

FORGIVEN NOT CLEANSED

Transcript of a clip from the talk A CLEAN HEART by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Our heart -- deep, deep down -- is still unclean. Our heart has never been cleansed by the Holy Spirit, and we have a sense of aliveness to God and we have a sense of our sins being forgiven, but our heart is still unclean and continues to contaminate Jesus' Spirit every time He pours it in. And so, in a way, our nature has not been changed, it's been just overwhelmed from time to time, by Jesus' Spirit. Loved ones, that's why we cry that cry of despair so often, even those of us who are children of God. That cry in Roman 7:15: "I do not understand my own actions. I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." The only mistake is this! We are confusing the issue by using "I" in both cases. In actual fact there is something deep down in your heart that DOES do what it wants! And that's what actually produces the evil in your life and mine. It's the unclean heart that still wants what Jesus doesn't want and it would be better for us to say: "Well, I don't understand MY own actions because Jesus wants to do certain things in me when He comes in, but my own heart doesn't want to do those things."

Loved ones, that's the situation with many of us, I'm sure, here in this room this morning. That we have in some sense been acted upon by God's Spirit and in some sense we're a little further on than the Jew; we are at least regenerated and we are aware of God and alive to God and we know that He has forgiven us our sins. But actually we are very like the Jew in that our nature -- deep, deep down -- is still unchanged and our heart is still unclean and that heart continues to send up sin as we try to walk progressively with Jesus. There is a verse, you know, in the Old Testament that I think makes it very clear and will help you to understand it if you look at it. It's Ezekiel, and it's a verse where God is describing the New Covenant to the Jewish people and it's Ezekiel 36:26. God is describing the New Covenant: "A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take out of your flesh the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh."

So God will do two things, you see. He'll give us a new heart and then He will give us a new spirit and the new heart is explained a little more in the next verse, in verse 27: "And I will put my spirit within you." That's how He'll give us a new heart. He'll make our own spirits new, He'll put a new spirit within us, He'll renew our spirits, He'll regenerate our spirits and make us aware of God and aware of Jesus, so that we'll have some acquaintance with Him. But then, He'll put His own Spirit in us, you see -- "And I will put my spirit within you," (my Holy Spirit, He will dwell with you and stay inside you and He will create a new heart inside you) "and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances."

So there are two parts to the New Covenant. One is a new spirit and many of us have entered into that. Many of us have had our spirits renewed and regenerated and that's why we come to church here. We know that it's true; we know that God is real, we know that Jesus died for us, we know that our sins are forgiven and our spirit is renewed. But we know also an inconsistent Christian life, an up and down life. It seems when that little renewed spirit gets its way we are in victory, but it seems there are other times when that spirit isn't getting its way and that's because we haven't entered into the second part of the New Covenant, where God said: "I will put My Spirit in you, My Holy Spirit in you, to dwell in you and abide in you and He will create a new heart in you and He will enable you to walk in my statutes and observe my ordinances." Loved ones, the fact is there are many of us who call ourselves Christians, who have entered into only one part of the New Covenant that God gave us in Jesus. And that's the part that we find in I John 1:9, you remember, "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." We haven't entered into the second

part: "and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Our hearts are still unclean, but we walk in the first part of the New Covenant: "if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

So, it' amazing -- if you are a child of God, and you are in that situation, if you keep confessing and repenting day after day, and you keep getting shots of God's Spirit from Sunday services and you keep getting encouragement from other people's fellowship, you will be able to walk in a fair degree of obedience for awhile, but soon you will begin to see a nose dive taking place in your own life because the Holy Spirit does not dwell in you. He does not abide in you, He is not at home in your heart, He acts upon you from outside and at times is able to speak within you, but He does not dwell within you, because you have not allowed Him to prepare a dwelling place for Himself.