

LIVING BY FAITH

Message 9

September 18, 2016

INTRO: We have begun looking at feelings as related to faith. We considered numerous preliminary matters and want to now look at the primary issues involved. Feelings play a very large part in any person's life. As to the preliminaries, it is my view that God has helped us to understand the immaterial parts of man by using illustrations from the material. We saw the heart picturing man's mental processes; the kidneys, the cleansing of the mental processes and the bowels as the seat of the emotions.

It is also my view that the tabernacle pictures man's major components; body, soul and spirit. The tabernacle was the movable part of God's house before Israel reached Canaan. We saw in the Gospel of John that when Jesus came to earth, it says He dwelt, literally *tabernacle* among us. We saw in 2 Corinthians 5, and there are other references, that our bodies are the *tent*, or *tabernacle* in which we live.

We further saw that the tabernacle had the number five stamped all around it. I think that at least one of the indications of the five bars on three sides of the temple, and the five pillars by the doorway speak of the five senses of the body. That man has five physical senses, is of course not questionable. I mentioned that the physical senses are vehicles of information from our physical surroundings. On the basis of this information, the self, the real you makes many, many decisions each day.

I proposed to you that the first room in the tabernacle pictures the soul and that the soul is the interface between the physical world around us and ourselves. It takes in the data and as I see it, it goes to the mind and ultimately the self and the self makes the decisions as to what will be done.

But we learned that the tabernacle had an inner room. It is called the Holy of Holies. It was in this room that God dwelt. It is here that God comes to dwell when we become believers. Look at 1 Corinthians 3 (read 16-17). Now the word for temple here is *naos*, which was what the tabernacle became once it reached its permanent place on Mount Moriah. When we become Christians, God comes to dwell in us permanently, unless we defile the temple. So look at chapter 6 (read 19-20).

Now, this inner room, the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle had no doorway to the outside. But it had a doorway to the first room. As I see it, and this is my interpretation, as the soul is the interface between the material world and the self, so it is the interface between the spiritual world and the self. And when we talk about the sixth sense, I believe this is what it actually is.

And as the five senses are vehicles of information from the material world, so the four pillars between the Holy of Holies and the holy place represent four vehicles of spiritual information. So we can sometimes detect that someone is watching us without any of our five senses giving us that information.

Let me use a more modern illustration that I think helps us understand body, soul and spirit. It is the computer. Now a computer was designed after the way man works, whether purposely or not. There is the hardware. That is the material components. Liken that to the body, if you will. Then there is the software, the programming. The programming is massless. It does not weigh anything, but without it, a computer will not do anything. We could liken that to the soul. But a computer with hardware and software is dead. It has to be plugged in to an electrical source. And I see electricity as the closest thing to spirit I can find.

Scripture says the body without the spirit is dead (James 2:26). You take the electricity out of a body, and it is dead. There is electricity all around us, and all through us as long as we live. And when God created the heavens and the earth, it says the Spirit of God moved on the waters.

So, if I am correct, man has, not five nor six, but nine avenues through which information comes to the self. There are the five bodily senses, and there are the four spiritual senses. The spiritual senses take in information from human spirits, animal spirits, evil spirits and good spirits. We will see more of this later. And all of the senses have the capacity to create feelings in us. For example, when an evil spirit came upon Saul of the OT, and David played the harp, Saul felt better.

Feelings, on the other hand, can be a very big threat to faith. Feelings can cause very strong doubt, and doubting is not of faith. Feelings wreak such havoc in some that they leave the faith. And the relation of faith to feelings is the subject of

this message, and I realize it is by no means exhaustive on this subject.

2. Primary matters

a. Feelings related to the physical senses

So those are then the preliminary matters that we looked at. We will consider now, the primary matters. In these primary matters, we want to look first at feelings as related to the physical senses. We spoke in the last message of the senses. The senses are those special things we have been created with that take in information from our physical surroundings and relay them to the real person, that is to us. Let me quote from the last message, "Now, what is a sense? Let us look at the physical senses. A physical sense is the vehicle that lets in information from the physical world to the mind. The senses gather information from our physical surroundings and send that information to the self. These are the five senses we are familiar with. Sight lets in visual information. Hearing lets in many kinds of vibration information. Taste lets in flavor information, touch lets in information of things that contact the body. Smell lets in chemical information. The loss of any sense seriously handicaps us and can be dangerous to our life."

And again, "Now all five physical senses can set off our spiritual feelings. For example, hearing songs can set off all kinds of feelings." Let me just mention here that I gave as an example, Saul of the OT earlier. I quote again, "Seeing things, smelling things etc.. all of these can set off all kinds of feelings. But not only can the five senses affect our feelings, but memories, dreams, visions, or imaginations can set off all kinds of feelings."

Now, the senses that can lead us to doubt. And doubt sets off very uncomfortable feelings of uncertainty. The senses that make us most susceptible to doubt from the physical realm are sight and sound. So 2 Corinthians 5:7 says, "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

Turn to John 20. After Jesus was risen from the dead He appeared to a number of the disciples, but Thomas was not there. Let me read for us John 20:24-28, "Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." Sight wants to relieve the unpleasant feelings caused by doubt.

So the passage goes on, "And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, 'Peace to you!' Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.' And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

When it comes to our faith in the Lord, doubt can set off very disconcerting feelings. It is faith that has the task to overcome those. For example, many who see people suffer say, "How can God be a God of love and allow such suffering?" And doubt sets in. I watched a debate Eric Hovund had with a man who said he loved Jesus but seemed to hate the OT (though that is not truly possible). And he had Eric Hovund silent much of the time. He asked, how could God have two she bears come and kill 42 children? Then he said, "That sickens me." And he listed a host of things. And then he shared how Jesus came to change all that. And many who hear things like that are brought to doubt. There are many, many things that have the potential of making us doubt the God of the Bible or the Bible itself.

We may see suffering or we may see the lives of those who profess to be Christians, or read things or see professing Christians live in secret sins, and doubt sets in and feelings of uncertainty begin

to work in us. So the inflow of physical data we allow to enter affects the way we feel and leads to actions.

Furthermore, consider that 1 Corinthians 6 verse 20 said that we glorify God in two areas, in our body or in our spirit, not the soul. Go to John 4. When Jesus spoke to the woman at the well in John 4, she had one burning question for Him. Who was right about the true place of worship, the Jews or the Samaritans? So look at Jesus' answer in verses 23-24 (read). So there is a spiritual side to man and there is such a thing as spiritual communication. And I believe that many feelings we experience are not only due to the five physical senses, but the four areas of spiritual communication possible in man. So we want to consider those spiritual senses.

b. Feelings as related to the spiritual senses

1) Man's spirit

Let us consider first then, the sensations that come through man's spirit. I think we need not spend time on the fact that man has a spirit. The passage in 1 Corinthians 6 we read, and many others clearly teach that. Such things as pride and anger, and many others are spirit issues. Last Wednesday we studied anger. Ecclesiastes 7:9 says, "Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry, For anger rests in the bosom of fools." Often when people are angry you can sense that.

Mark 2:8 says, "But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves..." He perceived this in His spirit. Mark 8:12 says of Jesus, "But He sighed deeply in His spirit..." In Luke 10:21 it says, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said..." In Luke 1:47, when Mary, who was expecting, met Elizebeth who was expecting as well, she said, "And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."

Paul says in 2 Corinthians 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let

us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." So there is filthiness of spirit. There are people with filthy spirits. Many women can sense this of certain men. A believer who is close to the Lord can often sense such things. There is much communication between people through the spirit part of man, even when they are entirely unaware of it.

2) Animal spirits

Second, it is possible for communication from animals through their spirits with some people. Animals have a spirit, though only one passage of Scripture speaks of that (Eccl. 3:21). But some of the primitive cultures of the world, and now with the way modern is going, there seems to be some communication between man and the animal world. Those who care much for what they call 'mother earth', seem to have such connections as well.

There might be other communications as well. Let me tell you one story here. A man from my home area was walking through the bush. He had a very strong sensation and it caused him to look behind him. When he did, he spotted a cougar, ready to pounce on him. None of his five senses alerted him to that.

Let me take you to a biblical story in the life of Christ. One day Jesus went across the Sea of Galilee to the country of the Gergesenes. Two demonized men met him. One of them was extremely violent. When the demons requested to enter the herd of swine because they were afraid of Jesus, He allowed it. They entered the swine. I believe they enter via the spirit. Well, the swine went wild, ran into the sea and drowned.

I have not studied how these two avenues of information to us affect us. But let me spend most of our time on those two areas that affect us most in our culture. These are the

communication of good spirits and evil spirits with man.

3) Evil spirits

We'll consider evil spirits first. I would say that by far the majority of communication to man from the spiritual realm are the communications of evil spirits. It is ever on the increase today. I don't even want to mention any of the ways it is being done for fear someone might get ideas. People all over our country are inviting spirits to be there guides. As has been mentioned from this pulpit, it is possible to have demon spirit guides enter through some so called Christian counseling techniques. I believe when we allow certain visualizations to happen, spirits can enter. When we are involved in fornication or adultery, it is hardly possible that evil spirits do not enter or at least communicate with us. And so there are many other avenues in which evil spirits communicate with us.

My wife and I worked with a young lady who was demonized. The demons were starving her to death, literally. It was an amazing story she told us. But though these demons were starving her, she did not want the demons to be dealt with because they were her friends. She later sought deliverance and was delivered, and her health returned.

How do demons enter? I believe it is through the spirit part of man, though others might disagree with that. Once they enter here, they of course have access to the feelings and to the mind, and often to other parts of the body. Turn to Mark 9 (read 16-27).

Turn to Luke 8. In Luke 8 we have one of the accounts of the parable of the four soils. And in verses 11-12, Jesus explains the seed that fell by the wayside. It says, "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the

devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

Now, how does the devil do that? Notice that he enters the heart, that is the mind, and he steals the Word of the Lord out of this person's mind. How does he do that? He enters, I believe, via the spirit part of man. And from here he has access to the mind and he is often able to cause us to doubt by placing various thoughts in our mind, or he might use other people to whom he has access, to do so.

So, how is the Christian to handle these kinds of things? Well, we have the greatest example in Matthew 4 (read 1-11). Now chapter 6 (read 10-18). We go to 2 Corinthians 10 (read 3-5).

Now what kinds of feelings can evil spirits bring? Well, all kinds of feelings. Feelings of depression, feelings of guilt, discouragement, fear and on and on. For example, guilt is a feeling. I am always amazed at how evil the devil is. Say with regard to guilt. Young children may feel guilty that their parents cannot get along or for their parent's divorce. How horrible is that? I believe also that demons are able to create many pleasurable feelings which are experienced, either through sin or even through ministry done in the name of Christ. So man seeks these feelings again and again, but the origin of those feelings is demonic. A prime example is alcohol, also called spirits; and those ministers who appear to be godly but are actually angels of light.

4) Good spirits (PP 7)

Well, let me show you all of this on a power point (PP 7). But what now, of the Holy Spirit or good spirits? How do they communicate with us, or do they? We read of Jesus' great temptations in Matthew 4 earlier. And verse 11 said, "Then the devil left Him, and behold, angles came and ministered to Him." There is

the communication of good spirits, which are angels.

Go to Hebrews 1. This chapter has quite a lot to say about angels or good spirits. Look at verses 6-7 (read). Now look at verse 13-14. And how do angels minister to those who inherit salvation? They do so through the spirit part of man, no doubt.

There have been two special occasions, both difficult times, when I sensed that angels came and ministered to me. And how do they do that? It may be by encouragement, or possibly by bringing some Scripture to our attention. It is most likely we are not aware many times of the presence of angels and their ministry to us.

But what of the Holy Spirit? Go to John 16. Just before Jesus died, He gave the disciples a lot of information about the Holy Spirit in John 14-16. In 16:7-8 He says this, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

One of the major works of the Holy Spirit is to convict of sin. How does He do that? He does that when man is given the right information, or when his conscience goes to work. Go to John 8 (read 3-11).

What is conviction? It is one of two things: a fact; I am guilty, and or a feeling. As a fact, others or God are convinced of my wrongdoing. As a feeling, I am internally convinced of my wrongdoing. The feeling is that of guilt. There are very few feelings I dread more than this one. It will put the fear of God on one.

The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of truth. John 16:13, "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come." So, when I listen to a speaker, the Holy Spirit may indicate internally that this is the truth. His spirit bears witness with our spirit (Rom. 8). Here is this spiritual sense.

So every sense, whether physical or spiritual has the potential to create a lot of feelings within us. And how do we handle all of that? Well, go with me to a most instructive passage, Hebrews 5. Now before we read in that chapter, let me just give a word of introduction. The Hebrews addressed in this letter, seem to have been Jewish people who had accepted that Jesus Christ was indeed the Jewish Messiah and they had gotten saved.

But now, through many adverse circumstances, they were getting discouraged and giving consideration to going back to their old way of life. And in this letter is admonition after admonition to not leave the faith.

And so, verse 12 says, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food." No doubt many feelings, such as those of discouragement, had been their lot. No doubt Satan did all he could to feed their discouragement. And at one time they had been vibrant growing believers, and they had so drifted backward that they needed to be fed with milk again.

Verse 13 then says, "For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe." They had a major problem. They had left the Word, the source of truth that can overcome all feelings.

(PP 8) So let me give you a very old illustration I have used many times and I am sure you are familiar with. It is that of the train. The engine represents the facts. That is the truth of God's Word. True faith is the next car and follows the facts. And trailing these two are the feelings. **(PP 9)** When feelings lead the train, it is a roller-coaster life. It is not steady and steadfast, and Satan has the advantage. When facts lead the way, life stabilizes.

So what is the key to a victorious Christian life as regards feelings? The Word of God! So now look at what a good diet of the Word of God can do in verse 14, "But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." Solid food is the meat of the Word of God. And I want you to notice that the believers themselves, not just their pastors, should be able to partake of the meat of the Word of God.

We live in a day and in a community where most Christians live on milk. You do not need to discuss things long to learn that. Recently, when I had the privilege of going way up past the Artic Circle, we were stopped for some time at the swollen Peel River. The ferry could not take us across until the water went down.

A policeman was anxiously waiting to cross. He was from Newfoundland, and was going to Inuvik to fly home. And I introduced myself and told him I was a pastor. And I asked about his life and he had grown up going to church. And I said, "Do you go to church?" And he said, "Not as much as I should." And I said, "Do you read your Bible? And he said, "Not as much as I should." How many a Christian would have to report something like that?

Now I want you to notice what a Bible reading, Bible growing life does for believers. The verse says, "But solid food belongs to those

who are of full age..." Here is the mature growing Christian. You see it explains it like this, "...that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Coming in to this mature Christian has been all kinds of data let in through all the senses, whether physical or spiritual. But he has been in the Word of God, and he has his senses exercised to discern both good and evil. I am quite often amazed at Christians, and their lack of discernment. I wonder, where have you been all this time? I am amazed at the lack of discernment in pastors!

Do you know what we exercise more than our spiritual senses? Our bodies! I am not down on that. But if you leave one out, let it not be the spiritual one. People exercise their bodies. Paul said bodily exercise profits, how much? Little. You say, "He didn't know what he was talking about!" He did. In light of eternity, it profits little. That does not mean it is not good. It does mean there is something better.

Now the senses must be exercised to discern good and evil. One cannot get the body in good shape without exercise. One cannot, cannot, cannot get spiritually into good shape without much spiritual exercise! You see, the Bible does not spell everything out regarding right and wrong, good and evil. But by learning the principles of the Word, one can learn that some good feelings are bad and some bad ones are the right thing to do. Only saturation in the Word and a sincere heart to do that which is right will help us to discern what to do in many situations.

When a pilot who has not exercised his senses to trust the gauges of his airplane flies into bad weather and visual sight is gone, he has 178 seconds to live. Then he will plunge into the ground. His feelings will lead him to his

death. When a Christian does not learn to trust the Word of God, the devil will come and snatch that which was sown, and he will destroy him.

Vine's Dictionary calls the senses of Hebrews 5, 'the capacities for spiritual apprehension.' Little Kittle says they speak first of the senses, then moral discernment, and last judgment. Today we are told over and over not to judge. I expect that exhortation comes from milk fed Christians.

So Hebrews 6 goes on like this in 1-6 (read). "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame."

Let me make two brief warnings from this passage. The writer says we will go on to perfection, "if God permits." Why would God not permit it? There comes a time when we have squandered our privileges, and so it says God's Spirit will not always strive with man. Second, when we so squander our privileges, there comes a time when it is no longer possible to renew us to repentance. When that happens, God gives us over to a mind that can no longer discern.

If you have kept up with Kent Hovund, I ask, could that be where he is? So Scripture says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." You see, when we fall away

from Him we fall into His hand of judgment. And feelings can lead us there.

CONCL: A verse that has been the main text for this series has been, Habakkuk 2:4, "Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith." One of the mazes the Christian must overcome is that of the feelings. Feelings are the sensations created in us by the input of information through the senses. We have the five physical senses, which can create all kinds of feelings. Then we have the sensations that come through the spirit part of man, and there are many of these, and many we fail to recognize unless we become strong in the Word of God.

We can learn when dark clouds of depression are not God's way of speaking to our hearts. We can learn that when He wants to speak to a sin issue in our lives He is very specific about it. We can learn when guilt is false, and when it is real and we need to confess and repent. All of such abilities come from exercising the senses to discern both good and evil.

You see, there is no possible way that we can live in known sin, and be spiritually discerning Christians. If Kittle is right about the senses, the *aistheterion* of Hebrews five, then they speak of the senses, and they give us the capacity for moral discernment and judgment. One of the most touted things in the Christian realm today is, "Don't judge! You can't judge!" Really!

My wife likes to point out these words of Jesus, "Judge righteous judgment!" The Jews were judging Him because He healed on the Sabbath. And Jesus said in John 7:24, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." You see, the problem is when you judge according to appearance, you have not learned to exercise the senses according to the Word of God. It is high time Christians grow up in the Word of God and learn to discern and judge, not by appearance or feelings, but judge righteous judgment! That is the responsibility of true biblical faith.