

The Patio Pulpit For August 25, 2021

A Series

“The Inner Man: the Esso Man.”

Some of us can remember driving up to a gas station, a place where they sold pretty much nothing else, and one or two men would come out to our car and ask how much gas you wanted and then proceed to put that amount in your tank. The other man would ask if he could clean your windshield or check your oil or your tire pressure or your radiator. I worked at such a gas station in the early ‘60’s. It was Hilltop Esso in Monroe at the intersection of 74 and 601 and Franklin Street. You may have stopped at the Hilltop Grill located a few hundred feet behind the gas station to get a bite to eat. They were famous for their homemade onion rings.

We had vending machines but that was the only other thing available at Hilltop Esso.

I am beginning a brief study tonight of the Biblical concept of the inner man. And the reason I told you about Hilltop Esso is in the text we are going to read in just a moment, there is a Greek word that looks and sounds like the Esso in Hilltop Esso. The Greek word is “eso.” τὸν ἔσω ἄνθρωπον· “the inner man.” The eso man.

Turn to Romans 7:22, and we will read through to v.25. ²² *For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man,* the eso man, ²³ *but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members.*

²⁴ *Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*

²⁵ *Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other hand, I myself, with my flesh am serving the law of sin.*

The apostle made it clear that the inner man in the believer is the same as the mind. In this context they are being interchanged. The mind is the equivalent of the inner man.

In the Bible the inner man is not merely a term describing our conscience and it is not just a way of referring to our feelings, good and bad. It is all that, but it is quite a bit more. It refers to that substantial spiritual part possessed by every human being, saved and unsaved. It is real and it is substantial. The inner man, whether dead or alive, is who we are. Our bodies are certainly involved by necessity, but our inner man, or our spirit, some prefer “soul,” is that part of us that has dominance over our bodies. It doesn’t always win and sometimes it loses pitifully, but it was designed to rule over our physical bodies. That was where Adam and Eve were defeated. They failed to stop the physical and emotional and intellectual desires of their bodies by walking in the Spirit. They were the first people to experience the struggle between the flesh and the spirit.

The regenerated inner man is the essence of life for the believer.

First, “Your inner man is a person.” Our bodies merely house that person.

2 Corinthians 5:1 *For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2 Cor. 5:1 NAU)* We have a building from God. That building for every disciple of Christ is also called “*the temple of the Spirit.*”

Second, “Your body is a temple of God because your alive inner man dwells there by the power of the Spirit.”

Before God graciously saved us and gave us the Spirit, we were not the temple of God. We were like houses that stood vacant, decaying and lifeless. But then God bought us, outer man and inner man, and moved us into His property and made this once vacant piece of property a beautiful temple, occupied now by the Spirit and our born of the Spirit inner man. In that sense, God is the cosmic realtor.

3

1 Corinthians 3:16 *Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? (1 Cor. 3:16 NAU) (Rom. 7:22 BYZ) All who are born of the Spirit are temples of God.*

1 Corinthians 3:17 *If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are. (1 Cor. 3:17 NAU)*

Remember what Jesus said? *“It is the Spirit who gives life.”*

1 Corinthians 6:19 *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? (1 Cor. 6:19 NAU)*

We are God’s property, bought by the blood of Jesus. ¹⁹ *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?*

²⁰ *For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. (1 Cor. 6:19-20 NAU)*

And I close with this tonight:

So our physical bodies are not evil, just corrupt and corruptible, and they are in the process of being torn down.

¹⁶ *Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. (2 Cor. 4:16 NAU)*

We are all dying, of course, and there is nothing we can do about it. But God has done something about it, it’s called the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And we have been raised up with Christ and seated in the heavenlies in Him. We are the temple of God and we dwell together with God and Jesus and the Spirit in these new houses made without hands.

If the Lord is willing, we will take this up again next Wednesday.