

EDMONDS BEACON

YOUR HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER.
ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD.

806 5TH ST
MUKILTEO WA 98275

MAY 29, 2008

Soul, Heart: Two Words for the Same Thing

BY RITA BENNETT, WORSHIP COLUMNIST

As Jesus looked down from the Mount of Beatitudes where He was teaching his disciples, He saw a multitude of faces at the bottom looking up at Him in rapt attention.



Many of them could be called the "pure in heart." These were among the citizens gathered in Galilee who were downtrodden by self-righteous religious and governmental leaders.

One day He was speaking to them on what we today call the sixth Beatitude: "The pure in heart shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

I can imagine some of the discussions on this beatitude. "What does He mean by that? Do I have to be totally pure at all times in order to go to Heaven? What is the heart? Is He speaking about the organ that beats in my chest?"

First let's see what Jesus means by "heart."

Dr. W.E. Vine says, "Kardia, the heart, the chief organ of physical life, occupies the most important place in the human system. By an easy transition the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements ... The heart, in its moral significance in the O.T., includes

the emotions, the reason and the will. Psyche the soul, or life, is rendered 'heart.'" (Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words, 1966, p. 206, 207.)

Scripture teaches humankind that we are composed of spirit (pneuma), soul (psyche) and body (soma). We just saw that the soul and heart are much the same so the terms can be used interchangeably. The heart or soul is a mixture of purity and impurity. It is in the process of being cleaned up.

To have a clean heart requires cooperation from the individual. Some of the ways to do this officially are during: Lenten Season, Yom Kippur, Pilgrimages, Revivals, Seminars, Bible Studies, Spirit-filled Prayer Meetings.

Our hearts are also changed as we help the sick, bring or send aid to countries suffering from disaster, visit the elderly who are homebound ...

One part of us has been purified; that part is the renewed spirit that has been cleansed through "new birth." This "new creation" core part can see God spiritually in prayer, dreams, visions and biblical meditations.

The Apostle Paul said, "But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit (pneuma)" (I Corinthians 6:17). "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

"The pure in heart shall see God." It is imperative that our hearts be changed to be more like Christ. Otherwise we will not be good witnesses for Him.

Unless our hearts/souls are being purified and restored, we will not be as happy and fulfilled. Unless our vulnerable hearts are healed, our spiritual eyes may be swollen and shut so that we cannot see God as we grope in darkness for something to satisfy.

We see that the sixth beatitude has both a present and a future fulfillment. In the future, one day we will see God face to face. The Apostle John says, "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2,3).

Saint John was speaking from experience when he said these words. We know this because in a vision he was caught up to Heaven and given a tour of the City of God.

He wrote a book about it, "And when I saw Him [Jesus], I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying to me, Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am He that lives, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen" (Revelation 1:17,18a).

In review, we see God spiritually in this life, until we see Him face to face in the next.

Local author Rita Bennett is CEO of the Edmonds-based Christian Renewal Association. She can be reached at (425) 775-2965 or at www.EmotionallyFree.org, or by writing her at P.O. Box 576, Edmonds, WA 98020. Reprint ©2008 by Rita Bennett.