

The Restoration of the Soul: 'He Restoreth my Soul'

Series: Healing the Heart and Life by Walking with Jesus Christ Daily, Session 5

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Transcript

Dallas Willard 00:00

Well, we've come down now to the really the last in the series that has to do with sort of systematic presentation. And tonight we're talking about the healing of the soul. It's one of the hardest topics to talk about. There's been a kind of resurgence of interest in the soul. And in terms of publishing, there are all kinds of books now on the soul. That's really quite hard to understand and get it in place, practically, practically. And yeah, it's absolutely essential.

Dallas Willard 00:36

The great passage in Deuteronomy six that Jesus picks up. You all know this, I mean, this is the great shema, Hear O Israel. Now, Jesus did a little modification to that in Mark 12. Because, as you may recall, there he adds some dimensions that are important. He doesn't leave out any of those. But in response to an enquiring person who was asking what is the great commandment? Jesus says, well, hear, O Israel, the LORD our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. And I think it is very important that we get added in here, dianoia, mind, and the mind is the area of thoughts and feelings.

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And then he doesn't stop there. But he pulls out of I think it's Leviticus 18, the further commandment Love your neighbor as yourself. Now, actually, those go together. And the teaching of the New Testament about love makes it clear that you can't love God, unless you love your neighbor. And actually, you can't love your neighbor, unless you love God. Just look at your neighbor. Right. You have to love God to have the wisdom and the strength to love your neighbor. Because you had to put that neighbor in a larger context. Right. And that's extremely important for us to understand. And we want this love to come right down to the level of our body. Because that's where we live with our neighbor is in our body. And so let's kind of keep the continuity from last time. And just remember that we want to, we want the body to be set, to spontaneously be loving. And that means that in our relationships to others around us, that we are free of those two modes of attack and withdrawal. You remember those?

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See that want to be free of those. And I asked you to think about First Corinthians 13, because that really does bring to full us. I mean, there isn't anything and we're literature that comes close to the teaching about love in the New Testament. And the capstone is really what Paul says about it there. I hope you had a chance to meditate on that. And to see the emphasis that Paul had learned from his fellowship with Jesus Christ, and with those that Christ were redeeming. And we might just meditate a little bit on that wording. And if you want to look at it, you can I'll just paraphrase some

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of it. But you'll remember that Paul says Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels. Sometimes we don't remember but rhetoric or oratory was one of the greatest things in antiquity. And to be able to speak well, was was thought to be one of the greatest attainments in human life. And people employ people who could just as we say, roll the rhetoric to be there at special occasions and roll it, you know, but of course, it could be so empty. And that's what Paul is saying. If I can speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not agape love, I am become a gong show. sounding brass is a gong. That's what that's what that's referring to is a gong and tinkling symbols or clashing symbols, just a lot of noise. Though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries. Though I have all knowledge, though I have all faith so that I can move mountains. And have not love I am nothing. I am zilch. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, you know, you could do that without love. Yes, you could. And give my body to be burned and have not love it doesn't profit me anything. And then he begins to go on to the really the heart of Love, Love suffers long Why did he think of patience the first thing Love suffers long and is kind love does not envy doesn't exalt itself isn't puffed up, doesn't do really stupid things. I think that's one way of putting that it doth not behave itself unseemly, doesn't do really stupid things. doesn't seek its own. Is not easily provoked. I guess that means it can be provoked. It's just not easy to provoke it. doesn't dwell on bad stuff. Thinketh no evil, doesn't rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in truth bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never quits, never quits.

Dallas Willard 07:25

Now remember, this is something we are, we don't do. This is something love does. And what we do is, we receive love, and that now all of the parts remember my circle all those parts, then that's Love the Lord your God. with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind with all your strength and your neighbor as yourself. And Jesus actually tells us what that last phrase means when he says this is a new command I give you that you love one another as I have loved you see what it means to love your neighbor is redefined by Jesus.

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Greater love has no man than this, that he should lay down his life for his friends. I don't think that just means dying. Sometimes it'd be easier to die for someone than live. Alright, get it over with. See that's from the human point of view, it might be easier to just die for them. Leave them here to take care of themselves. Well, you see, we have to be careful with all of this. Now we want our bodies to be involved in that. And our bodies are very important. Because in our body is given a certain natural ability to step into goodness. And as far as it's a natural ability, its flesh. And you see a lot of that coming on. I don't know if you saw the recent edition of Time magazine that featured meditation. Just a discussion of what happens if you do certain things with your body and that's all true. But there's got to be a lot more to it than that. Jane got an email from somebody this last week. And on the subject of mental health and stress management said just in case you've had a rough day, here is a stress management technique recommended by all the latest psycho psychological texts. The funny thing is it really works.

Dallas Willard 09:49

Picture yourself near stream birds are softly chirping and the cool mountain air. No one but you

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knows your secret place. You're in total seclusion from the hectic least called the world. The soothing sound of gentle waterfall fills the air with a cascade of serenity, the water is crystal clear, you can easily make out the person you're holding underwater.

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So, you know, we really do need a little help, we need to recognize the importance of the body from a natural point of view. But then you see when we when we move into spiritual disciplines with our body, we're moving beyond the flesh, into union with Christ. And what the body can do is important because that's where we can make a move. And we have to move. And as I've said over and over in the series, what we're talking about here healing, holiness, power, this is not passive. And we have to learn how to move. And we do it with our body. In chapter 15, of William laws, a wonderful old book a serious call to a devout and holy life. He has some wonderful words about this. And actually, what he what he's talking about here is singing psalms when you don't feel like it. And he's talking about how God has made us so that our bodies and souls are joining together. And that, by doing things with our bodies, we can actually open up avenues for power and strength in our souls. And just read a word or two here from this chapter 15, of this wonderful old book. Now, therefore, you may plainly see the reason and necessity of singing psalms. It is because outward actions are necessary to support inward tempers. And therefore the outward act of joy is necessary to raise and support the inward joy of the mind. See, that's when we talk about putting off the old person putting on the new person, we're talking about doing something. And it's a very interesting thing that all the disciplines for the spiritual life, are bodily behaviors, even memorization of Scripture. And now why is that we'll go back to last week's study now and remember what is our body, it's our little power pack. God has given us our body, as a place to exercise our kingdom. And of course, its point is to submit it to God. But we're given the option of not doing that. And that's where we get in trouble. And the teaching here of law, he can he says also, for since we are neither all soul, nor all body, seeing none of our actions are either separately of the soul, or separately the body, seeing we have no habits, but such as are produced by the actions of both our souls and our bodies. It is certain that if we would arrive at habits of devotion or delight in God, we must not only meditate and exercise our souls, but we must practice and exercise our bodies, to all such outward actions are, as are conformable, to these inward tempers, see, that's what we have to learn to train, the body, really to use the body, it's a God given principle that we can use it to bring ourselves closer to God. And what you do with your body makes a difference.

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Just think about a simple thing like skipping. Most of you look to me like you've given up skipping. But maybe you'd like to try it tonight in the dark on your way home. And what you will realize is, it makes a tremendous difference. Skipping just something simple like that, you see. And that's why it really does matter what we do with our bodies when we pray. It really does and you need to experiment with that and learn the difference that it makes. No, it isn't because it earns you anything, right? It's because you're an embodied being. Right, you're an embodied being. And so you have to learn how to take care of and use that body to submit your members to God in righteousness.

Dallas Willard**Dallas Willard 14:48**

And last time, I gave you a verse about it is vain to rise up early and sit up late and eat the bread of sorrow. And some of you looked at me a little strange about that. So I thought I'd better give you the right reference on it, which is Psalms 127. And we use the first verses here, Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it. Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keep keeping awake is in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, and retire late to eat the bread of sorrow, of painful labor. For he gives to His beloved sleep.

Dallas Willard 15:43

Sleep is one of the greatest acts of faith. You heard about the lady who said that when she went to bed at night, she turned the world over to the Lord because He was going to be awake anyway. But some of us can't do that. And to be able to sleep is a great act of trust, towards God. So our bond is very important, and we want to, we want to bring it into this area of love. And we want our bodies in its social relations, to be in a position of loving, without special effort.

Dallas Willard 16:28

Now, it'll take us a while to get there, you see. And we have to train ourselves so that love naturally flows. And what we have to stop and think about is one of the things that shows us where we are spiritually. And what we spontaneously do, also shows us where we are spiritually. So now, let's think about love and work our way into the soul here. But remember, now, Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind with all your strength. And when you look at that verse, I mean, think about what that would be like for us to be in that position. And think the thought, this is something for us, this is for us, it means we can do this, it's possible for you to do that. Now, you know, I'm not going to argue about whether you're going to get all the way there until you're dead. And on the other side, we just want to remember that we can do a lot better than we're doing. See, maybe you can't go all the way. But you can make significant progress. And that's what we want to think about

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well, now what is love, love is will to good for all concerned, in our presence, and our action. That is to say, when we love, we have goodwill, we are thinking about doing good to those that are affected by our actions note, love is not a feeling. We talked about that earlier. It has feelings with it. And they're good feelings. But we don't focus on that. That's a consequence. That's not the heart of the matter. That's very important to understand. Because love is a set of the will.

Dallas Willard 18:36

First it comes from God in Christ. That's how we we learn it. And I've given you two passages there. And I won't take time to work through them now. But I hope you're familiar with them. And the great passage in Romans eight is about how nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. He talks about how God has loved us and then John 1:4-9 says simply we love God because He first loved us. The truth is from where we're coming in a broken world, broken people in a broken world. We really don't know what love is. And that's why in the culture, it is such a mess. And it does so much harm hurt so many people because of the confusion. to If love in this sense were what

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governed our relationships in our families and beyond. Then of course the world would be transformed beyond recognition. But too often love is confused with desire. And love is not desire. See, I say I love chocolate cake. But I don't. I want to eat it. I am not interested in it's good at all.

Dallas Willard 20:05

And love and desire are two different things. Now, if we were put together in the right way, then we would desire what is good. But the trouble is that we often desire things that are not good. And consequently our love does not function rightly. Because our will is enslaved to things that we desire and not to what is good. And now, go back through the notes and remember what we said about the mind and all of that. Because if our mind isn't set, full of the goodness of God, then we will be enslaved to our desires, because we will think, I can't do what is good, because if I do, I won't get what I want.

Dallas Willard 20:56

And it's only confidence in God that enables us to say, The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want and to say that whatever the circumstances may be. So that's the process that we go through God loves us, then love is from God, and the one who loves is born of God and knows God. Now that's a really, so you have to remember the standard of love. Because certainly, it isn't true that the one who less is born of God, that isn't true.

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The one who loves is born of God, because that's the only source of love. And the center of the universe is a wonderful community of persons, that is characterized by love. God is love. So we grow to love God with all our heart now. Kingdom living is living by the grace of God that comes from God acting in our lives in a loving way. And we know this grace by venturing on God. And means, among other things, that now then when I'm faced with a choice, I won't just say, What do I want? I will say what is good. And when the voice comes back and says yes, if you do what is good, then you will not get what you want. Right? Then I say, Aha, there is a God. There is a God.

Dallas Willard 22:42

And that's the great testimony out of the book of Daniel, you know, there is a God in heaven. So well, I'll throw you in the furnace. Okay? We don't need to have a committee meeting about this and think about it. You just go right ahead. Do that was their confidence. Daniel also there is a God in heaven, I'll pray to Him and He will reveal to me the meaning of the dream. See there is a God. So the first words of the old creed, I believe in God, the Father almighty Maker of heaven ever see, that's foundational to loving. And then by imitating God,

Dallas Willard 23:23

I love this passage from Ephesians. Be imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love just as Christ also loved you and gave himself up for us and offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma. Isn't that a nice phrase? A fragrant aroma. God, Christ's giving himself up in love. Now you know that aroma has filled the whole earth. Sometimes it's kind of blotted out. But it's there. Jesus put his mark on the earth when he was lifted up on the cross, and that was an act of love. took no

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one made him do that. He did that out of love. He did it to reach you and me and everyone in the world. And it's a fragrant aroma, what that, it's the aroma of love. So transformation of character then, and expressions of power will go hand in hand as that grace moves.

Dallas Willard 24:36

Signs and wonders are a natural expression of the presence of the kingdom. It's a natural expression of the presence of the kingdom. See, one of the interesting things when you study the Gospels and the book of Acts is what happened without people even trying to do it. You remember the little woman who came and just touched the hem of Jesus's garment, well see, that's because his body was functioning right. It was full of power. And then you see that same thing with the apostles later on. And it does happen still. Some of you will remember Kathryn Kuhlman. And people started being healed without her doing anything in her Bible classes, she just teaching the Bible.

Dallas Willard 25:35

See, so let me just restate that signs and wonders as we speak of them, are a natural expression of the presence of the kingdom of God. And that is a kingdom of love, and grace. And we should expect that and our bodies should be in a position to convey that kind of power. And it's a wonderful way to do that in a rituals like, my friend, Trevor Hudson, down in South Africa was used to have in his churches Thursday night, I think once a month, they would have the Lord's Supper, and they had a prayer team. And people who wanted ministry for health would come. And then in that setting, he would, there are many ways of doing it, you don't have to knock them over, like Benny Hin does. I mean, there are many ways of doing this. But we have to understand the presence of the kingdom has that as a natural expression.

Dallas Willard 26:35

See, as you as you grow in character, and love increasingly possesses your life, you will naturally want to give the gift of the kingdom to other people in speaking and in action. And just in your presence. The really the primary, the primary means of evangelization in the world is the bodies of disciples. It's what is there, what's flowing out from them. And once you come with your mind, and your will, and your, your body and your soul, and your social relationships, and all of that is functioning as it was meant to function, then the world will change around you.

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And then love will lead us to pray for people and to speak against what is evil, and to speak what is good. And we do that in the name of Jesus. That's the main thing, really, they were learning in the book of Acts was to act in the name of Jesus. So go back and look at all those little passages and see how they use that name. Now, see, when you use the name, you are invoking the kingdom, you're acting in the name of the king. So now that that may be a challenge to some of you, I know it won't to others. But this is just something you experimentally follow up on.

Dallas Willard 28:14

Now the core of Kingdom living is the surrendered will. And I have to talk about that before I go on to

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the soul. And I will get there in just a minute. But I said I think the other a few weeks ago, the will or the heart or the spirit is the executive center of the self. And that's where you make your choices. And it is fundamental to everything. Because it is what God looks at more than anything else. It is the set of our will and a surrendered will to God is at the very heart of progression towards wholeness. And if that will is not surrendered, then the rest of it won't come along. And what that means is what I want is not what I live for. And do not pass this you can't. Because if you pass this, the rest of it won't work. I don't live for myself. And this is what Jesus was talking about when he talked about taking the cross. It has to be a settled thing. I do not live for what I want. It's okay for me to want, I don't deny what I want. But it does not rule me. And that's what it means to have a surrendered will a will surrender to God and I at the center of my being now. I've settled that good under God rules me. That's what I live for.

Dallas Willard 29:58

Now, Paul, going back to our lesson from last time puts this in very bodily terms. He says, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, but present yourself to God as those alive from the dead and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. And remember our discussion last time about the sin that is in my members well see I put I give my members to God. And and it's actually often very helpful for you to just very explicitly do that. Find a quiet place and time and prepare yourself for it and spend significant time. Just lay down on the floor, and give your body to God and say, Lord, you have my hands, I have my tongue. Go, just all that's yours, surrendered them up. And now that's helpful then in using your members and righteousness wherever you are. Don't be afraid to do that you can give your body to God.

Dallas Willard 31:01

Actually, he bought it anyway. He made it anyway, you don't own your body, you're not on your own. You're bought with the price. So give it up. Turn it over to God. And then you're ready to as Paul says die daily. Paul was describing a situation actually where any day he could have been dead. You know, so when he got up in the morning and walked out to carry out his ministry, it was like accepting death. Now, that's a very literal sense of it. But of course, we also want to understand that if we think we're not about to be killed today, we still want to be dead. To self-will. Not dead to will, will is not bad. Wills good. The harm comes when it is turned on itself. And they say now what do I want? I want what I want when I want it, as the song says right? And no, I don't live that way. Now, if so, suppose I want some raisin bran for breakfast. Well, that's okay. That's not self-will self-will is like when I say I'd better have some raisin bran for breakfast, you know fee fi fo fum. No, that's see that's different.

Dallas Willard 32:34

Now the surrendered will then works itself out. It doesn't mean gritted teeth. See that. Also, we want to remember to this, we're looking for the executive center of the self to bring every aspect of the being around so that when we do love our neighbor as ourselves, it isn't like, ooh. It's easy. And I think that's the most important thing for us to understand. And all this teaching is, we're talking about the easy life. The hard life is the other way. This is the easy way. Now, it's not easy, it's impossible. If you don't take the inward route, then it's impossible. And gritted teeth won't help for

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very long. So the surrendered will turns all dimensions of the person, mind, body and so on, to love of God and to love what God loves. And so then again, our old illustration you think about Bless those who curse you well. That's the easy way. That's it. That's the easy way. But you have to have stabilized your mind in your vision of God. The feelings that are governing your life must be those that go with love, joy, peace, faith, hope, and so on. And it's easy. Does that make sense to you? Because you see, that's the heart of the teaching.

Dallas Willard 34:15

We're talking about actually coming to a place where we just do the things that Jesus said. And we can all be summed up in terms of loving God and our neighbor in the way Jesus described it. But it isn't an outward thing. It's an inward thing. And we can do it by the grace of God if we go by the inward route. And we can't even do it by the grace of God if we go the outward route, because the grace of God will not cooperate with us.

Dallas Willard 34:43

And that is what Jesus means when he says you have to go beyond the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees or you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. Not talking about going to heaven when you die. It's talking about living an interactive relationship with what God is doing now. Its Matthew 5:20, right. Unless you go beyond now what is the righteous scribes and Pharisees, it's at the level of action. So what he's saying is, don't just try to do the right thing. Don't just try not to do the wrong thing. That's where the scribes and the Pharisees, the ambition of the Pharisee, is to say, I didn't do anything wrong. And then in order to meet that, they had to cut it down. And that's what you see, in any system of legalism. You take a religious group, and I won't mention anyone, because I don't want to be hard on any of the groups, but just look at any of the groups, and look at the degree of legalism that is involved. And what you will suddenly realize is that, well, I'll just say most of them, so anyone who wants to can make an exception of themselves in such a group. See, when you look at most of them, what you will see is that they have defined this, so that it leaves out the heart of love. And they defined their righteousness in certain ways. That will enable them to negotiate it while remaining fundamentally unchanged.

Dallas Willard 36:10

And that's where we get our, our host of mean unhappy Christians. And there's so many of them. It's because they've not gone to the inside. See, they haven't changed the inside, and they find it impossible to deal with the outside. Blessing those who curse you is something you can learn to do. And now our last session, which is next week, perhaps I want to talk about the practicalities of learning to do specific things, and maybe you will want to bring a special commandment that you think is real hard. And then we'll try to talk about how you would learn to do that, because they're all doable. They're all doable, if you don't fall into the legalist trap.

Dallas Willard 37:16

So spiritual formation in Christ's-likeness is not just a matter of changing the will itself, but the whole person. And so now the soul. The real problem is how to describe the soul. And let's begin just by saying the soul is the deepest part of you. It is actually for the most part, beyond your

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conscious awareness. You have a kind of sense of it. And you sense it as a kind of stream of life flowing in you. And sometimes it's pretty weak. Sometimes it's stronger. Sometimes we speak to the soul in the second person, you'll notice that in the Bible, in the Psalms, why are they are cast down, oh, my soul, thou disquieted within me, hope thou in God for you shall yet praise him for the health of his countenance See, you talk to the soul, the rich farmer, soul you have much goods laid up, many years. Take your rest, right? And so that's the deepest part. Jesus said, what would a man give in exchange for his soul? He's referring to the deepest part of the self, which if you lose that, your whole life is out of control. And in thinking about the last days, as Jesus said, in your patience, possess ye, your souls, it's talking about the end time when life isn't going to be like it is now. Hard Times that he says to those who have faith in Him, in your patience, possess your souls. Now, actually, if you don't have patience, you're not going to possess your soul very well. In any circumstance. And patience requires faith that God is in charge. And that what I want doesn't have to be done. It requires humility, and a lot of other things that go together. And if you have that, then you're able to possess your soul.

Dallas Willard 39:31

Poets also speak in this way. They speak to the soul as if it were a sort of something over here. The second person, you don't have direct control over your soul. You can't and that's your will. And next is your body and your mind and your feelings as you learn to use your body but your soul simply isn't under your direct control. Your soul is like that about you, which enables you to have control at all, if you have it. And it's so important to understand that it interfaces with reality that it interfaces with God, the soul is meant to find its home and its rest in God. And its contact with God is what keeps it alive and keeps it strong. Then on the other hand, the soul is what brings all dimensions of the self together to form one life.

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So in the person whose soul is not broken, the feelings and the thoughts and the bodily behavior, and the social interactions are all congruent. You understand what I mean? They're consistent. And that's just the opposite of the situation that Paul presents you remember in Galatians Five, as well as Romans seven the things that I would that I do not, things I would not I wind up doing. See that's, that's the result of a non functional soul. Now, there are all kinds of degrees of that. But basically, what you see in a person whose soul has been restored is the capacity to consistently and simply do the good things which they propose to do, and to not do the evil things that they propose to avoid. And that goes all the way from adultery to Twinkies. So now we have a real problem in our country in our country, and not just in our country I was, Newsweek this week, I think was talking about how it's now it's coming to Asia. Of just eating too much. And I certainly don't mean to get after anyone about that here. So don't worry about it. But there's, it's a problem. It's a health problem. And it's just you might think it would be a simple thing, to just say, well, I won't eat that much. But it isn't.

Dallas Willard 42:11

And a lot of that is geared into our social system. Though it's not just the body, it's the social setting. It's just like, oh, you know, Peter in case where he's denying Christ, the social setting and

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the body as well. And the broken soul can't make those come out whole, one would think it would be a simple thing to say, well, like smoking, for example, just won't smoke. But if you've tried it, when you've been addicted, and I can't really speak for it. Because I was never addicted. I when I was a child, I picked up some cigarettes, some side of the road and smoked them. And I think I threw up for three days. So that just took care of me. But both of my brothers I remember my older brother who's now gone to heaven. He used to we were very poor and I he would stop smoking long enough to buy his daughter's new shoes. And then he make a beeline for the lucky strikes. Lucky strikes means fine tobacco. Remember that? LSMFT. See, I know I know all those things.

Dallas Willard 43:33

So now the broken life is an the broken soul. That's what we're really talking about in this series. And this is the common kind of an experience of we, we have lost souls or dead souls. And when the will withdraws from God, and focuses upon itself, the soul is deprived of sustenance in God. And it withers up it dries up and is unable to make the connections. Like between a decision I hate the smoking and well okay, I just won't smoke would seem like a simple thing. My drug of choice is caffeine. But I would not be enslaved to it. I mean, there's a good use for it, and a lot of bad uses. So what we whatever foods the same way foods wonderful. But you don't want to be a slave to it. And we can escape that as we progressively nourish our soul in God more and more and learn to lose ourselves in love of God.

Dallas Willard 44:51

Now, when that soul is broken, then that's what leads to so much duplicity in human life. Deceit, falsehood it carries all the dimensions of the cell with it, body language, social relations, all of that is corrupted by duplicity and deceit. And transparency is lost. And where you and you really can't have love without transparency, you have to have that you have to have transparency, or you can't have love. And that's why communication is so important, because transparency doesn't just happen. It happens as you willfully use communication in a way that is not misleading and not deceitful. And you can do that because you trust God, and you don't have to manage the world on your own.

Dallas Willard 45:40

Now, the duplicity and the deceitfulness brings you to the place to where you don't really know where you are. And that's what a lost person is, a lost person is a person who does not know where they are. And isn't someone who doesn't know where they're going. It's someone who doesn't know where they are, if you don't know where you are, and someone hands you a map, you can't use it. See, so you have to know where you are. And if you've lived in the duplicity of human relationships long enough, you're so confused, you have no idea where you stand. And it's only as God pulls us into clarity, that we begin to know where we are. Because now we can claim where we are, as the gift of God, we can begin to say I am me, I am here. These are the people around me, this is what we're doing. And all of a sudden, things begin to become clearer.

Dallas Willard 46:39

You're not denying who you are, you're not denying who other people are, you're not denying what

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your work is. Not in behalf of dreams about what you wish you were or others were or what your work is. This, this is really fundamental folks in getting out of brokenness. This is where we begin to be able to do what is morally good to devote ourselves effectively to the good we want to do in life.

Dallas Willard 47:07

See, every every individual has on them a personal call from God, to be the light of the world where they are. Now, I know Jesus is the light of the world, but he doesn't let you off the hook that easy he says You're the light of the world. And you can only be the light of the world where you are. And that really means you have to get out of all of this duplicity. And you have to begin to find a source of nourishment for yourself where you are, and say it's okay for me to be here. It's okay for me to be who I am. It's alright. That I had the family that I have that I was born in the time I was that I have gender that I have, that I have, the education that I have, and so forth.

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Wow, I know that's not that's not easy to say. That's not easy to say because we want to focus on it, we can just fill our life full of regrets and recriminations and all the things that weren't right. And if we do that, then we will never be able to say, as I said the other night its so important to be able to say God has done well by me. So you have this picture now in the Scripture, the tragic picture of human life. Matthew 9:36 such a touching place. Jesus is he's early in His ministry, he's looking out at the people and, and the language there is very, very graphic. It says his heart was torn. Heart was torn. The language that used is like you would use if a wild animal tore you since his heart was torn. As he looked at the people this is because they fainted and were scattered abroad like sheep without a shepherd. And sheep without a shepherd really do get scattered abroad.

Dallas Willard 49:09

You know the Old Testament passage and 50 Isaiah 53 All we like sheep have gone astray how to sheep go straight, one nibble at a time. That's the way they go astray. And after a while they're just all over the place. They have no idea how they got there, how they're going to get home. They have to have a shepherd one nibble at a time. That's how she'd go astray. Jesus looked out at this fever they fainted and were a scattered abroad like sheep having a shepherd

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Matthew 11:28 Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden. And I will give you rest.

Dallas Willard 49:51

This wonderful passage here and Isaiah 61, which couldn't be the I'm passage for the whole series, The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed Me to bring good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to the prisoners, and proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. That is to say that right now is the time that you can know God's favor. This is the time. So it's a very, very distressing situation. And it all comes out of the brokenness of soul. Now, other things contribute to that. But it's, it's the broken of brokenness of soul that leads to this general condition.

Dallas Willard**Dallas Willard 50:45**

So Jesus says, come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. For I am meek and lowly of heart. And you will find rest unto your soul, your soul, that deepest part of you that what should be the the flow of life that comes out of God into you. And, of course, that's exactly what is given to the disciple of Jesus. And the Spirit begins to flow in them, and renews their soul. And the disciple is someone who comes to Jesus as that verse says, I want to learn of you. So you go over that, again, Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, there might be someone like that here tonight. You know, many people, their problem is not a chip is on the shoulder, their world is on their shoulder, they are carrying the world.

Dallas Willard 52:01

Labor and heavy laden see there, they feel like they have to make things come out, right. And they're doing their best. And they've got themselves at the center instead of God at the center. And because of that, they don't have the resources that they were built, to run on. So apprenticeship to Jesus, then come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest, take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.

Dallas Willard 52:35

See, that's the key, meek and lowly of heart, that means I don't presume to run the world. I'm meek, I recognize my dependence on God, I'm lowly of heart, I don't lift myself up, as as the point of reference for my life, much less the lives of everyone else. And in Jesus, you see, the kingdom of the heavens is present, and available to those that trust him. And that's why he preached the gospel that it did repent for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand, he said, and you remember mark for Matthew 4:17, and elsewhere, that's the gospel of Jesus, repent. For the kingdom of heaven, isn't it now, repent doesn't mean get on beat your head on the floor. It means to think about how you think about things.

Dallas Willard 53:29

Now, when you do that, you may want to beat your head on the floor. That's not the essential teaching here. You may not some of the most solid disciples of Jesus have never gone through that kind of an experience. They've just looked at their thinking and said, This is all wrong. And Jesus is all right. And I'm gonna start thinking the way he did instead of the way that I do. But the thinking was redone in the light of the fact that the kingdom of the heavens is available. And it was available, of course in him. See Jesus, proclaimed the kingdom of God as available. He manifest manifested the presence of the kingdom in his deeds. And he taught about the kingdom in His teachings. You remember how many times the scriptures will say, well, the kingdom of heaven is like, the kingdom of God is like, that's teaching. And the sermon on the mount is teaching. Now, when he sent his disciples out the first time around, he told them to proclaim and to manifest, but he didn't tell them to teach. And the reason for that was they didn't know enough to teach. You start with proclaiming and manifesting, the teaching comes along. And if you have a solid teaching group, then Everything moves much faster. Because people can step into the kingdom with understanding and grow with it rapidly.

Dallas Willard**Dallas Willard 55:13**

So now to take his yoke means to join him in his work. You know how to yoke is a yoke is a piece of equipment that enables oxen or horses or mules or goats. That's about the limit of it to work together, it unites them in a common task. And when he says, Take my yoke upon you, he's saying, Get involved in my work with me, that's what it means. And it's all it's a whole life process of doing and saying what he does. So the if you want to minister with Jesus, you do what he did in the manner he did it, you say what he said in the way that he said. And that's why things like really knowing the scriptures are so important. We need to have reworked that teaching that we got from the world so that it no longer makes any sense. And the teaching that Jesus gives makes sense.

Dallas Willard 56:24

So whole life learning, it isn't just for church. It's everywhere you are. That's discipleship to Jesus, you're bringing your whole life now into the flow of what God is doing. So I mean, just think about what you spend your time doing every day. What did you do today, what you're going to do tomorrow? Well, you do that in the yoke. You do it in the yoke, as you do it, you look to Him. And you ask and invoke and expect that he will act with you. And that's how you know his presence in your life. Now, if you say, well, I'll just pull it myself, I'll pull the load myself. That's like, I used to train horses, and a young horse that's not been trained well, when you yoke them to a horse, you what you do is you yoke them to a horse that's trained. And when you do that, that that new horse will just take off and pull the whole load and the other old guy will just stand there and say, Oh, well, isn't that nice. And then the horse will decide to slack off and, and the wagon or whatever it is back there, and it will bump their behinds and skin their legs. And, and so they after a while they figured out that's not too nice either. And so pretty soon, they said, well, I'll just walk by, walk evenly with this other horse. They got the message.

Dallas Willard 58:03

And that's exactly what Jesus is talking about. I mean, he lived in a culture, of course, where people would understand that. And when we take the yoke, now then what happens is, we began to rest. We stop fighting it. We learn to rest, we rest in the strength that comes from God from Christ that we're walking with. And then we begin to be able to do everything that we do in rest and confidence in him. And that seeps into the deepest part of our being.

Dallas Willard 58:38

And so we can actually, as Colossians 3:17, says, do everything, everything we do and say in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father through him. Now see that's the secret is learning to do that. And having all of the dimensions of your being I can't, I can't skip this last point here. It means to abandon outcomes. To abandon outcomes, to leave those to God. You do your part, but you do not trust your part even. You do it, and you trust God.

Dallas Willard 59:27

And that's what it means, as First Peter five talks about how God gives grace to the humble and resists the proud. And sometimes you can almost feel the resistance of God blowing in your face and you need to get back in another position. Well, I'm not in charge of this. I don't I humble myself

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under the mighty hand of God, that in due season, he may exalt you. And so that's the ultimate outcome is that you would be exalted. By God, not by you, Casting all your care upon Him because He cares for you. So that's the peace. soul rest comes through apprenticeship of Jesus, natural consequence of faith in Jesus. In the yoke. Once we learn that, then we begin to have rest, and our soul has rest.

Dallas Willard 1:00:26

Let's see that seeking the Kingdom means just to do that. I was so see we sing about Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. How do you do it? Well, this is how you do. Learning from Jesus. That's how you seek the kingdom of God. We look for what God is doing. And we join him in that. And as we do it, we experience the union with God, and our souls are refreshed and upheld and built up because we're drawing from the resources of God.

Dallas Willard 1:00:59

I mentioned before the Psalm one man. I hope you might just meditate on that first song. This man is one who doesn't walk into counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners nor sit in the seat of the scornful but his delight is in the law of God. And that's a key now. And we have to cover that briefly. The Law of God is the key to harmonizing our souls with what God is doing.

Dallas Willard 1:01:30

And I've mentioned also Joshua, one eight, if you don't know that, when you should certainly memorize it and meditate on it. This Book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth, not out of your hand out of your mouth. That means you're saying it. This book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth. But you shall meditate there in day and night. That you may observe to do according to all that is written there in and then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success and good success.

Dallas Willard 1:02:02

Now do you remember how Matthew 6:33 winds up? Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things. Everything you need, The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not lack. Psalm one man to like a tree planted by the river of waters looks like drought on the ground, but the roots go deep down to where the water is. And that's because he's absorbed in the law, God,

Dallas Willard 1:02:33

the law of the Lord is perfect restoring the soul. Do you know that verse, Psalm 19, seven, the law of the Lord is perfect restoring the soul. I think the old version says converting the soul. And see the kingdom of God is God in action. And the law tells you what God does. So when you come to the law, and you absorb yourself in it, then your actions begin to go with the flow of God's life. And that's how the soul is renewed. And given new strength. The law is precious and tender. See, we live in a nation that is antinomian we hate law. I'm just gonna say that and leave it with you and you think about it. So we hate law. None at all saying that the Australians were the ones that got caught were the ones that got away. And, but the law and and also a lot of the teaching about grace is antinomian. And it's false. Law is a grace. And it's beautiful. It's wonderful.

Dallas Willard**Dallas Willard** 1:03:53

Psalm 119 is just, I wish I had time to just read some verses out of that the beauty of the law, about how the soul will just thirst for it. We'll see that's that Psalm One guy says, He delights in the law of God. Now you delight in something because it's beautiful and good. And it is not easy to get good laws. And ancient people in Greece and all the other ancient lands, treasured law, because it told them how to live well.

Dallas Willard 1:04:28

Some of you will have read some of Plato, you'll remember Socrates his story and how they were going to poison him and his friends tried to get him to run off to another country. He said, How can I do that to the laws of Athens that have looked after me and cared for me? All of my 70 years How can I do that? The law is a beautiful thing. I know it's sometimes hard to see now. And often today we confuse the institutions of law and the personalities of law with the law. Oh, so we have all these lawyer jokes, you know, I'm not going to tell any. So rest easy. But it is tempting. But the law is a wonderful thing. That's why, for example, my students at USC, many of them, they're drawn to the law. It isn't just that they think it would be a wonderful profession, or their father or mother wants them to go into. Think again. I mean, how many? How many pictures of law are on the television? I mean, how many of those programs just look at how many of them are there, see that that's a kind of backdoor acknowledgement of how important law is and what a good thing it is.

Dallas Willard 1:05:41

In the Old Testament, there are so many expressions of the tenderness of the law. And just give you a couple here, Exodus 23:19, and you shall not boil a kid. That's a baby goat, by the way. In the milk of its mother, just think about that, once one does that reflect about what kind of sensitivity it is that reflect a prohibition that you would not use the very substance that's supposed to nourish this little goat to cook it. And there's just a sense of appropriateness and rightness and tenderness.

Dallas Willard 1:06:32

The Deuteronomy 24:21 is about gleaning after the harvest, that meant after you did your harvest, you didn't go back and see what you left. And that was one of the teachings that the Old Testament law had, and it was for people who needed food, they should be able to come into the field. And that was a law. And I've mentioned here, Ruth, if you remember the beautiful story of Ruth, she was a Gleaner. She was a Gleaner. And there's a very tender passage in there where Boaz tells his workers to leave a few handfuls on purpose. And, you know, life is such a terrible grind, if you don't have that kind of tenderness in it. And we all experienced so much of it in our world, don't we, where there's just a grind, that occasionally there's some tenderness in it. And the law is such a beautiful and tender thing. And we want to understand that it is a grace law is not opposed to grace, it is a grace.

Dallas Willard 1:07:35

Here's how it works. Upon our confidence in Christ and sincere intention, we are able to walk in the ways in reality of the Kingdom of God, upheld by grace, we can do that. I say again, it won't happen without our decision to do it. But we can do it. It won't be imposed on us. The Son and the Spirit in

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our lives make it possible for the requirements of the law to be fulfilled in us who walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. So you don't live in Romans seven, you live in Romans eight.

Dallas Willard 1:08:19

And when that happens now then the broken depths of our soul are reintegrated in a life in union with God, the Eternal kind of life. The soul heals. That's how the law of the Lord is perfect restoring the soul. Now, of course, the Good Shepherd restores my soul too right. That's a part of the same picture. It isn't. These aren't contrasts, these are a part of the same picture. And it's like setting a broken limb. You put it back in position, you hold it there and it heals. And you will progressively see people who engage with Christ in this way with intention, beginning to heal and things begin to go right.

Dallas Willard 1:09:10

Sanctification is a condition of life where we are established in relationship with Christ. Sanctification is not an experience, though there may be experiences involved. It's not some special kind of status. It is a constant relationship with Christ. Sanctification is a process you can be more or less sanctified, but there are places where you aren't. And many of us after we're first brought into the kingdom, we are a long way from sanctification. Maybe we're getting there, but we're not there yet.

Dallas Willard 1:09:53

A cup of coffee that is getting warm in the microwave can still be cold. So at a point, though we began to have this established in us. And we are living from the reality of the Kingdom as we walk with Christ. Now, that's where healing is, folks. It's in a walk with Christ and the Kingdom of God. And as we do that, then all of these parts of the self that we've been talking about, are healed.

Dallas Willard 1:10:26

And the whole person begins to effortlessly abide in the vine, of which we are the branches. And Pastor Lynn brought a wonderful message on that a few weeks ago. And it's one of the deepest teachings the model of the branch and the vine see, the branch rests in the vine, it draws its nurture from the vine. Interestingly, the vine doesn't bear fruit of its own, it bares it in the branches. But that comes from the vine. It doesn't mean that we're being weird sanctification doesn't mean that we're being weird or righteously mean or being proud of our humility or any of that sort of thing. Now, why do I say that? Well, because actually, that's the way sanctified people are often presented. Right? Of course, they don't know what they're talking about. But you know, holiness is misery. And that's when many people look into the teaching of Jesus. They Oh, that would be just miserable to be like that. I'd have to give up this and give up that and give up the other thing, Oh, we got to give up. And they don't understand that the heart of sanctification is rootedness in God. And then that allows you to be anywhere like Christ. Christ didn't have to avoid places. The Pharisees around him, wanted him to avoid places, because you see that's what they thought sanctification was, but he knew it wasn't. See because he was established in God. Anywhere, anytime. Anywho that sanctification, you're easy. Because you're not struggling. You come to rest, see easy yoke yoke

light burden. Paul, John says, His commandments are not burdensome. Why?

Dallas Willard 1:12:30

Well, because we've been transformed. Our soul now works. We're not carrying the burden of outcomes, because we're not on the throne of our life. We don't try to please people. This is one of the greatest blessings of healing and wholeness and sanctification, you just stop trying to please people. Instead, you try to do them good. That's love, remember. And that wonderful passage in Colossians completes, is talking about really is just talking about work. Don't work for anybody but Jesus. He's the one who's going to pay you anyway. So work for him. And then you when you if you do that, you're going to do other people. So much more good. That way. Now you have to be established to do that you have to be settled. You have to know where you're drawing, you have to have rest in your soul in order to do that. You can see that's where we realize this isn't this whole thing isn't about not sinning. So much of talk about Christian life is no not sitting not I'm really hanging on there. Well, I mean, that's important. But look, as the law restores our soul in our walk with Christ, less and less of life is a struggle with temptation. You don't even go there. Pride points are but dung a good four letter word that we can use in church. And sin is even worse. Well, that's bad enough, I guess.

Dallas Willard 1:14:25

Sin is slop. And it is seen for what it is. Why would anyone want to do that? Only if their soul is dying. If they're living on their own, trying to run the world. They're flushed with bitter, harmful feelings that are making their glands pump like the Colorado River. But no, no. See that's what it means when Paul talks about being dead to sin. is that for you. Well, you know, there's a point at which we're not sure we want that. What would I be without my temptations? Who would I be if I didn't have this little thing parked over here? Maybe I don't do it, but I could do it if I wanted to, I haven't really decided not to do it. So there's a real struggle with identity there. And I hope you will meditate on these verses in Romans six. I don't have time to look at them tonight. But you know, there was a time when I was young that I enjoyed shooting out streetlights had a BB gun. And it was kind of fun to pop a cat once in a while and no no BBz gonna the sting him a little bit. Now, may I confess to you that I am totally dead to those things now. I have no interest in it whatsoever.

Dallas Willard 1:16:07

Now there's some other things I'm not there on. Like, for example, I'm gonna be stung with vanity. A little, envy. I can be tempted, I'm not. I've learned actually, the best way to deal with that is just to see how stupid it is. That normally will turn it off pretty fast. But you had to learn how to deal with that. And we can learn how to be dead. And to realize that grace is for life, and not just for guilt. Not just for dealing with bad things. And when we do that, see, then we realize more and more. It's not about not sinning.

Dallas Willard 1:16:50

The Christian life is not about not sinning. It's about something much greater than that. It's about living in something that makes sin look like stupid dung, slop, whatever you want to call it. My grandmother bless her heart, the worst word she had in her vocabulary were shucks and tobacco.

So God's intent for us is that we should become the kind of person whom he can empower to do what we want. And when our souls have been knit together and made whole, then that can begin to happen. Of course, that's our future in the universe.

Dallas Willard 1:17:31

And in concluding the systematic presentation of the material, I just want to leave you with Revelation 22:5, because that's what your future is. So you want to think now How should I live since that's my future. And there shall no longer be any night, and they shall not have a need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun because the Lord God shall illumine them, and they shall reign forever and ever. And that's where the redeemed person is heading. That's you. That's your future. Now we go back. Love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength and your neighbors as yourself. See that is the healed life. That's the healed life. And we have to choose that and step into it and say yes, that's for me. I really do want to be like that. And once we see what we're doing and decide that and then we can make progress. And it'll no doubt be rather individualized and all that but it'll be steady. And it'll just get sweeter and sweeter doing and that's what we sing songs about that don't get sweeter as the years go by. sweeter as the years go by, well, that's the way it's supposed to be. And it can be that way. Now, Pastor Bill had a wonderful image or vision a few weeks back about a fire coming into the valley. I've been talking to you about the fire. This is the fire of God, living in people who love Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength and their neighbor as themselves.