

OUTLINE AND READINGS FOR 9A.M. SERVICE AT NETTLEHAM
OCTOBER 21ST
THEME; How Precious Are Our Souls To God And How We Can Nurture
Them

The readings Psalm 42;

Matt 11 25-30. and Matt 16; 21 –27 ...

Comment on Psalm 42.....very honest psalm....someone who is oppressed by enemies. circumstances commentaries suggest he may have been a worker in the temple who had been exiled when Israel overthrown by assyrians.....who cant worship as normal and longs for that because his past experience has been that when he could he found god's presence so real it comforted and strengthened him.....but a person who in spite of all his troubles yet can say at the end.....no matter what I will praise my God because I know he is a loving faithful god, my SOUL will trust in him.

Second lessons from matt

Matt 11 25-30;. context; he has been angry with faithless cities who are not impressed by his miracles and warns them of the consequences,,,,,but then he sends his call to any individual who will respond to his love.
Jesus calls to the weary with his offer of rest for their **souls**.....

What do we mean by "**soul**" ref to dictionary

Secular view animating principle credited with faculties of though emotion and action.....distinguished from but **temporarily** co-existent from the body....in other word.our inmost being, the thing which makes us who we are.....

Theological interpretation is similar.....but emphasises the spiritual nature, considered in relationship to God... immortal, separated from the body on death and susceptible to joy or misery in a future life. Could relate to other religions than Christianity

Christian

So the soul is our very being.....linked to body and mind but separate and transcending just bodily life. To be understood in relationship with God our loving creator and sovereign Lord.....and in Christian belief our Father in heaven.

So what did Jesus mean when he said to Peter that it was possible to "lose own's soul"?

To be soul less is to become devoid of sensitivity or conscience, capacity for deep feelings, cynical, and disparaging of other people and their intentions, sometimes bitter and unforgiving

Lives lived for day to day pleasures or needs, self centred, blind and deaf to God's love and way of living until we become deaf to his love

Remember the story of Tax Gatherer and Pharisee....why did Jesus say despised Tax Gatherer was nearer salvation than the good living

Pharisee.....Pharisees prayer was self focussed, complacent and proud lost sight of his real relationship with God as a sinner

Also shows us how we can allow "rubbish" like pride, to get in the way of our relationship with God.

Story; Bishop who was a wonderful evangelist.....especially on one to one basis.....talking to dust bin men one day and told them he knew the greatest dust bin man of all ,who would take away all your rubbish and destroy it for ever.....His name is Jesus

No wonder then that Jesus said that the answer for us was to be "born again" to have a new spiritual life through faith in Him. Now when a baby is first born it does not know the family into which it is born nor of the faculties and skills he or she will acquire as she grows up.....walking, talking, learning (to say No!)

Life is a process.....which start with birth.....And it is the same for our spiritual life.

Also turned to John Wesley sermons.....he describes this process by (pages 73/74) saying; way to the kingdom is belief.....God then coming to reign in your soul by his grace.....he says soul is the vehicle of salvation..... When this happens " **a small part of heaven is opened in the soul**" that is. In our inner being

David Watson describes the soul as "the vehicle of salvation"

So how can we nurture our souls.....?

First to understand and believe that God's love comes to use unconditionally in Jesus not something we can earn or deserve but only receive as a gift from God.....(children)

Come to me and I **will** give you rest for your souls;

But can be hard to accept.....if we have brought up to believe that we can only be loved if we "deserve it" Or if we have suffered rejection from parent, friend, husband wife. Someone we should have been able to trust in...we can become very fearful and afraid of further rejection...indeed we may come to believe that we are not worthy of love, no-one would love us just for ourselves.....

Sometimes we may need prayer for inner healing before we can fully realise how much we are loved

But the truth is that God does love us so much that he gave his only Son to die in our place and thus release us from the burden of sin and past hurts and failings

The answer is to focus upon the bounty, the wonder of this, a love which cannot be defeated or used up...enough for all. Be willing to believe..first step which leads on to further understanding

**"Loved with an everlasting love, brought by grace that love to know
Spirit breathing from above, thou has taught me it is so
O this full and perfect [peace, O this transport all divine
In a love which cannot cease, I AM HIS AND HE IS MINE**
Hymn 443 in old hymn book

When Jesus was angry with Peter (third reading) it was because Peter was reluctant /afraid to look at Jesus mission from Gods eternal perspective. Not unnaturally Peter was focussed on this world only.....he did not want Jesus to die and could not see what purpose that might fulfil.....
Jesus says....get behind me Satan! His answer shows how precious human souls are.....that he is willing to die for them to be saved and restored to a loving relationship with God the Father

Understand that Salvation is a process.....which happens in the soul
...because when we believe in Jesus as Saviour...our souls are cleansed and the Holy spirit can come and live in us.....and when he comes he brings peace, joy and a desire to live righteous pleasing lives to God.

Peace and Joy.....that transcends the difficulties of this life and the fear of death.....gives us assurance that nothing can separate us from the love of God .and in response our love for Him and our desire to serve and please him grows

Quote John Wesley;
"with this peace of God there is also joy which is produced in the heart by the Holy Spirit. He give us a calm, humble rejoicing in God through Jesus, He inspires Christian souls with profound joy which comes when the Spirit tells us that we are children of God. We rejoice because we have hope and we look forward to that unfading crown of glory in heaven
(Sermon on the Kingdom of heaven)

Don't let wrong attitudes take root again

But there is a danger.....if we allow wrong attitudes and actions to grow again in our hearts...we can lose that peace and joy.....

Quote from Galations 5

"the works of the flesh are self evident.....hatred, conflict, anger, jealousy and envy, quarrels and disputes,.....but the fruit of the spirit is;
love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness ,faithfulness gentleness and self control

As we worship week by week we turn our focus away from ourselves

and look to our loving Lord, as we have communion with God in prayers, and learn more of his love in bible study and fellowship, step out in service, so our relationship with Him grows.

There is no limit to what He can do in our lives.....so don't hold back or limit the work of the spirit in your hearts and lives.

Luke 12 ;32 Don't be afraid little flock, for your Father has been **pleased** to give you the kingdom