

Outline

"The God Gene: The Psychology of Faith"

February 11, 2007

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30

Introduction: Soul, Psyche, and Jesus

- Psychology.... psyche = the mind, soul, or internal life of a person
+logos = the word about, the study of....
- Psychiatry psyche = the mind, soul, or internal life of a person
+"iatros" = a derivative of the Greek verb, to heal...
- *"I did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give my "psyche" (my life, my soul), as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45*
- Or when Jesus says, *"Whoever wants to save their "psyche" (life or soul) will lose it, but whoever loses his or her "psyche" (life or soul) for me will save it." Mark 8:35*
- The biblical concept: your psyche is what really makes you, you And Jesus is the lover of your soul!

I. The Conflict Between Psychology and Religion in the Twentieth Century

A. 3 General Perspectives Concerning Psychology & Religion

1. Psychology should have nothing to do with religion (religion is a "neurosis")
 - Sigmund Freud – Religion & the Oedipus Complex
 - Carl Jung – Religion & the Collective Unconscious
 - B.F. Skinner – Religion & the role of behavior and environment
2. Religion should have nothing to do with psychology (psychology is demonic)
3. Religion and psychology should work together (holistic therapy)

II. The Geneticists Weigh In: The "God Gene" and Experiencing God

- *"As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God." Psalm 42:1*
- *"God has set eternity in the hearts of mortals." Ecclesiastes 3:11*

III. Sin, brokenness, a yearning for God, and wholeness

Conclusion: Where Christianity, Psychiatry & Psychology Meet

- The "Therapy" of Christianity: Where Wholeness is Found ...
- *"...and you will find rest for your souls..." Matthew 11:28-30*

Monday - Look over your sermon notes from yesterday. Remember that In the New Testament, the Greek word 'psyche' is used in *Mk 10:45*, where Jesus says, "I did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give my 'psyche' (my life, my soul), as a ransom for many." Or in *Mk 8:35*, Jesus says, "Whoever wants to save their 'psyche' (life or soul) will lose it, but whoever loses his or her 'psyche' (life or soul) for me will save it." The biblical concept is that a person's psyche... this is what really makes you, you ...it is at the essence of your being, it is internally at your core. Sometimes the pressures of life or chemical imbalances in the brain wear down our soul. The practice of psychology and psychiatry can be valuable tools used by God for internal healing. If you think you need help from either of these, or other kinds of help for your 'soul', don't hesitate, I encourage you to call Joe Shafer at the church and he'll assist you in finding the help you need.

Tuesday - The soul refers to the vital existence of a human being. The Hebrew word for soul, '*nephesh*' is a key Old Testament term (755 times) referring to human beings. In the New Testament, the term '*psyche*' retreats behind the ideas of body, flesh, spirit to characterize human existence. In the Bible, a person is a unity. Body and soul or spirit are not opposite terms, but rather terms which supplement one another to describe aspects of the inseparable whole person. Such a holistic image of a person is maintained also in the New Testament even over against the Greek culture which, since Plato, sharply separated body and soul with an analytic exactness and which saw the soul as the valuable, immortal, undying part of human beings. The basic meaning of '*nephesh*' is throat. Thus, the Bible refers to the hungry, thirsty, satisfied, soul (*Ps. 107:5, 9; Prov. 27:7; Jer. 31:12, 25*).

Wednesday - The soul means the entire human being in its physical life needing food and clothing (*Matt. 6:25*). Interestingly, in one sense, a person does not have a soul. A person is a living soul (*Gen. 2:7*). That means a living being that owes life itself to the Creator just as does the animal (*Gen. 2:19*). Every human soul (*Acts 2:43; Rom. 2:9*) means each individual person. The popular expression used today "to save our souls" goes back to this biblical way of thinking (*1 Pet. 3:20*). It means to save the entire person.

Thursday - There is continuity between the earthly and the resurrected life that does not lie in the capabilities or nature of mortal humans. It lies alone in the power of the Spirit of God (*1 Cor. 15:44*). According to the Bible, a human being exists as a whole unit and remains also as a whole person in the hand of God after death. A person is not at any time viewed as a bodiless soul. So when our 'soul' is stressed or in chaos, it hurts every other aspect of our life.

Friday - With all this thought about the soul, the question arises: Is there a 'God-Gene' which predisposes us to yearn for God to satisfy our soul? What do you think? Read again, *Psalms 42:1* "As a deer longs for flowing stream, so my soul longs for you, O God." And *Ecclesiastes 3:11* "God has set eternity in the hearts of mortals." What do these passages imply?