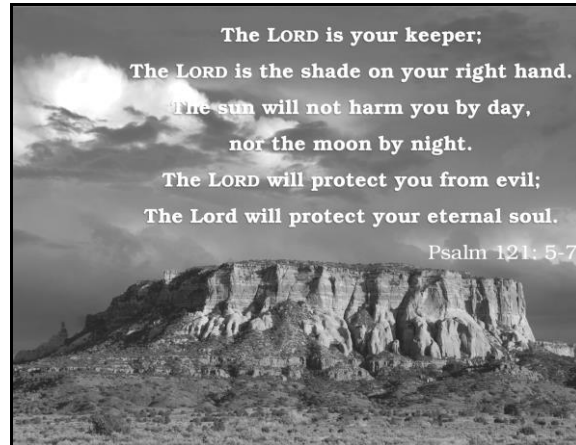


JESUS YOUR SOULMATE



Duke Ellington said, "Food feeds the body, music feeds the soul."
Thank you for nurturing our souls.

Scripture:

Psalm 111

¹Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation. ²Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them. ³Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever. ⁴He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the LORD is gracious and merciful. ⁵He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant. ⁶He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations. ⁷The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy. ⁸They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness. ⁹He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name. ¹⁰The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.

Mark 1: 21-28

²¹They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²²They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. ²³Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." ²⁸At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

This is the Word of the Lord! Thanks be to God!



This is the last in a three part series on the soul. Have you ever pondered what the qualities of your soulmate might be? Maybe

you have a soulmate; maybe you were blessed to marry your soulmate. This is different, more like a friend soul partner.

WHAT QUALITIES WOULD YOUR SOULMATE HAVE?

If you could list the qualities of a soulmate what qualities would that person have? Think of what you might put on a list of qualities: Loving, generous, compassionate, gracious, merciful, joyful, understanding, spiritual, empathic, honest, authentically divine Sushi lover, Warriors fan?

Each of us might have different criteria for what qualities our soulmates must possess.

Have you ever considered that Jesus qualifies by fulfilling every one of the items on your list? I propose that you consider today how Jesus divinely fulfills the criteria to be a soulmate for each one of us.

MANY BIBLE PASSAGES MENTION THE SOUL

The first Sunday I preached about the soul, I handed out a list of Bible passages that mention the soul. The many passages on the list help us conceptualize what the soul is. One of the first passages on the soul is from Deuteronomy chapter 4. "But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul." Deuteronomy 4:29

Seeking God with your heart and your soul was made much easier when Jesus came to earth in the flesh. People who met him felt he was special right away. As Psalm 62 says: their souls felt gladness, rejoicing and securely at rest when they were with him.

I imagine when Jesus looked those who followed him straight in the eyes their hearts melted and their souls exclaimed: "Here is my soulmate!"

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF SOULMATE?

What exactly is a soulmate? Merriam Webster dictionary says: A soulmate is *a person who is perfectly suited to another in temperament; a person who strongly resembles another in attitudes or beliefs.*

You can imagine the people watching Jesus with amazement as he healed the man from the

unclean spirit. They were probably all thinking: "I want this guy on my team!"

All of us yearn for a soulmate or soulpartner. In fact, recent research on longevity finds that to live a long healthy life it is essential to have someone who is like a soul partner, someone you can tell all your good thoughts and your crazy thoughts to and they will not judge you. It is a person with whom you can be your authentic self.

That's what makes Jesus the perfect soulmate for each one of us. We can share with Jesus our inner thoughts and feelings and we won't be negatively judged or rejected.

We can talk and walk and pray with Jesus, like in the lovely hymn, "In the Garden." The words of the chorus are: "And he walks with me and he talks with me, and he tells me I am his own. And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known."

Remember the passage in Romans that says, *Absolutely nothing can separate us from the love of God?* (Romans 8:39)

And remember the one that says, "*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*" (John 3: 17)

JESUS SHOWED US HOW GOD WANTS US TO BE

Jesus saved the world and continues to save the world by showing us, (through his healings recorded in scripture and in prayer), how to be the person God meant for us to be in relationship with one another.

Sue Monk Kidd wrote a delightful book titled *The Secret Life of Bees*. She said this about the soul: "We have this immense interior life inside of us. We can call it the life of the soul. Poets and mystics and people have been trying to figure out what to call this for a long time. But there is an inner silence in it. And

there is an incredible mystery floating in it. This is where the divine lives in us.”

Jesus is your soulmate living divinely inside you. He is there guiding you silently, helping you navigate the waters of life. He is your rudder and your sail.

When you tap into that soul inspiring energy within, you feel powerful and accomplish more than you thought you were capable of. But when you lose your awareness of God’s presence in your soul, you get misdirected and begin to feel badly about yourself. That distracts you from the path of righteousness (as the Bible calls it). That just means, a path where you can achieve your highest potential by following the Ten Commandments and living the life God would want you to live: healthy and happy and loving and serving.

In John 17 Jesus’ prayer to God before he is crucified was a prayer meant for all his followers including those of us existing today. He prayed about being within us in our soul. He said to God, “I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

In the scripture today, the “unclean” spirit recognized who Jesus was and begged to be left inside the man. But Jesus used his power for healing and wholeness and healed the man of the spirit that tortured him.

Back in the days when Jesus walked this earth, there was not such a division between what a person believed spiritually and what they believed intellectually about the world.

MADELINE L’ENGLE

In this era, people hesitate to talk about the spiritual realm in order to be taken seriously.

Not Madeline L’Engle! She wrote many books, but a “*Wrinkle in Time*” was the most popular. She vehemently disagrees with that idea. She believes we need to grow spiritually at the same speed and just as deeply as we strive to grow intellectually in order for humanity to survive.

L’Engle says we should not be afraid to let our understanding of God grow along with us. Let us deepen and widen and stretch as we age. This will strengthen us for the challenges of aging.

Reverend Oswald Chambers agreed with L’Engle in a commentary he wrote on 2nd Corinthians 4:16-17 which says, “Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.”

Chambers explains this passage by saying. “Through earth’s heartbreaks, sorrows, and grief, the sanctified soul treads calm and unwavering, unafraid even of death itself...”

That is one of the biggest benefits of being aware that Jesus is your soulmate. When you are ready to pass into the next eternal realm, you will have that peace that surpasses all understanding. You will be able to trust that Jesus is with you, and have a sense of peace, a lack of fear, and a readiness in your time of passing.

NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES

Some amazing near death experiences help us get a glimpse of what that presence of peace is like for people, even for some who were not totally prepared to meet Jesus. CNN did a documentary called *To Heaven and Back*. It featured a story by Dr. Mary Neal, an orthopedic surgeon who drowned during a kayaking trip in Chile. She was caught underwater for fifteen minutes because she became trapped in stones that were crushing both of her legs. Prior to this she would call herself “spiritual” but not all that religious. Now she is very involved in church and encourages others to trust that Jesus is with them always.

A video was shown to the congregation. <http://www.cnn.com/2013/11/29/us/to-heaven-and-back/index.html>

That is what it means that Jesus is in you and with you. We can believe King David when he wrote in the Psalms: “Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him.” (Psalm 16:9) “Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body rests secure.” (Psalm 62:1)

GOD IS LOVE

To truly be in touch with your soul and Jesus, who dwells there, give yourself the gift of silence each day to be aware of his unconditional love. Believe God loves you despite all your sins, and faults and broken parts.

The simple message of the Bible is: God is love. But that means so much more when you accept that love and incorporate it into your daily life striving to follow Christ’s example of spreading God’s healing love to all.

In her commencement speech for her granddaughter’s graduation ceremony, Madeline L’Engle said, “We are all suffering from our abuse of the beautiful planet given us to care for; we have polluted air, water, land. The only pollution we can hope to prevent is that within our own spirits, (our own souls). We can prevent hardness and coldness within our own hearts. It was the meanness of spirit, hard hearts that most troubled Jesus. ... And we must remember that God has given us a beautiful planet in a beautiful solar system in a beautiful galaxy in a beautiful universe.

And we human beings were created to be beautiful, too, with loving compassionate hearts.”

For many of us Jesus is not calling us to heaven right away today, but he is calling us to come home to our souls where we can tap into his strength and peace, deep inside our psyche.

We are all created to be loving, generous, merciful and compassionate. But the world around us can distract us and take us astray off the path that God has laid out for us.

Jesus calls us back home, back onto the path, back to his way of living peacefully and in harmony with all of creation. And it is there where we remember to be authentic and loving. When we are in touch with our soul it is there

where our soulmate Jesus reminds us that our purpose is to love God and to help God save our beautiful world, one person at a time.

Benediction:

A Blessing of Solitude

by John O’Donohue from Anam Cara

May you recognize in your life, the presence, power and light of your soul.

May you realize that you are never alone, that your soul in its brightness and belonging connects you intimately with the rhythm of the universe.

May you have respect for your own individuality and difference.

May you realize that the shape of your soul is unique, that you have a special destiny here, that behind the façade of your life there is something beautiful, good and eternal happening.

May you learn to see yourself with the same delight, pride, and expectation with which God sees you in every moment.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever more. Amen



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