

THE “EMOTIONAL” LIFE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (Part 5: The *splagchnidzomai* of the Lord-2)

In the last essay we noted that the term used for the self-evident reality for strong corporeal human “emotion” is *splagchnidzoma* (σπλαγχνίζομαι). The term actually refers to ‘guts,’ which is why the King James translation translates it “bowels.” It is the feeling a normal human being experiences when he learns, for example, of a tragedy, which makes him feel like he has been kicked in the gut or made him *feel* so bad as to make him nauseas. We have also learned that this feeling, far from being an amoral, non-relevant physiological state, is often listed among spiritual virtues in the Bible. A couple of passages to consider:

1 John 3:17 But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his feelings (σπλαγχνίζομαι) against him, how does the love of God abide in him?

- Clearly, a believer who sees another believer and starts to *feel* compassion and makes the choice to shut down those feelings is not living in the supernatural love of God.

Colossians 3:12 And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on compassion (σπλάγγνα), kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

- Clearly, this *feeling* of compassion is listed among other supernatural virtues.

We have also noted how this whole idea of classifying *physical* feelings with other spiritual virtues really makes no sense in a Cartesian framework. In a Cartesian framework man has two separate parts, soul and body. And the body with its corporeal feelings has little to no relevance to the real you, the immaterial soul. According to this model, what really matters is the immaterial soul (in the brain) with its virtues—the body with its feelings are viewed in amoral, non-virtuous categories; they are just animal feelings, no more and no less. However, this view is directly antithetical to the spiritual ethics found throughout the Bible. And it is contradicted by the very life and powerful dimensions of the love of Christ.

The hylomorphic view of man stands in great contrast to the Cartesian view. In hylomorphism, man is one. He is an ensouled body. He is one being in which the soul gives life to the whole body; therefore, there is a very strong connection between the soul and the body, between the thinking and the feelings. This is what we see in the life of Christ and in biblical descriptions of spiritual virtues throughout the Bible. Note the following passages:

Mark 1:40 And a leper came to Him, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." 41 And moved with compassion (σπλαγχνίζομαι), He stretched out His hand, and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."

Mark 6:34 And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and He felt compassion (σπλαγχνίζομαι) for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things.

Matthew 9:36 And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion (σπλαγχνίζομαι) for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.

Matthew 14:14 And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and felt compassion (σπλαγχνίζομαι) for them, and healed their sick.

Matthew 20:34 And moved with compassion (σπλαγχνίζομαι), Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him.

The biblical testimony is loud and clear. The Perfect Man saw various deplorable and miserable human conditions and had visceral emotional, corporeal reactions (σπλαγχνίζομαι), which *moved* Him to acts of beneficence. Yes, He was moved by His feelings as He was moved by His whole being's profound love and feeling of pity for them. His compassion fulfilled itself in the outward act of mercy. Had He shut down these corporeal feelings as per 1 John 3:17, the love of God would not have been dwelling in Him. He would not have been the Ideal Man for our salvation or our Example. To shut down feelings of compassion would require Christ, or any human being, to stop caring, to stop thinking of those in need, and to think of and come up with reasons one should not be compassionate or show mercy to the needy—in other words, to willfully make decisions to stop loving.

In the Sacred Romance,

Pastor Don