

ME TO YOU

INTRODUCTION

How are things with your soul? Most of us have never been asked that question. Even if we were, how would we know? What would we use to assess it? Can we really trust our judgment?

Sometimes we confuse the question with “Is your heart right with God?” or “Are you at peace with yourself?” and the answer is either “yes” or “no.” We have never learned to talk about the actual condition of our souls.

So how would we know? The place to look is behind other questions that we seldom ask: What do I do when no one is looking? What do I think about when I stop at a red light, and why do I think about that? How do I treat the people I live with? What is my greatest fear, and why do I fear it? What do I want, and what do I protect more than anything else in my life? What is the common denominator of everything that I think is funny?

The idea is to ask ourselves the deeper questions and begin clustering the answers around key themes that emerge from this self-discovery.

We learned last week that you can be a follower of Jesus and still not be minded, or souled, in the same way. This explains how we can have so many Christians in our city without changing the culture. The problem is not that these Christians are faking it or that they are too silent about their witness, but that they are following Jesus and still not oriented like him.

Let's take one example from the disciples' journey with Jesus.

TEXTUAL WORK: SAME ROAD, DIFFERENT WORLD

According to Mark, the disciples left Galilee and were headed toward Jerusalem when Jesus told them (again) that “the Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men” (9:31). Meanwhile, they were tagging along behind, embroiled in their own conversation about “who was the greatest” (v. 34). No one knows what each disciple argued, but we can be sure that each argued for himself. Peter did not argue that John was the greatest and Matthew did not argue for Phillip.

As surely as Adam and Eve hid themselves, each disciple pleaded his own case because it was his nature. It was the way he was wired. It was his mind. And the irony is that they did it while following someone of a completely different mind. *Note: You can pull on these two edges for a while, pointing out the many things that disciples still do while following someone who is of another mind.*

Jesus sat a child in their midst and said, “Do this!” But they did not have the mind to do it. Two chapters later, Jesus was talking about his sacrifice for the world again when two disciples come forward to ask for a favor: “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory” (10:33–37). The right and left were positions of power and glory.

The problem in both cases was the same: The disciples were following Jesus, but they were wired another way. They were on the same road (see 9:30; 10:32) but in a different world.

Even though they followed Jesus for two years, they needed a SoulShift. They had to shift from thinking primarily of themselves to thinking primarily of others. They had to shift from Me to You.

IMPLICATION: THE ME-FIRST VIRUS

Martin Luther said that man is born *cor incurvatus ad se*, meaning his heart is curved inward upon itself. We have a genetic flaw toward self-centeredness. Here are the symptoms:

- *We have a critical spirit.* We think our ideas are better than someone else's simply because they are ours.
- *We look out for ourselves first.* Look at a group photograph that you are in and ask yourself, "Who do you look for first?" Why do you do that?
- *We have a low self-esteem.* We think our appearance or performance is lower than that of others, in part because our standards for ourselves are higher than others.
- *We can't forgive ourselves.* Even when God has forgiven us, our own opinion is still more important.
- *We are competitive.* To win is to prove that we are the better person. Losing is insufferable because it defies the image we have of ourselves.
- *We talk about ourselves all the time.* We dominate the conversation, talk over people, or use clever tactics like humor or cynicism to take control of the conversation.
- *We hold grudges.* Over things that were done to us, but not someone else.

Jesus is different. Everything he does is for other people and from that others-focused disposition. He is curved outward. So when Jesus heard the disciples arguing about which of them was the greatest, he could not have been more perplexed. That kind of argument was completely foreign to his nature. So how do we—who are wired more like the disciples—get to the place where we are curved outward?

APPLICATION: THE JOURNEY FROM ME TO YOU

It doesn't happen in a day. Think of it as a journey you are on with certain stages along the way.

Stage 1: Wake Up

We need a wake-up call: that moment when it first occurs to us that our whole life has revolved around ourselves. *Note: List those who stumble onto this discovery—newlyweds, first-time missionaries, first-time parents, etc.*

There will be moments along the way—some dramatic and some more subtle—that God will use to wake us up. When one of them happens to you, take a few moments to savor it. Let it affect you.

Stage 2: Take an Interest in Others

Our days are like a crowded airport terminal filled with people, obligations, and deadlines. Pretty soon, the object in life is to simply get through it. Slow down.

Start befriending people who can't help you. Take an interest in the lives of people who work for you. Celebrate what they've done. Notice what they're working on. Ask yourself, "What is like to be them right now?" Given their predicament, schedule, limitations, and resources, what do they most need?" Then ask, "What do I have that could help them?"

Stage 3: Become a Servant

When we take an interest in people, we are still in charge. We decide who to help and how much to give them. We decide if our help is appreciated and whether we get results. But when we choose to be a servant, we give up the right to be in charge. We make ourselves vulnerable. We do small things in hidden places where there is almost no reward for us.

Stage 4: Carry Each Other's Burdens

There is no time when we are more like the Trinity than when we carry each other's burdens and enter their lives. We take up their infirmities and bear their sins. We absorb their flaws and failures and still associate with them.

We carry each other's burdens when we stand in the gap for them, pray for their children as for our own, suffer alongside them, and lose sleep over them.

CONCLUSION

When you think of it, there is no greater evidence of Me to You than the moment Jesus uttered from the cross, "Father, forgive them."

Wherever you are in the shift from Me to You, ask God to help you find your way to the next stage. Let's do that together. *Close in prayer.*