

Soul Shaper

SOURCE

June/July 2007

This Soul Shaper covers the whole Spiritual Talk series called Source.

You may download the Spiritual Talks or listen online at www.threadschurch.org.

Podcasts are available from the home page. All other formats are available from the *What We're About/Spiritual Talks* page. And of course, you can join us on Sundays for our Worship Gatherings at 9:15am or 11:00am. Questions?...Email connect@threadschurch.org or call the office at 269.327.0445.

LIFE (June 17, 2007)

Read: Exodus 3:1-12

- How does Moses respond when God calls his name? Can you think of a time when you experienced God calling to you? How did you respond?
- God affirms for Moses the relationship He has had through the previous generations. He also shares His plan with Moses. Evidence that he has heard their cries and given them thought and consideration. How do these actions on the part of God affirm His presence with His people?
- How is this evidence of God wanting a relationship with His people?
- Moses protests when God asks him to approach Pharaoh, noting his own inadequacies. How does God reassure Moses and demonstrate his relationship to His people? What does this say to us about our lives and what God may want from us?
- How can you use your prayer life to experience relationship with God?

JOY (June 24, 2007)

Read: John 12:1-8

- In this passage we see who Jesus is not through His own actions, but by the actions of others toward him. What strikes you most about Mary's act toward Jesus?
- Mary performs a real act of servitude for Jesus by anointing him. What is the result for the others in the room? What strikes you about that?
- Can you think of a time when you set aside the space to enjoy God for who he is?
- We have Christ with us always, but we are not always "in tune" with him?
- Judas makes a comment in this passage that is very task oriented. What is your reaction to Jesus' response to him? Isn't Jesus usually very concerned for the poor?
- What does this say about how Jesus asks us to receive Him?
- The picture painted in this passage gives us the impression that the participants, despite it not yet being the celebration of the Passover, are enjoying the hospitality of Lazarus' house and the company of one another. In one translation, verse 2 says that Lazarus *reclined* with Jesus. In our rushed culture, we tend to think of a meal like the one described here as a luxury, maybe even a bit extravagant
- How can we experience this kind of extravagant joy, of God simply for who He is in our lives?

LIGHT (July 1, 2007)

Read: Matthew 4:1-4, Luke 8:19-21

- How is Jesus modeling God's way of listening in Matthew? What is the result of His listening to this call?
- How does Jesus' listening to the Holy Spirit lead to a clarity about his relationship with His Father? Look specifically at verse 4.
- How does Jesus' refusal to turn stones to food demonstrate his perfect listening to God's voice? Where is his focus in this desert experience?
- How does Jesus refusal to give in to Satan's temptation clarify God's direction for Him?
- Look over at Luke 8:19-21. Jesus paints a picture of family that is probably not how we would typically describe it. Who does he say is His family?
- What ties together the family Christ describes?
- How is He calling us to live out the path he modeled for us over in Matthew 4? What is in store for us if we are to listen in the way that he modeled?
- What is it that he heard through His listening?
- The American Heritage Dictionary defines *to listen* as to make an effort to hear something, to heed or to obey. In your prayer life, how do you practice listening? What is the most difficult part?

WHOLENESS (July 8, 2007)

Read: Isaiah 6:1-8

- “[T]he life of prayer is God's love affair with us. When we jump into openness and honesty with God, we discover that we're the beloved—the one that God is always welcoming home, always preparing a feast for, always saying “I love you” to. The point of prayer is living in that wonderful Good News and letting it form who we are and how we live. If we could just accept that we are the beloved in the heart of God—can you imagine!” -- Michael Sullivan, *Windows into the Soul: Art as Spiritual Expression*
- Isaiah has spent the earlier part of this book cataloging the sins of Israel and Judah. Here in chapter 6 the tables turn and the focus is on Isaiah himself. How is Isaiah's experience like your own when examining others and yourself?
- What stands out to you about Isaiah's interaction with God and the seraphs? As you look carefully, what is significant about the covered and uncovered parts of the seraphs?
- What is Isaiah's response to God when he comes before him with an open heart? How is Isaiah overcome?
- When Isaiah responds to God with complete and total honesty, God cleanses or forgives him. What is Isaiah's response to this?
- What was your initial reaction to the sacrifice He made in Christ in order for you to be cleansed or forgiven? Is that your continued reaction?
- “Jesus made an overwhelming sacrifice for our forgiveness. How can honesty with God in prayer be a renewal of your response to this?
- What do you choose to do with that forgiveness? How does it shape your ability to hear God?

LOVE (July 15, 2007)

Read: Luke 19:1-10

- Zacchaeus sought Christ from the height of a tree. He made an effort to “get a look” at Jesus. What was the result?
- Jesus surprises the people’s expectations by inviting Himself to dinner at Zacchaeus’s house. In what ways does God’s loving concern for the world surprise our expectations?
- What is the response of Zaccheus to Jesus’ openness?
- What was Zacchaeus able to see through his acceptance of God?
- How can our experience of God be affected by bringing others to him in prayer?
- Jesus said, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” How does God reach out to the lost today?
- Praying for others needs is caring for another. How does that very same act care for our own heart as well? What does God grow in us?
- By giving hospitality to the Lord, Zacchaeus experienced a life change that caused him to have a very different outlook toward others. What are some ways you can show hospitality to God? What could be some of the results?
- How do we express care within our community? How do we reach thru our community to those not yet experiencing that care?