

Soul Viruses

By Pastor Marvin R. Barham

We are created in the image of God and distinctively different than animals. God breathed into man and made him a living soul. God did not breathe into animals nor did He give them a living soul. Animals have a mind; they have a will, and emotion. They can obey, they can be wounded and feel rejection or anger. They can learn. However, they do not have the conscious faculty for moral conviction. They cannot have relationship with God. Only you and I were created to have relationship with God. Animals have souls but they are not "living souls". The Word tells us that when the spirit is the life of the body and when this body dies the spirit returns to God from whence it came. When your spirit leaves this body your soul goes with it. Thus, the soul is a vital part of your well being. Everyday, either your spirit man is feeding off of your soul or your flesh man is feeding off of it. Therefore, it is vital that your soul be healthy and growing in the righteousness of Christ. Your spirit man seeks to bring prosperity to your soul. But your flesh seeks to malign it.

Last week I mentioned that the righteousness in Christ in our lives should be like a virus; it should be contagious. I said that I vaccination is made from the disease itself to protect you from getting the real thing. I said that Satan would love nothing more than to vaccinate us with a bit of the real disease causing us to simply be religious but ineffective for the Kingdom of God. Tonight I want to share with you about ungodly viruses that seek to destroy our souls and Kingdom effectiveness. As God has been teaching us in His Word to prosper in our souls we have learned that the greatest defense against unrighteousness and the greatest offense in righteous living is to choose to love Him more every day; to choose to love each other more; to choose to hate sin and unrighteousness in our lives. We have learned that the more we hear the Word of God the more it improves our hearing and the more our hearing the Word improves the more of the Word we are able to hear and understand. With a passionate love for Father and an unquenchable thirst and hunger for His Word of Truth together create a force field for the soul (mind, will, and emotions). The epistle of James describes this force field and how it works.

James 4:6-8 *But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."^a Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

Computers have changed our lives, our culture, our lifestyles, and the entire world. They have changed how we communicate, do business, even prepare sermons. There are days that technology aids my day with better ways to organize, archive, retrieve information, and administrate multiple tasks. There are days my computer brings great efficiency to my day. Then there are days I rue the day they were invented. There are days it is so sluggish and it test my patience. There are days I literally want to pick it up by the monitor and throw it out a window. All the while I know that throwing the monitor out solves nothing. **The monitor only provides me the visual of what is in the heart of the machine.**

Often the problem is in the heart of the machine. Something has changed how the machine functions. And in most cases, it is the result of what we call a virus. It is similar to a virus that attacks your physical body and causes it to begin to respond and function incorrectly and not as it was designed.

The most frustrating thing about computer viruses is that they are created maliciously by smart people with dark hearts. They are created by people who seek to destroy the well being and peace of others. The second frustration is that the virus is only permitted to enter my system when I neglect to correctly discern or use poor judgment and open, what I thought was an innocent email, yet knowing it was from someone I had no clue as to who they are.

The virus thus, reveals shortcomings in your defenses. Ephesians 6:10-12 tells us "*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*"

Many say, "But I go to church". That is not the full armor. "But I read my Bible". That is not the full armor. "But I pray". That is not the full armor. Many live their Christian lives half dressed for the daily battles that rage in their flesh. You have to put on the mind of Christ with His Word, you have to wage war with His Word and prayer, you have to let the Word and prayers transform

your heart. You have to guard your soul with the power of the Holy Ghost. You have live the Word, live the life of prayer, and live the life of accountability, responsibility of righteousness.

If I have failed to implement a filter, a virus protection, kept my virus protection updated, put my firewall up, and have my spy ware sniff working then I have not done all I could have. Even with all of this working, my first line of defense against a virus is discernment and good godly judgment. I must implement a policy when using my computer that I only open emails or visit websites that I know I can trust and from people that I know have no malicious intent against my well being.

We find that there are many kinds of computer viruses. There are Trojan viruses and Worm viruses. They utilize various methods to create havoc on your system. They seek to destroy your hard drive or attach themselves to your directories and other documents so that you pass them on. Some lay dormant and then gradually fester to bring grave destruction to your operating system. The same is with sin our lives. When we allow the viruses of the soul to enter they attach themselves from one emotion to another. It may start with discontentment then grow to frustration and then anger. Soon you find your whole perspective is skewed. Soon they attach themselves to your imagination and a sense of paranoia sets in and relationships begin to be destroyed and you find your whole life is a mess.

Sin, the Word of God, the Spirit of God and right covenant relationships are so similar to the lessons learned from computer viruses and protection. Sin resembles a computer virus. When we let our guard down and allow sin to enter it gradually and maliciously begins to change the way we see things, it begins to affect the way we respond, and ultimately causes us to malfunction or to not function as God has designed and desired us to function in response to His Word and Holy Spirit. **When we are not functioning as God desires and designed us to, we are less effective for the purposes of His calling in our lives.** I am not saying you are not useful or that God loves you any less. But your Kingdom effectiveness is depredated. If your soul is not growing then it is in degradation. Living things grow, dead things do not. There are no walking dead in Christ. Living things walk, dead things do not. I am thankful that He is a gracious and merciful God. I am thankful that His response to my ill response, to His working in my life, is not as my response to my malfunctioning computer. I am thankful that He does not get the urge to reach down and grab me by the head and throw it.

So we find here an aspect of God's merciful nature; another characteristic of God of which we must seek to immolate. **We are a flesh people but not people of the flesh. 2 Corinthians 10:3-6** describes what I mean, "***For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.***"

Satan, spirits and principalities of darkness, darkened hearts of enmity against God, and your flesh all are daily **producing malicious opportunities and vices which contradict the way God has designed your soul to function. They seek to infiltrate your defenses of righteous living and destroy your soul.** Perversion seeks to destroy your soul; anger seeks to destroy your soul; greed, fear, frustration, discouragement, hopelessness, discontentment, all are like computer viruses that seek to destroy your soul. The only firewall, the only virus protection, the only spy ware you have is the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and your desperate love and obedience for them both. **The law of righteous obedience in the Kingdom of God is not the following of legalistic religious practice** but when you, your choices, your actions, your behavior, your motives, your thoughts, your passions, priorities, your words, your trust, everything about you and how you live is functioning how God designed it, in His will, and according to the precepts and principles of His Word and righteous living. Righteous obedience is when you live with the virus protection on every day; when you daily live with your firewall or guard up; When you recognize, because of the Word of God in you, that the enemy is trying to infiltrate the righteousness of your soul, and you resist and destroy the viruses that seek to destroy your relationship with Father and compromise your life's calling to righteous living.

As with our computers, we must not allow darkness into our lives. **We must learn to let the Word of God that exposes those viruses of the soul.** We must learn to recognize the godless things that permeate our culture and exposes them for what they are. **We must keep our guards up and not excuse even the less noticeable sins in that infect our hearts and minds.**

Psalms 145:17-19 *The LORD is **righteous in all his ways**, and holy in all his works. The LORD is nigh unto all **them that call upon him**, to all that **call upon him in truth**. He will fulfill the desire of **them that fear him**: he also will **hear their cry**, and **will save them**.*

Our desire is to be more like Father. As the Psalmist expresses, Our Father is righteous in “all His ways”; He is holy in “all His works”. Our greatest defense against sin, and the greatest means in which our souls prosper in God, is to draw closer to Him. **The closer I am to Him, the further I am from those things that do not please Him.** God draws closer to those who call upon Him in TRUTH; those who call upon Him with sincere and hungry hearts; those who love Him so much that they fear breaking His heart and who when in desperation call on Him who they trust.

As we were in prayer Saturday night, the Holy Spirit revealed to me, **“Who more could I trust my life or the well being of my family into other than the hands of God?”** Would I dare trust my life and the well being of my family into the hands of myself, my employer, or the government? I think none could compare to the gracious, merciful, loving and caring hands of almighty God.

Let our hearts prayer be... *“Dear loving Father, I too often allow things to enter my heart and mind that are malicious to my righteousness in you. Lord, by the power of Your Spirit and Your Word of Truth, help me to guard my soul each day. By Your grace, keep me from those things of the flesh that wage war on my soul and righteous living in You.”*