



Sunday Teaching Guide

Identity, Week 2

September 17, 2023

Bible Texts

- Matthew 22:36-38
- Deuteronomy 6:4-5
- Psalm 42:1-2
- Numbers 11:4-6
- Dueteronomy 6:6-7

Important Terms

- SHEMA: This Hebrew word means "hear" and is used as the name of the prayer in Deuteronomy 6:4-5.
- LEVAV: This Hebrew word means "heart."
- NEPHESH: This Hebrew word is normally translated as "soul," but this word does not have the connotation of a duality of soul vs. body.

Sermon Notes

- In Exodus, we find the Israelites wandering in the desert after they had been rescued by God from their slavery in Egypt. They were tired, hungry, and thirsty, so much so that they put on rose-colored glasses and looked back at Egypt, wishing they could return. These people forgot the reality that God had rescued them and was providing for them. In their complaining, they use the word "nephesh" to describe their situation. Some translations say "we have lost our appetite" and others say they're famished or withering away. What we find is that it sounds pretty physical, which doesn't sound anything like how we think of soul, and that's because "nephesh" is physical. The most basic definition is even "throat."
- In Psalms, the author says, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God." In a brilliant work of metaphor, the author shows us that our thirst can be like a deer for water. My throat, my "nephesh", can be so physically dry I pant for that water, desperate for it. My life, my "nephesh" life, is to look the same. My whole being longs to be with God.
- To love God with all your soul, your "nephesh", doesn't mean promising some disembodied reality to God but means giving your whole, present, entire physical being to God. It means dedicating to God and entrusting with all that is good, all that is broken, and all that is you.

Reflection Questions

- Are there words that you can think of that you use differently than other people? What do you think is the cause of this difference in usage?
- Are there words that you have seen changed over time? Why did that change happen?
- What phrases and saying come to mind when you think of the word "soul"?
- Does your understanding of the word "soul" that it is the opposite of "body"? How are "soul" and "body" different? Are they?
- Are there things that you love compared to things that you love with your whole soul? What is the difference?
- What sense of longing do you feel for a relationship with God and living like Jesus?

Prayer for the Week

- Psalm 23:1-2: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside quiet waters.

Additional Readings

- Isaiah 55:1
- John 6:35
- Matthew 5:6