

“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ”

1 Thessalonians 5:23

Your dream car sits in the driveway—a cherry red ‘65 Mustang. Chrome glints in the sun. Pure white leather interior. Jet black convertible top. You ease into the driver’s seat, and your hand slides to the ignition. NO KEY! Panicked, you pop the hood and gasp. NO ENGINE! Just a hollow shell—beautiful and perfect outside, but empty inside and useless to its true purpose.

You are God’s dream. He knew you before you were born and knows the hairs on your head. But He is not finished with you. It does not fulfill His purpose to simply exist in your earthly body. Your inner self—your soul—your spiritual engine—the Holy Ghost—needs to be in place for you to reach your potential. Spiritual birth through Jesus Christ is the key and He holds it for you in his hand if you will just reach for it. Him, not those whose search is in the world.

Time since the first nanosecond of creation can be divided into three periods. The first period is the time from the moment of creation until the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. The Old Testament teaches us a lot about this period. The second period was just three years long and began in Mark 1:14-15. It was the period of Jesus’ ministry. This ministry begins a new era in the history of man. *“And after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and*

saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’” The third period began with the resurrection of Jesus and is the period of time we are currently in. A fourth period will begin upon Jesus’ return.

There are two stories that you should read in preparation for class discussion. The first is John Chapter 9 and the second is in Acts 16:25-34. The first story ends with Jesus

asking a man, who had been born blind and had been given his sight by Him. John 9:35-38. *“Do you believe in the Son of Man?” He answered and said, ‘And who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?’ Jesus said to him, ‘You have both seen Him and He is the one who is talking with you.’ And he said, ‘Lord, I believe.’ And he worshiped Him.”*

The second story (Acts 16:25-34) is about the Philippian jailer who asked the question,

“What must I do to be saved?” The story ends with the jailer taking them to his home; *“And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.”*

What happened to the blind man and the Philippian jailer? How were they changed? Jesus, in John Chapter 3, teaches the answer to this question. Read this chapter in preparation for class discussion.

1. Nicodemus is a learned man, a rabbi and a member of the powerful Sanhedrin. He is a member of the ruling class. He comes to Jesus by night to find out more about this man who is performing great signs. Jesus was the word that became flesh (John 1:14). As stated by Leon Morris, in his book, ***The New International Commentary On The New Testament/*** The Gospel According to John (p209), *“Jesus is the Word become flesh.”* But He did not become flesh so to speak on general principles. He had a purpose. He came specifically in order that men might have the abundant life (John 10:10). In this chapter (chapter 3) John furthers his purpose by recording a conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus, a typical representative of Pharisaic Judaism. As such Nicodemus would have stressed the careful observance of the Law and the traditions of the elders. For the loyal Pharisee this was the way of salvation. John uses this conversation to show that all such views are wide of the mark. Not a devout regard for the Law, not even a revised presentation of Judaism is required, but a radical rebirth. The demand is repeated three times (v. 3, 5, 7). Nicodemus and all his tribe of law-doers are left with not the slightest doubt but that what is asked of a man is not more law, but the power of God within him to remake him completely.”
2. Let’s examine the three verses that Jesus used in Chapter 3, John 3:3, 5, 7. You may first note that Jesus begins this discourse with the words truly, truly (or verily, verily). When Jesus uses these words in succession, it means that he is getting ready to say something extremely important. He is saying, listen, pay close attention to what I am getting ready to reveal to you.

2.1. John 3:3

This birth must be a spiritual birth. It is a birth from above. As Morris states, *“The man who would enter the kingdom of God must be born in a radically new fashion, and this second birth is from heaven. Entry into the kingdom is not by way of human striving, but by that re-birth which only God can effect.”*

2.2. John 3:5

Being born of water and the spirit does not refer to baptism, but rather the regenerating activity of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that causes the birth of the spirit within us. As you recall in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve’s spirit died. From that point on, there was no way for the individual descendent of Adam and Eve to communicate directly with God. With the re-birth of our spirit, we now have the ability to establish a direct relationship with God. Water is associated with terms like drop, dew, rain, etc. These words before they were translated, in their original use, often referred to procreation.

2.3. John 3:7

Jesus is explaining to Nicodemus that after being a student of the gospel (Old Testament) he should recognize that men/women cannot attain salvation by observing the Law nor is any person capable of saving themselves. This must be an act of God.

3. **Having been born again we are now body, mind and spirit.** Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23. “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

3.1. The birth of the spirit is analogous to the birth of a physical baby. Many times we refer to the birth of a baby as being miraculous. When our spirit is born within us, as a result of accepting the Lord Jesus as our Lord and savior, our spiritual birth is also a miracle from God. Take a moment and reflect on the sameness of the birth of a baby and the birth of the spirit. Being born inherently means that the result is an infant. Record your thoughts.

3.2. As parents we have the responsibility to raise our children. We provide them with education, training and the essentials of life. Who has the responsibility to train our spirits?

3.3. What two things may get in the way of our spiritual training? _____

3.4. Read Romans 7:21-25. *“I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wants to do good / For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, /but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members./ Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?/ Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.”*



3.4.1. Does the law referred to in verse 21 refer to the law of God or the law of sin?

3.5. Think of an example in your life of the spiritual war that takes place in you.

4. **How does evil work in our persons?** John Murray in his book, *The New International Commentary On The New Testament, The Epistle To The Romans* (p. 265) states, *“When we ask how the evil can be present when there is the determinate will to the good, the answer resides in the fact that there are two antithetical laws, the law of God and the law of sin, both of which bear upon our persons and are therefore registered in us in a way that reflects the antithesis in which they stand to each other.”*

4.1. Read 2 Corinthians 4:16

The Outer man, corresponds to the earthen vessels, mentioned earlier in the chapter, the body, and the mortal flesh. Philip E. Hughes in his book, ***The New International Commentary On The New Testament, The Second Epistle To The Corinthians*** (p.153) states, “The connotation of the latter (outward man) is not moral but physical, referring to man’s, and in particular the Apostle’s, mortal frame which is undergoing decay and moving towards the grave. The present tense (“is decaying”) indicates a steady and irreversible process; and this process is especially and even startlingly marked in the case of the Apostle because of the extreme severity of his sufferings.

But the “outward man” should not be understood in a merely material sense, for it indicates the human constitution with all its faculties and energies, mental as well as muscular, perceptive as well as practical. Indeed, there is no doubt that the



significance of the expression is to be found most simply and adequately in terms of that aspect of Paul's being which, being outwardly manifested, is visible to his fellow-men: it is what they see of him.

Similarly, the significance of the expression the "inward man" should not be sought in terms of anatomy or psychology: it indicates that which is hidden from the gaze of the man of this world and inaccessible to his analysis. Paul is speaking of a great Christian reality, of the remarkable fact that the advance, evident to all, in outward decay is accompanied, day after day, by the experience of an inward renewal. The outward is the paradox of the inward. The light of eternity shines in the Christian's heart (2 Cor.4:6); a light which no affliction can extinguish. (Proverbs 4:18 – *"the path of righteous is like the light of dawn..."*)

4.2. What about unbelievers? What happens to them? _____

Phillip Hughes goes on to state, **"For the unbeliever, of course, the decay of the outward man is also a fact of experience; but his heart (soul) is darkened, he knows no inward renewal, and his way becomes more and more confined until it brings him to the narrow limits of the grave and the grim reality of judgment."**

5. **The Body.** The body is the physical part of man/woman. In the American Heritage Dictionary, the body is, "the entire material structure and substance of an organism, especially of a human being." This includes our bones, muscles, heart, lungs, etc. It is through the body that we perceive nature and all that is outside of our body. This is done through the **five senses** (sight, smell, touch, hearing and taste). However, we have learned that the body houses something more for people who have accepted Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. What else resides in your body?

5.1. 1 Corinthians 3:16 _____



5.2. 1 Corinthians 6:19 *“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”*

5.3. 2 Corinthians 6:16 _____

5.4. Romans 6:12-13, 1 Corinthians 6:18 - What instructions does God give us concerning our bodies? *“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”*

5.5. Though Jesus’ teachings, the Holy Spirit is living in believers. Record what God is teaching us in 1 Corinthians 6:13, 20 _____

6. **The Spirit.** The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines spirit as, “1. That which is traditionally believed to be the vital principle or animating force within living beings 2. That which constitutes one’s unseen, intangible being.” At the heart of the definition of “spirit” is the experience of a mysterious awesome power like an invisible wind. You can feel its effect, but you cannot see the wind. In order to gain a better understanding of spirit, look up the following verses.

6.1. Romans 7:14-22 _____

6.2. 1 Corinthians 2:11,14-15 *“But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man.”*

6.3. 1 Corinthians 15:41-51, Acts 7:59 _____



6.4. Romans 1:9 *“For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the preaching of the gospel of His Son, is my witness as to how unceasingly I make mention of you.”*

6.5. 2 Corinthians 4:16 – *“Therefore we do not lose heart, but through our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day.”*

7. **With our spirits, we are able to relate to God.** The relationship between God and a person born with a spirit is a very special relationship. As we have seen in the first lesson, when Adam sinned, his spirit died and he was separated from God. What happens to a person’s spirit after receiving Jesus Christ as Savior?

7.1. Ephesians 3:16, 4:22-24 *“and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.”*

7.2. Romans 6:11 *“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”*

7.3. Ephesians 2:3-5

7.4. 1 John 4:13 *“By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit.”*

7.5. 1 Thessalonians 5:23

8. As Christians, children of God, we continue to live in the world, but we are no longer from the world. How is it possible to withstand the influence of worldly ways?

8.1. 1 John 4:4, 5:11-13



8.2. Romans 8:10 *“If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.”*

8.3. 1 Peter 1:23, 3:4 _____

9. **How does the Holy Spirit relate to us?** What has God freely given us? What does this mean to you?

9.1. Hebrews 4:12, Hebrews Chapter 9 _____

9.2. John 14:16-17,26 - 16 *“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; / that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. / But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.”*

10. **The Soul.** While the spirit allows us to relate to God, the soul allows us to relate to other people. The soul is generally thought of as a three part mechanism, consisting of the mind (the ability to think), the will (the decision to act) and the emotions (the ability to feel). The Greek word, ‘nepes’ is used in the Bible for soul in various meanings. In some instances it means possessing life. Thus it is frequently used of animals, e.g. Genesis 1:20, 24, 30. Sometimes it refers to something physical like blood, which is essential to physical existence (Genesis 9:4, Leviticus 17:10-14). In some cases the Greek word ‘nepes’ is used as the seat of physical appetite (Deuteronomy 12:15, 20-21, 23-24), and in other cases ‘nepes’ is used as the source of emotion (Psalm 86:4; 107:26 and finally ‘nepes’ is associated with the will and moral action (Job 7:15, Psalm 119:129, 167).

10.1. The soul can be equated to personality and is therefore changeable, depending upon how a person feels about himself/herself. Everyone wants to be viewed as someone of worth and loved and we interact with others to try and get these

needs met. As you grow, learn and experience life, your brain is processing information. Your concept of yourself is based upon this information accumulated over time. As we live and interact with others, we make decisions (exercise will) from this information as it is evaluated by our mind and emotions. What information has your brain given you? List some thoughts and feelings about yourself, such as loved, worthwhile, unworthy, happy, sad, confident, ill at ease, full of joy, etc.

As Christians, God gives us direction about making choices and how it can be accomplished. Romans 12:2 _____

10.2. What does it mean to conform? _____

10.3. How can we renew our minds? Colossians 3:16,17 *“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God./ Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”*

10.4. 2 Corinthians 3:18 _____

10.5. James 4:7-8, Ephesians 4:27. Resist the devil and do not give him an opportunity means that you have the power to overcome this type of influence. _____

11. **We have the power to walk by truth, not by our emotions.** This power is provided to us by the Holy Spirit in communication with our spirit. In this process we can aid our souls.

- 11.1. Philippians 4:13 _____

- 11.2. 1 Corinthians 10:13 *“No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”*
- 11.3. Romans 8:26 *“And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.”* _____

- 11.4. Ephesians 3:16 _____

- 11.5. 2 Timothy 1:7 *“For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline.”*
- 11.6. Romans 8:11 _____

12. Understanding the differences between the body, soul and spirit provides us with invaluable assistance in our spiritual growth and development.

- 12.1. Hebrews 4:12 _____

During the week read/sing the following song as a reminder of this lesson.



Come and Fill My Heart - Grand Cunningham, Matt Huesmann

Free, I long to be free, I long for the day I believe; that all You say You see in me is true.
It's hard for me to do. It's hard for me to die to myself, entrust my life to someone else,
so come empty me out, I'm no good without you inside me.

I need you in my life, I need you like the air that I breathe; You've become the very
heart of me; and I, I can't believe my eyes; can't believe the dream that I've found;
you know you've turned my world around; so come fill up my heart; We're never apart;
you're deep inside me.

Come and fill my heart with hope, come and fill my life with love; come and fill my soul
with strength to carry on; because from here the climb is steep the road is long, come
and fill my days with dreams, empty me of all the empty things that I hold onto; come
and fill my heart with you.