt who is not covered under the blood.

And so we have a remarkable thing that takes place and everybody gets together and they find a male lamb and it had to be a perfect lamb. And so it was a male lamb. It was a perfect lamb. It became a slain lamb. They had to kill it. Then they had to share the lamb. And when they left Egypt, when they left Egypt to go across the Red Sea and into the Promised Land, what you need to understand is all three million people that left Egypt and went into the Promised Land had the lamb inside of them.

It is a remarkable picture of salvation because they leave slavery to the serpent only when they have the slain lamb inside of them. And, of course, that lamb is a picture of Jesus Christ which is why John the Baptist upon seeing Jesus said, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”¹³

And yet now that they have this great victory, they leave Egypt, but things still aren’t exactly smooth going. See, the children of Israel rebelled against God’s rule about going into the Promised Land. They sent in 12 spies and 10 of them came back and said, “No way, Jose. We can’t get in there.”

And two of them came back and said, “You know what? God can do anything. We are ready to go.”

But the other 10, somehow or other, had climbed up inside the brains of their opponents and gotten next to their optical nerve and said, “We are like grasshoppers in their sight.” Somehow or other they knew what they looked like in the lives of those who they were going to have to go in to defeat.

Now they started complaining. Some of them wanted to go back to Egypt and that is kind of the way it is with us. Sometimes after being born again there is still a tendency inside of us to want to ignore God wills and seek our own way because we find out the Christian life really and truthfully is challenging. And what happens when we do that? We end up wandering in the wilderness like they did. We sometimes long for our old life, a life in which there wasn’t a compulsion to obey God and to do right.

So they end up wandering for 40 years and underwent a lot of serious chastisement that we will talk about next week and what they should have learned from it. And that purged from their midst most of those who liked [?] and desired to return to Egypt.

See, here is the problem. God had gotten Israel out of Egypt. But they had to wander in the wilderness for 40 years so that God could get Egypt out of Israel. In other words,

¹³ John 1:29.

they had become worldly. They had become Egyptian in some respects. So do you see the picture They leave slavery in Egypt by hiding the lamb inside of them. Excuse me.

[?] after receiving the sacrifice of the only Lamb of God, Jesus Christ.

Then they come to the waters of the Red Sea where their enemies are drowned, but they pass through safely.

Now, by the way, Paul refers to this event in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 saying it is a picture of baptism. He talks about the baptism that they were baptized under the cloud and in the Red Sea in 1 Corinthians chapter 10 and sends a picture of baptism which is something we do. It is that... it... Baptism doesn't really do anything but get you wet. But it is a picture of the fact that you have. The old man has been crucified and buried with Jesus Christ and you were raised up to walk in newness of life. Christ commanded baptism along with the Lord's supper as the two ordinances of the church that we were to keep thereafter. One of the commands of Christ is to baptize his disciples. So when we are executing the Great Commission we are supposed to go out. We are to baptize people. And we have to be baptized in order to be obedient to Christ.

But now with their external enemies behind them Pharaoh's army gets drowned in the sea. They still have an internal enemy. There are some that don't want to go further. [?] God can give a victory. Others just want to go back to the way things were. And that is often true of us as well. And with our slavery to sin ended, the battles become more internal, dealing with our mindsets, our emotions, our thinking. And we have many false ideas that have to be cast down before we can win the victory that God has for us.

So you can really divide the history of Israel into two great sections, getting the people out of Egypt and then getting Egypt out of the people.

Now there are seven significant battles in the book of Joshua that represent the seven most significant battles for your soul, that is, your mind and your will and emotions.

Let me ask you a question. When you asked Jesus into your heart to forgive you of your sins and become your Savior, did everything just suddenly get better? Did you instantly have total victory over bad news and dishonesty and depression? Did you used to curse? Did that cursing instantly go away? Or did you know you had Jesus, but you were still experiencing some problems with your mind, will and emotions? I fall into that latter count.

See, the Bible tells us that we are made in three distinct parts to reflect the trinity of God. We are made in his image. All creation reveals the trinity. Think about it for a minute. There is only three kinds of time, past, present and future. There are three kinds of space, height, length and depth. We live in a three dimensional world. There are three kinds of energy scientists tell us. There is light energy. There is kinetic energy or energy of motion and there is what is called binding force energy. That is the energy that holds the molecules inside the wood of the pews that you are sitting on together.

Scientists tell us that everything in the universe is described in one of three scientific continuums. Everything is either energy and matter which is one continuum or it has to deal with space or it has to deal with time. So there are three continuum, each of which have three parts.

I marvel sometimes that people have such a hard time with the trinity and they can't understand that God is one God, but he has three distinct persons. And I know that is a great mystery and a great theological concept, but I just don't have a problem with it.

But I go turn on a faucet at my house. Water comes out in a liquid form. It is H₂O. But when I put my glass under the dispenser at the front of my refrigerator, ice cubes come out which is also H₂O. And then when I see my wife put water in a pot and stick it on a stove and after a while steam starts coming up, it is still H₂O. I have no problem believing that H₂O can exist in three different forms. If you get still hot enough it will liquefy. If you get it really hot it will vaporize and turn into a gas. So I have no problem believing in trinities. I don't have a problem understanding that the Nile is, you know, it is falls and it is a lake and it is a river all in the same time.

You know, this concept of trinity is just not that hard to see. And, by the way, it shouldn't be hard. Paul said that the invisible things of him, that means God, are clearly seen in the creation of the world, even his eternal power and godhead. The trinity is all around you. All you have got to do is open your eyes and look.

So people that say, "Oh, God is not a trinity, there is no proof for it," you can't come to that conclusion. These are people that have their blinders on.

So if God is a trinity and he says, "Let us make man in our image," then that means that you and I are also a trinity.

1 Thessalonians 5:23. Paul says, "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."¹⁴

There they are. And, by the way, any time you see them together he always mentions spirit first and then soul and then body when the three are mentioned in one place.

Now, interestingly in Hebrews 4:12 the writer of Hebrews says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."¹⁵

He says. "The Word of God shows you the difference between the soul and the spirit. It divides them asunder."

¹⁴ 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

¹⁵ Hebrews 4:12.

So God's Word makes a difference between your spirit and our soul, your spirit being that part of you that communicates to God, your soul being your mind, will and emotions. So we are a three part being.

Now we need to be born again and the Bible distinguishes being born again which takes place in your spirit and the salvation of your soul.

By the way, you will notice many times that the apostle Paul in Romans chapter five particularly I call that the much more chapter because he uses that phrase very often. And he will say something like, "Being justified by Christ's death, much more shall we be saved through his life."

Now we have gotten a little lazy as Baptists in using the word "saved" to mean anything that we want it. You know, it just means you asked Jesus Christ in your heart and walked the aisle and you shake the hands of the preacher and you said, "I want to be saved, pastor."

That is not it. The Bible actually, Paul talked about being justified, but he says, "We shall be saved," as though he had not yet achieved salvation. He had not yet attained. That is a better word, salvation because you and I can do nothing to merit it.

Here is the deal. When we asked Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Savior, God forgives us of our sins and at that point in time we become what the Bible correctly calls justified. The old time preachers used to say to be justified meant it was just as if I had never sinned.

God wipes out your record of sin on the books of heaven. He forgives you because those debts, those sins, those transgressions against the laws of God have been covered by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. They have been paid for forever and your sin debt is wiped out. That is what it means to be justified. You were justified when you invited Jesus Christ into your heart as your Lord and Savior, you repented of your sins, because the Bible says except you repent, you shall all perish, Luke chapter 13, twice in that one chapter, in fact.

So you need to understand that that is justification. Now as a Christian every day I am supposed to be striving to become more like Christ. Paul said in Philippians chapter three, he says:

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.¹⁶

¹⁶ Philippians 3:12-14.

He says, "I am striving to be like Jesus."

Now I know that one day we will be like him for we shall see him as he is, Paul said, but you need to understand that I am now supposed to be involved in a process called sanctification. Sanctification means becoming more holy or becoming more Christ like. So when I invited Christ into my heart that was justification. As I daily study God's Word and pray and eliminate those things from my life that God is not pleased with and do the righteous things that he calls on me to do, I am in the process of sanctification. And then one day, according to the end of Philippians chapter three I will get to the third step which is called glorification.

This old body that has all kinds of problems used to walk with a cane for about eight and a half years still has its aches and pains and bumps and bruises. But one of these days I won't... I will have a body. You will still recognize it is me. But God will glorify this body and give me a glorified body and it won't cough, by the way in the middle of a sermon or while I am making a recording. Won't that be wonderful?

Paul says that when Christ comes, he says:

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.¹⁷

God is going to give me a glorified body like the glorified body that Jesus Christ has. Now won't that be awesome?

So let me give you a little math formula here. You might want to write this down. Justification plus sanctification plus glorification equals salvation. Let me say that one more time. Justification plus sanctification plus glorification equals salvation. We need to understand that salvation encompasses all those things.

Now God starts with justification and that causes a new birth in our spirit. Jesus said in John chapter three verses three through eight:

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou

¹⁷ Philippians 3:20-21.

hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.¹⁸

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”¹⁹

Paul is saying that the old dead spirit, the one we inherited from our fathers because we were dead in our trespasses and sin, it says in Ephesians two, is gone and a new spirit is born within us and God implants his Holy Spirit to live in our spirit. We are born with a dead spirit. Adam and Eve, by the way, you remember, Adam and Eve, God told Adam, he said, “Adam, here is the deal.”

He put him in the garden and there is these two trees in the garden. You can do anything you want to the garden. Eat whatever you want to in the garden. But there is this one tree here that you are not supposed to be messing with. And it is the... you are not to eat of this tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Don't eat in this tree. For in the day that you eat thereof, ye shall surely die.

Now the interesting thing is Eve comes along and, by the way, Adam is with her because the Bible... I used to not think that. I used to think that Eve was by herself when the devil talked to her. But the Bible says that Eve ate of the tree and then did give to her husband who was with her.

So he was kind of standing back saying, “Let's see what happens to her.”

And so Eve gets tempted and she... the devil says, “Has God surely said you will die? You will not die. He just didn't want you to be a god, too. Because when you eat of this, you are going to know the difference between good and evil like he does.”

Now Adam and Eve ate that day of the fruit and yet they lived some... Adam lived some 900 years after eating that.

Let me ask you a question. Did God then lie when he said, “You are going to die in the day that you eat of it”? Or was he mistaken or did he just kind of whimsically change his mind about Adam dying on the day he ate of the fruit?

No. God kept his word, because God, as I said, looks at us, sees us about 10 percent body. That body thing is not all that important to him. He sees us about 30 percent mind will and emotion. He sees us 60 percent spirit. The spirit is that part of us with which God communicates.

The day that Adam disobeyed God in the garden of Eden, he got a dead spirit. He die in his spirit. He died in that part of him that had intimacy with God. And he lost that intimacy.

¹⁸ John 3:3-8.

¹⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:17.

Now here is the interesting thing. We were in Adam and Eve's loins. All of us came genetically from Adam and Eve. Since they had dead spirits, ever since then whenever a human has been born, they have been born with a dead spirit. That is called the depravity of man, meaning that you will never have to teach that cute little baby that maybe the midwife came over and delivered or maybe you picked up at the hospital some time after it was born or that the stork flew in if you want to believe that, ok? You will never have to teach that cute little baby to tell a lie. They are going to figure that out on their own.

You will never have to teach them to grab something from somebody else and say, "Mine," because they will figure that out on their own. You will never have to teach a young person how to steal. They will figure that out on their own. Why? Because they were born with a sin nature. And while all the TV shows like to go on about how man is basically good and a lot of politicians stand up and make stump speeches about how they believe in the goodness of man, the reality is that man is not basically good. There is some good in all men, but man is basically wired from the moment he is born to be a sinner in rebellion against God. That is called depravity. And everyone of us have been born that way and that is why we have to be born again to have a live spirit put within us.

Genesis 2:17 is when he said, "But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."²⁰

And Adam and Eve did.

Once we are saved, God works about to bring new life in our soul which is sanctification. So justification happens in our spirits. Sanctification is in our souls. Let me give you Scripture for that.

Acts chapter 15 verse 24.

There happened to be some false teaching that didn't endanger the eternal security of the believers in Christ which were hearing it, but nevertheless it subverted their souls. It says this.

"Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment..."²¹

So the problem was is there were some people saying, "Oh, you have got to be circumcised before you ask Jesus into your heart or you are not really a Christian."

So they had to have this counsel at Jerusalem in Acts 15 and it is wisely said here.

"Hey, you didn't lose your salvation if you went out and did that, but we understood that

²⁰ Genesis 2:17.

²¹ Acts 15:24.

it subverted your soul.” The law of the spirit, Paul says in Romans seven, is in his mind. The law of sin is in his members. The mind is the place where he showed the law of God. His flesh or members is where he served the law of sin.

By the way, after Paul describes that turmoil in chapter seven of Romans where he says the stuff I want to do I don’t do and the stuff I shouldn’t do, that I wind up doing and I aim proving, you know, this law of sin is in my members. He says this in chapter eight.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”²²

So do you know how you conquer sin? You listen to the Spirit of God instead of paying attention to what your flesh is telling you.

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.²³

How do you fulfill the righteousness of the law? You walk after the leadership of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Now, by the way, James speaks of the salvation or conversion of the soul. So look at James chapter one and verse 19. He is talking to the brethren. So he is talking to Christians and he tells them that they ought to engraft Scripture and look at verse 21 of James chapter one and this is a good verse to know whether or not you are using a Bible that really works at translating accurately the original languages of the New Testament or if they impose some of their own theological presuppositions on Scripture and don’t translate all the words.

It says this in James chapter one and verse 21.

“Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.”²⁴

Your ψυχη (psoo-khay’), the word from which we get psychology and psychologist. Your soul is your ψυχη (psoo-khay’). And he says, “The Word of God,” by the way, not a psychologist, but Word of God will save your ψυχη (psoo-khay’), your mind, your will and your emotions. The Word of God is the greatest cure for mental problems and for emotional problems and for making wrong decisions.

²² Romans 8:1.

²³ Romans 8:2-4.

²⁴ James 1:21.

James says you need to engraft the Word to save your souls because that is a work not yet completed. The Spirit has already completed the work of justification, but he hasn't yet completed the work of sanctification and we do that by engrafting God's Word.

James five verse 19.

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”²⁵

Did you notice what it says? It says it will save his soul from death. Let me read that out of the King James.

James chapter five and verse 19.

“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”²⁶

He is not just talking about leading someone to Christ here. It may mean that you need to come tell me where I am sinning and erring and if you get me back on the right track, you could save me a lot of anguish in my mind, my will and my emotions and how I think, how I decide and how I feel. That is part of that process.

And so that happens in the soul.

Peter, by the way, in 1 Peter 4:19, he also indicates the same thing that those who are... he talks about people who are going to undergo suffering very soon in 1 Peter and it is going to be a time of severe mental, emotional, physical distress and so he warns them that during this time of distress, he says, “Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”²⁷

And he doesn't say, “Let them commit the [?] of their spirit because the spirit is already kept.” And the fact is, Peter himself makes that abundantly clear because he says, “You know, there is one thing we don't have to worry about and that is in losing our salvation because guess what? We are kept.”

He starts out this same epistle, by the way, 1 Peter chapter one and verse four he says we have “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God.”²⁸

²⁵ James 5:19.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ 1 Peter 4:19.

²⁸ 1 Peter 1:4-5.

So that means the only way I can be unkept is for there to be a greater power than the power of God and that power doesn't exist.

“...through faith unto salvation...”²⁹

I am kept unto salvation.

“...ready to be revealed at the last time.”³⁰

I am not worried about losing my place in heaven ever because Christ is keeping me by his power and because he knows I would mess it up if I could.

So he says your salvation is eternally secure. Your justification, nothing can happen to it. And yet he says, “When you are going through tough trials, we need to commit the keeping of your souls, that is your mind, will and emotions to Jesus Christ as well,” because guess what? When suffering comes, it is easy to think wrong thoughts. It is easy to have feelings of despair in the midst of suffering. It is easy to make bad decisions in the midst of suffering.

I remember one time when I first started getting ill and the illness that made me walk on a cane for about eight years of my life and God has since then healed me of it and I am so grateful for that, an illness doctors had told me I would never be free from the pain or the fatigue that went with it. And yet when I was first going into this process and I was so despairing already, thoughts of suicide, thoughts of, you know, my life isn't worth it. I can't put up with this pain all the time. I just can't stand living this way all the time. I am tired of all the needles and the CAT scans and the MRIs and the bone marrow biopsies and the liver biopsies and all the things that I went through during this difficult time of my life.

And I remember that someone gave me some very wise counsel and they said, “Robert, don't make any major decisions when you are feeling like this,” because the fact of the matter is suffering will make us think the wrong thoughts. It will make us have forms of despair and it may make us make wrong decisions.

So if you are at a time of suffering, I would encourage you to get on your knees and say, “God, I need you to keep my mind,” that is how I think, “my will, the decisions I am going to make and my emotions, how I am going to feel, on a steady path that will keep me living for you in spite of these circumstances.”

That is what Peter means in 1 Peter four and verse 19.

I don't know if you have ever felt overwhelmed, but I certainly have.

²⁹ 1 Peter 1:5.

³⁰ Ibid.

1 Peter two chapter 11 warns that fleshly lusts, they can't destroy our spirit. They can't make us lose our way to heaven, but he says, "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul."³¹ That is, your mind, your will and your emotions.

By the way, those fleshly lusts are going to be one of the seven battles of the Promised Land that we are going to deal with.

Peter tells us that we can purify our souls be obedience to the Word of God.

1 Peter 1:22. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently."³²

You purified your souls and guess what? Your purified soul is obeying God. That is not justification. I didn't do anything for justification. I simply rely upon the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ when I receive Christ into my heart as my Savior. He did it all. But I can participate in the work of sanctification by majoring on God's Word, by obeying God's Word. And by doing so, God's Word will purify my soul, my mind, my will and emotions.

The apostle Paul told the Christians in Corinth that they needed to engage the enemy on a territory of their own soul. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;³³

Now, you need to read that passage again in 2 Corinthians 10 verses four and five and notice where the battle is taking place. It is in our arguments. It is in our pretensions. It is in our thoughts. It is in our knowledge. It is the arena of the mind, the will and the emotions. It is the soul.

Now while being born again in our spirit is an instantaneous process that takes place at the precise moment that receive Jesus Christ, the salvation of our soul, that is, the making of our mind and will and emotions into what Christ wants them to be, is anything but instantaneous. It is brought about through spiritual battle with the enemy, through casting aside the seven sins and the garbage that wishes to occupy our minds. It is through meditating on the Word of God. It is a life long process, but, brothers and sisters, let me tell you this. It is a process worth engaging in.

³¹ 1 Peter 2:11.

³² 1 Peter 1:22.

³³ 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.

And to the degree to which we progress, is dependent on our spiritual alertness to the nature of the battle. This is why I want us to view the seven battles of the Promised Land because if you are aware of the battles, hopefully you will fight them well.

God will ultimately save our body, glorification we mentioned in Philippians chapter three.

Now let me just close by saying this. Have you ever wondered or maybe do you understand now why so many Christians never become truly productive in the kingdom of God? It is because, I think, they are born in the Spirit. They have been justified, but they have never fought the seven battles of the soul. They have never completed the work of sanctification. They are not really participating. They can't complete it until you are in glory, but they haven't really participated in the work of sanctification.

Let me ask you. Do you often feel overwhelmed and then when you are thinking of your habits or your emotions? Do you really want victory over them? And will you right now commit yourselves into the hands of a faithful God to help you win the battles of the soul? And will you ask him to do that?

Next week we are going to find out why Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness and why we seem to be in a spiritual wilderness of our own at times. And then we will look to the seven battles of the Promised Land. And the fact is the first battle is the battle against bitterness symbolized by the battle against Jericho.

Before we get ready for battles you need to listen to these words that God prepared Joshua with at the beginning of Joshua. And so I would like to ask you to turn to Joshua chapter one as we close and I want you to read these words with me that God says you need to do.

Joshua chapter one and verse eight.

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”³⁴

He says, “You need to ruminate on the Word of God or meditate.”

When I was a student at Texas A&M University, they had some cows there in the Ag Sciences lab that had what was called a [?] installed in the side of the cow. Basically it is a round hole and window with a covering or a hatch that allows veterinary students to see what is going on inside the animal. And when they eat a certain kind of feed they can actually open the hatch and go in and feel the different parts of the stomach to see how much of the food made it into which compartment of the stomach. And cows have four stomachs or some people say eight because each stomach kind of has a couple of divisions. And when a cow eats grass out in the pasture he brings it up. He chews on it

³⁴ Joshua 1:8.

and it goes down into the first stomach. And then after a while it comes out of the stomach, it comes back up and it is kind of this little mushy ball of grass and he eats it again and it goes down to yet another place. And after a while he takes it up again and chews on it some more and then it goes back and eventually makes it way to this last stomach and all along this bacteria begin they are then in the intestinal tract the animal begin growing and multiplying and working on the cellulose that is the fiber that is there and they actually convert some of that cellulose through bacterial action into protein in the rumen as it is called. And rumen is one of the names of one of the stomachs in the cow.

The same thing us true of sheep. And that is where they get their protein from is from the bacteria not from the grass, but from the bacteria that are feeding on the cellulose or the fibers and the sugars in the grass.

But they don't ever spit the grass out. And we need to ruminate, to chew on, we need to memorize on God's Word, but then think about it again and again and again, say it with different words and emphasize, write it down, draw pictures of what is going on. Do a word study until that verse becomes a part of our lives and then we have ruminated on the Word of God.

Second thing he tells them in verse nine is that after you have ruminated not eh Word of God, you need to remember the presence of the Savior.

Joshua one and verse nine.

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”³⁵

He says, “The second thing you need to do is you just need to remember I am with you. This... you are going to face some battles. The battles are coming. There is going to be seven of them. There are going to be some bad battles. Somebody is going to get whooped in every one of the battles. But I want you to know, I am with you. Don't be afraid. Don't be dismayed.”

Jesus said it this way. He says, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

Remember that the Savior is with you. And, by the way, the Savior knows exactly what you are going through.

And then the third step, you need to ready yourself for battle, verses 10 and 11.

Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within

³⁵ Joshua 1:9.

three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.³⁶

He says, "Get your food ready."

The first thing he tells them to do is get your food ready. Prepare your victuals. If you want to successfully fight the battles for your soul, you need to every day be getting your spiritual food by reading the Word of God. You need to spend time meditating on it. By the way, I would encourage, you just read a passage of Scripture and start before you read and just say, "God, just show me one thing in this passage that is for me today." And as you read a verse of Scripture stop about at the end of the verse and say, "God, is there anything in this verse for me?" And then read the next one and all of the sudden God will say, "Yup, here is one. This one is for you."

This is great, by the way, in the book of Proverbs. You can just pray every verse back to God. God, this verse is telling me I need to do such and such. Would you help me do this? God, how can I apply this verse to my life? God, what is my short coming in this area?

Have a dialogue with God. Prayer is not about us talking to God. It is about us hearing from God and we need to learn that important difference.

Then establish clear lines of communication. He says, you know, you are going to pass through the people. You are going to command the people. You have got to get communications working if you are going to fight the battle. So now you need to be spending time in the Bible, but you need to be talking to the commander in chief in prayer.

And then you need to leave behind the stuff that isn't going to help you in the battle. You know, when you go to battle, you don't back your Samsonite suitcase and your American Tourister suitcase and carry your barbells with you and wear your ankle weights that you used to wear when you were going to the gym or when you played football in high school. You lay aside every weight and every hindrance that does so easily beset you so that you can run the race, so that you can fight the battle appropriately. Leave behind those hindrances. And then coming by faith to victory in the Promised Land.

Did notice what he says at the end of verse 11? He says, "We are going to pass over the Jordan in three days which... to possess the land which the Lord your God gave it to you to possess it." And he says, "The victory is ours."

Some of these battles of the soul that I am going to tell you about are battles you will fight all your life long, but they are winnable battles. The war may not be over until Christ calls you home or until he returns to take you home, but you can win the battles. Not in your strength, but because the Word of God will enable you and the Spirit of God

³⁶ Joshua 1:10-11.

will go with you and the peace of God will umpire in your heart and you can win the battles.

I don't know what your battle is today, but God wants you to win it. You go to the Lord with me in prayer.

Father, would you help us understand that we really are in a battle. I think some Christians think that once they ask Jesus in their heart, that the battle is over and all they have to do is kind of sit around and wait for glory. I think other people strive in their strength to earn their favors so that they can go to heaven and that is something we can never do. Because it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but it is by your grace that you saved us. But, Father, help us to realize that we fight battles not in the arena of our spirit, which belongs to Christ the moment we receive him as Savior and our justification is complete once and forever, but we fight ongoing battles every day in our mind and our will and our emotions, because when Satan can't have our spirit, he seeks to destroy our souls. And yet, Father, you told us meditate on your Word, get ready for the battle and claim the victory because you will be with us. Let us not be dismayed or fearful in life.

Father, we love you. Father, open our hearts now to understand you words and to follow them into living a victorious Christian life.