

## **Are you concerned about your soul?**

**April 8, 2018 Sermon by Pastor Diana J. Perkins**

**Many people strive to have the most comfortable life that they can possibly attain to. While we were vacationing in Arizona, we toured a few mansions that were beautiful and spacious. Everything that a person could ever dream of or desire was there for a price. One wealthy man that had his dream house built back in the 80's had moved on and others had inhabited the beautiful home. A baby grand piano, works of art that have been appraised for thousands of dollars were left behind and the library of expensive books was left behind. The acreage around the property was like a paradise with plants, swimming pool, and cactus lending its beauty to the property. I thought about the worldly wealth and the severed ties that were made when each owner chose to sell and leave behind the treasures that were important to them at one time. Where did they go? What caused them to seek another place to put down roots? Did they invest in their souls or was this their main focus, to have the best of houses to dwell in? Did they fall upon hard times and lose their castle on the hill to creditors? See Luke 12:16-21 and read the story of the rich man who only thought about storing up treasures for himself.**

**Today I want to talk about souls and I hope to take the focus from the material things of this life that are temporary and fade away and zoom in on the eternal souls of men that are so valuable to God. In Matthew 16:26 it asks this question: "What will it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" You will choose where your soul is going to spend eternity. If you choose to follow Jesus Christ, you will reign with him in heaven. If you choose to be a slave to Satan and rebel against your creator, you will spend eternity with him.**

**Jeremiah wrote these words found in Jeremiah 17:9&10. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can understand? I the LORD searches the heart and tests the mind." We can't figure ourselves out but God can. He knows us better than we know ourselves. We must be willing to learn from the one who designed our souls in the beginning. Genesis 2 reveals that God created man in his image from the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." (Verse 7)**

**Do you have a healthy soul? Is your soul at peace with your creator? Is it at "home" meaning, how does it compare with the Apostle Paul who wrote these words, "Whatever I gained in this life, I count it loss for Christ." He considered all things as loss compared to knowing Christ Jesus the Lord." Paul was willing to give up everything in this life in order to win Jesus Christ and he greatly desired to have the righteousness of God that comes through faith in Jesus. He longed to experience the power of the resurrection and willingly suffered for the sake of Christ that he might have fellowship with his Lord and Savior. He looked beyond this life to being resurrected and living eternally in heavenly places with his creator. Philippians 3:8-12. Philippians 4;11 tells us that Paul had learned to be content in whatever circumstance he found himself to be in. He knew what it was**

like to be poor and he had times that he had plenty. He had lived under all kinds of conditions and whether he had plenty to eat or was hungry, had too much or too little, Christ gave him the strength to face anything. His soul was at home. He trusted God in all things. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" he wrote.

As I was meditating on the subject of our souls, this song came to mind that was written by Horatio Spafford called "It is well with my soul." Mr. Spafford, a successful lawyer and businessman from Chicago had a lovely wife named Anna and five children. In 1871 they lost a young son due to pneumonia and due to a great Chicago fire the same year much of their business was lost. Yet God in his mercy and kindness allowed the business to be rebuilt and to flourish once more. Two years later, Mrs. Spafford and their four daughters were passengers on a French ocean liner headed for Europe. Mr. Spafford stayed behind in order to finish up some business but planned on boarding another ship to join the family at a later date. Four days into the journey, the ship that the Spafford family was on collided with a powerful, iron-hulled Scottish ship, the Loch Earn. Anna brought her children to the deck and knelt with them asking God to spare them if it was his will or if not, to make them willing to endure whatever their fate would be. Within 12 minutes their ship slipped beneath the dark waters of the Atlantic and all 226 passengers were thrown into the ocean. A sailor who was rowing a small boat over the spot where the ship went down spotted Anna, who was still alive, floating on a piece of wreckage. He pulled her into the boat and they were picked up by another vessel. Nine days later they landed in Cardiff, Wales. From there, Anna, wired a message with these words, "Saved alone, what shall I do?" Mr. Spafford framed the telegram and placed it in his office. He then booked passage on the next available ship and left to join his grieving wife. As the ship passed the area where the tragedy happened, Mr. Spafford wrote the words to the song, "It is well with my Soul." The Spaffords had three more children and one of them died at age 5 with pneumonia. In 1881, the Spaffords moved to Jerusalem and there Mr. Spafford died and was buried in that city.

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### It is well with my Soul

When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.

Chor: It is well with my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul.

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3 John was written by John the beloved to Gaius, a Christian friend and possibly a Church leader. In verse 2, John wrote these words: "Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health as it does well with your soul." I think of this as if he was saying, "We're best friends and I pray that good fortune is yours in everything you do and for your good health- that your everyday affairs prosper as well as your soul."

**How often do you think about your soul? Some people are content and take it for granted especially if they have a good family, a good job, and attend church. Look at the above verses again. Health and wellness doesn't move from the outside in but from the inside out. People can be prosperous, popular and have a reputation for being successful and even religious. Yet Jesus addressed this in his teachings.**

**Look at Matthew 23:25. (CEV) You Pharisees and teachers who do things to be seen of men are in big trouble! You wash the outside of your cups and dishes, while inside there is nothing but greed and selfishness. You blind Pharisees! First clean the inside of the cup and then the outside will also be clean." He went on to give them another picture of their condition. He likened them to tombs that had been whitewashed. On the outside they were beautiful, but on the inside they were full of bones and filth. He told them that they were like that. On the outside they looked good, but on the inside they were evil and only pretended to be good. He went on to explain that they had ignored the warnings and preaching of the prophets for they killed the servants that God sent to them. He exposed their evil hearts and told them that they would be held accountable for the evil that they had done to those servants that God had sent to guide them to righteous living.**

**Only souls that have the peace of God can find satisfaction and rest. The soul refers to the inner motivation and desires of the heart. King David wrote in the Psalms: "Bless the Lord, O my soul and all that is within me, bless his Holy name." ( Psalms 103:1). God's breath created our souls and we are living on borrowed breath. Whenever we breathe, speak, or sing we do so because God's breath sustains us. What will you give in exchange for your soul? We will give account to him for what we do with our bodies and souls.**

**Notice where God placed the first people he created. He placed them in a garden where every tree was pleasant to look upon and was good for food. (Genesis 2:8,9) There was only one tree in that paradise that they were warned not to eat of lest they die. God designed life to be enjoyed. Peace in your soul allows you to be free to enjoy sunsets, flowers, nature, animals and the beauty of all of his creation. A burdened soul acts like a cloud that hides the sun. It blocks out the beauty all around us. I've heard people say that they hated their life. Sins burden the souls of men. The Bible says that the way of the transgressor is hard. (See Proverbs 13:15) When we allow anxiety, fear, work, keeping rules, trying to appease God we fear may be disappointed in us, we are in danger of losing one of the keys to a healthy soul! That key is REST. A troubled soul focuses on controlling everything, taking care of everything, and being in charge of arranging everything. There is no thought about leaving burdens at the feet of Jesus. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, "Come to me all you who are tired and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest. Take the yoke I give you and put it on your shoulders and learn from me. I am gentle and humble and you will find rest for your souls. My yoke is easy and my burden is light." Romans 6:23: The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life given by Jesus Christ our Lord. It is given freely to those who place their faith in him.**

**Matthew 7 tells us to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to us.” Jesus will provide for the needs of those who place his work first in their lives. We must give Him first place in our hearts, in our homes and in our lives. Are you willing to trust Him with your soul? Where does your treasure lie? The Bible says that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” See Matthew 6:21. It is not all about us! “Trust in the Lord with all your heart; lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your path.” See Proverbs 3:5.**

**In Psalms 133:1-2, it tells us that unless the LORD builds a house, they labor in vain that build.” Invite the Lord to inhabit your soul and to work his plan out in your life.**

**Psalms 23 says “The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside still waters; He restores my soul.”**

**I was thinking about restoration today as I was scanning through the latest Reminisce magazine that comes in the mail. 50 years ago a young man bought a brand new car and surprised his new bride with it. She was thrilled to ride in style on their honeymoon and they enjoyed the car until they started a family. They then traded it in for a station wagon so they would have room for children. A few months before their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary date, the husband found a replica of the car that he had bought just before his marriage. When he showed it to his wife she turned her nose up at it with the remark that she wouldn't be the least bit interested in buying that piece of rusted junk. The husband returned without his wife and bought the car. He paid experts to restore the car to its original beauty and on the day of their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary he had the body man drive the car to the family home and leave it in front of their house. The wife looked out the window and said, “Wow, doesn't that look exactly like the car you gave me on our wedding day? I wonder who owns it.” The husband smiled and handed her the key and said, “You do!” She ran outside and couldn't contain her joy of once again enjoying the beautiful car that for the second time came as a gift from her loving husband. Transformation from a piece of rusted junk to a valuable treasure came about by placing the rusted and worn out piece of metal into the hands of experts who labored and restored it to its original beauty. That is what Jesus does for us. Bring him the broken pieces of your heart, your lives, your fears and doubts and the master creator will repair, restore, and cover you with his blood. He will also place his name on your heart and forehead. He will claim you as his own and you will shine as the stars in heaven. As you let your light shine before men, your heavenly Father will be glorified and your soul will be at peace.**

**Your life will be fruitful and will be a blessing to those who you come in contact with you and God will reward your efforts not only in this life but throughout eternity.**

**The souls of men are God's greatest treasures on earth. I urge you to commit yours to his tender loving care and allow him to build up his kingdom through you. AMEN!**