**#2 The Struggles of the Soul**

**Big Idea:** “The most important thing about you is not the things that you achieve; it is the person that you become.”

**I) Review Basics of the S\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 “*For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul*?” [Mark 8:36](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+8%3A36&version=ESV)

1. What is the soul? OT: ‘Nephesh’ & NT: ‘Psyche’ = to breath, blow, life. See Gen. 2:7ff. “Vital principle in man; without matter and form.”  All that makes a person a living being.

“What matters most, what marks your existence, the really deep reason why human life matters so much, is because of this tiny, fragile, vulnerable, precious thing about you called your soul. You are not just a self; you are a soul. You are a soul made by God, made from God and made to need God, made to run on God. Which means that you are not made to be self-sufficient.” Dallas Willard.

1. What shape is your soul in?

“The soul apart from God mistakes itself for God. As a result everything becomes delusional. We are locked in a self-destructive struggle with ourselves and with all those around us. The healthy soul is one in which all the essential parts of the human beings are originated around God as they’re restored and sustained by him. We embrace an overall, settled conditions of life the Kingdom of God described as death to self (Matthew 16:24-35)

**II) A Human Soul can be very d\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 “*Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him* ***ten thousand talents.*** *And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a* ***hundred denarii*** *and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’* ***He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt*.”**

1. Sin warps our souls, we think, and do what is contrary to God’s will. Every act of sin leads to the greater likelihoods of another act. Once you rationalize that first sin, it makes it more likely that you do more.
2. You can reach a point where you know that what you are doing is wrong, but you don’t care anymore. Sin can change your brain. **See 1 Kings 11**

**Life Point:** “Neural Consequences of Religious Belief on Self-Referential Processing” . Non-religious subjects used one part of the brain to evaluate themselves, but another part to evaluate others. Christians used the same part of the brain to evaluate themselves that they used to evaluate others. Jesus reference paint for self-evaluations. What does God think of me? “Prayer, meditation, and confession actually have the power to rewire the brain in a way that makes us less self-referential and more aware of how God sees us.’

**III) The Parable of S\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 “*A sower went out to sow.  And as he sowed, some seeds* ***fell along the path****, and the birds came and devoured them.  Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they* ***did not have much soil****, and immediately they sprang up, since they had* ***no depth of soil****, but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away.  Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and* ***choked them.*** *Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty*.” Matthew 13:3-8

1. We can allow our **Souls to be** **hard against God and others.**

 “Often these seeds are people who have been hurt or disappointed. They form a protective shell. They become cynical or bitter or suspicious. Cain first to harden the soul.” “Underneath the hardness is often fear. Fear of being rejected, fear of looking foolish, fear of being hurt. . . Yet, one tinny seed can break up a sidewalk if it can find a little room to breathe.”

**Life Point:** Jesus comes to pour the water of his love to soft the hard soul.

1. We can allow our **Souls to be shallow.** “Superficiality is the curse of our age. We like to live in the shallow’s. My soul becomes shallow when my interests and thoughts go no further then myself”

“He never chose to defy God. He just drifted. It was easier to drink beer than work on his marriage, so he got divorced. It was easier to complain then to work with all his soul, so he lost his job. It was easier to avoid people who would challenge him to need to his soul, so he hung out with people who would honor his desire for comfort above all. . . He does not even take care of his body. He is waiting to die, and when he does, no one will mourn. . . outside his bedroom door, if he only knew, his son waits for him to say one word of sorrow or regret, or love. It takes a small step of walking into deep water to give the seed a chance.”

**Life Point:** A person should be deep because life itself is deep. Jump into some deep waters of life in serving others, opening your life to God.

 **Life Point:** Jesus comes to show us the depth of love on the cross. “A soul especially has depth when it connected to God. His eternal existence, omniscience and love are all beyond measure. Take time to get deep with God in the Bible. Travel with people to the deep end of life. Travel with those who are suffering,”

1. Our souls can become **cluttered with s\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** **See Matthew 8**

“If the Devil can’t make you sin, he will make you busy, because either way your soul will shrivel. Our world will divert your soul attention because it is a cluttered world. And clutter is maybe the most dangerous result because it is so subtle. . . . They busy soul gets attached to the wrong things because the soul is sticky Desire other things. We mistake our clutter for life.”

**Life Point:** How can you make room for the eternal, God and others? Jesus wants to fill your life with the Holy Spirit.

1. Our souls **can bear fruit for God for here and eternity**. Jesus paid the price to redeem your soul that you might live a rich, deep, exciting life of faith.

“*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—  so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith*.” Galatians 3:13-14

“Forgiveness is the answer to the child’s dream of a miracle by which what is broken is made whole again, what is soiled is made clean again. Dag Hammarskjold

 **Life Point:** Ruthlessly eliminate h\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ from your life so you have time for God and others.

**Big Idea:** “The most important thing about you is not the things that you achieve; it is the person that you become.”

September 14th, 2014

***This story has been attributed to the late Peter Marshall, former chaplain of the United States Senate.*
There was once an old man who lived high above an Austrian village along the eastern slopes of the Alps. He had been hired by the village council many years ago to clear away the debris from the pools of water up in the mountain crevices that fed the lovely stream flowing through their village. With faithful, silent regularity, he patrolled the hills, removed the leaves and branches and wiped away the silt that would otherwise choke and contaminate the fresh flow of water. By and by, the village became a popular attraction for visitors. Graceful swans floated along the crystal clear stream; picnickers gathered along its banks; and the view of the water from local shops and cafes was picturesque beyond description.

Years passed. One evening the council met for its semiannual meeting. As they reviewed the budget, they noticed a small amount that was being paid to the "keeper of the spring." The village treasurer asked, "Who is this 'keeper of the spring'? Why do we keep him on the payroll year after year? No one ever sees him. Have any of you ever met this man? For all we know, he is simply taking our money and doing us no good whatsoever. In my opinion, this person is no longer necessary."

Everyone agreed with the treasurer and the council voted unanimously to dismiss the old man.

For several weeks, nothing much changed. The village went about with its business as usual. But by autumn, the trees began to shed their leaves. Small branches snapped off and fell into the pools that fed the stream, hindering the rushing flow of sparkling water. One afternoon, someone noticed a slight yellowish-brown tint in the water. A couple days later the water was much darker. Within another week or two, a slimy film covered sections of the water along the banks and a foul odor was soon detected. The swans left the village, as did the tourists. The economy of the village was in serious peril. Likewise was the health of the village, as many were getting sick from drinking the water.

An emergency meeting of the village council was held. After much discussion, they realized their error in judgment and they hired back the old "keeper of the spring." And within a few weeks, the beautiful stream came back to life. The swans and visitors gradually returned, as did the vitality and well being of the little village in the Alps.**

Tonight

 Basketball – guys one point, girls 5 points

 Rules

 Opening Prayer

 Work book

 Teams – why do you believe that God exits?

 DVD case for Faith.

 Small grouptime.

