

Walk by Faith

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I think a lot of us have trouble along this line. We go up in school to someone and we say, "I notice really that you are a bit loose in your relationships with your girlfriend." And they say, "Well, that's my life isn't it? It's up to me what I do." And you say, "Well, I'm a Christian and Jesus has said you should not commit fornication and that your relationships with the opposite sex should be pure and should be filled with non-selfish love and you should be free of any desire to get from your girlfriend but want to give." The other person says, "Well, that's interesting. I'm not a Christian. That's your problem and it's not mine."

And we go home that night and we say, "Lord, we've had a hard day witnessing and nothing..." And it's so easy, you know, to make an impression of a certain kind of moralist. And that's all you do. Or, you go up to somebody else at the end of the class and you say, "What do you do on Sundays?" And they say, "Well, I fish and water ski." And you say, "Well you know, it's Sunday. It belongs to God. And I go to the Campus Church. And really it's a corny place. You should come and see what goes on there." And then you discuss it. And then they discuss the church they used to go when they were young. And you discuss the pastors, and the people, and the choirs. And you leave feeling, "Well, that wasn't a very successful witness."

And again, and again we find ourselves driven into being moralists or being certain kind of churchman. Or it's even worse if we use the campus crusade presentation without the Spirit, because we go to them with our "four spiritual laws" and we take them through it. And nothing happens. And suddenly we realize the magic did not work. And we wonder, "Why are we having such a tough time witnessing?" Now dear ones, do you see that it's impossible to witness unless you have come through the same experience as the apostles themselves?

Now you remember that the one unique thing about Christianity is Jesus. He is different from Mohammed. Mohammed was an ordinary man--never claimed to be God's son. He's different from Buddha. Buddha didn't even believe in God. He's different from Confucius. Confucius didn't even say he was a prophet of God. He called himself a philosopher. He's different from all the Hindu gods, because we could see and touch him. And there were people who lived, and saw, and touched him and knew he was real. Jesus is far superior to all other so called prophets of religion, because he claimed to be God's son. And he defended his claim by rising from the dead and walking among us for 40 days.

So Jesus is the unique person in Christianity. And yet, do you see that at the end of his life, he told the apostles that they didn't have all they needed? That's right. He said, "Listen, you know me. You know me better than any other men have ever come to know God, but you don't have enough." Now loved ones, would you look with me at that place where Jesus said that? It's Acts 2:4. "And while staying with them he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem." See, he commanded them. It was as important as that. He said, "Don't leave Jerusalem." A lot of us would be wild keen to get all over the world and tell everybody about Jesus. But he said, "Don't depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father which he had said you heard from me. For John baptized with water but before many days you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Now many of us you know, take that and we say, "Oh yeah, well that's all right. That's what you mean by becoming a Christian. When you become a Christian you are baptized with the Holy Spirit." No, that's the new birth. When you come to Jesus and give him your whole life, then he gives you the

Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit regenerates your spirit and makes you aware and conscious of the spiritual world of God. But that's the new birth. The disciples, you see, experienced that.

You could look at it. John 20:22, where they experienced the new birth. "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit.'" Now you see, they were Christians in the sense that many of us are. They had received the Holy Spirit. But even though they had, Jesus said, "Listen wait, there's more of the Holy Spirit that you've to receive." So do you see brothers and sisters that that's not an argument about whether you receive the Holy Spirit when you're born of God? Of course you do. That's the only way you can be born of God. That's what makes you different from a Muslim. When a Muslim becomes a Muslim he just decides to follow Mohammed's rules, and practice his ceremonial and his moral laws.

When a Christian becomes a Christian the super natural Spirit of God comes into that Christian and makes him alive and aware of God. But do you see that even after that something is needed? And Jesus felt it was so important that he said, "Listen, don't leave until you receive this." And you remember, throughout the New Testament you find that they laid the same emphasis on this need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. You remember in Acts 8--we read it before, but some of you are here for the first time this morning, and it might be good to look at it.

In Acts 8, you remember, Philip went to Samaria and he preached and many of them became Christians. Acts 8:12, "But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip." Now look at Verse 14, "Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit." We say, "But hadn't they already?" Yes, they received him in the new birth. "For he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." In other words, it's not enough just to be born of the Spirit.

And brothers and sisters that's why so many of us have trouble with our witnessing lives, because, you see, you can only be a witness after you've received the power of the Holy Spirit. Now that's what Jesus said. He said in Acts 1:8, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be..." Not, you have to try to be. You'd better do your best. You'd better work up all the arguments you can for Christianity. But you'll automatically be. "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

In other words, the Holy Spirit will enable you to be a witness. And without the baptism with the Holy Spirit you'll never be a witness at all. You'll simply be a moralist, or a theologian, or a certain kind of churchman. But you'll never be someone who witnesses to the beauty of Jesus' life. Now do you see the word witnesses there in Verse 8? Witnesses--that's the Greek word "martures". Now it doesn't take much imagination to see which English word "marturio" produced from the Greek. It produced the English word "martyr".

Now a martyr is one who is willing to die for his faith. Now do you see a witness is one who has not simply come alive to God, but one who is ready to die to his own life, and his own plans for his own life, and is ready to live for Jesus' glory alone? Now brothers and sisters don't you see there's a difference between that and what many of us enter into at the new birth? Many of us, at the new birth, are preoccupied with getting clear of hell, and getting our sins forgiven, and getting things right between ourselves and God for our own salvation.

Now you see that in order to be baptized with the Holy Spirit it requires a complete switch in that egocentricity. It requires a complete turning from self and a complete turning to Jesus and saying, "Lord you are going to be Lord of my life, every part of it. The petting part, the future part, the ambition part, the swearing part, the irritable part, every part of my life, it's yours to do what you want with." And as a result of that, Jesus baptizes you with the Holy Spirit. And that's what you need in order to be a witness.

Now what difference does the Holy Spirit make to your own life? Well he makes you like Jesus. That's really the heart of it. See, Mohammed could only say, "Follow my laws." Buddha could only say, "Follow my eight-fold path to enlightenment." The Hindu prophets could only say, "Worship and respect the gods." But Jesus said, "I'm going to send you a third person of our trinity family. And he's going to take my life and he's going to give it to you. It's not just a matter of you trying to imitate me, or trying to follow me, or do you best to observe my laws, this Holy Spirit that I'm going to send you is going to take of the things that are mine and make them real in your own life."

Now dear ones, that's what produces super natural, effortless witnessing--when we experience the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our lives so that he gives us the very life of Jesus. See again and again at school, you know what the kids are impressed by, is your balance emotionally, or your intellectual integrating of life's problems. Or they're impressed with the friends that you have, or the kind of atmosphere that there is in a group like this. But so rarely they're actually impressed with Jesus. So rarely they're able to see past all those things and receive Jesus himself. Now, that can only happen if the Holy Spirit begins to make Jesus' life alive inside you.

Now the symbol for the Holy Spirit, in the Old Testament, was oil and you remember, a man could be born a prophet but he didn't enter into his function as a prophet until he was anointed with oil. Now you can see the same is true with the Holy Spirit, you can be born into God's family but you cannot represent God's family to the rest of the world until you're anointed with his holy oil, the Holy Spirit. And that's you remember, what happened to Jesus himself. A lot of us feel, "Oh well now Jesus didn't need this." But would you look at Luke 4:18-19? And you'll see that he was in the same situation, even though he was born of the Spirit, yet he needed to experience this anointing of the Spirit, or this baptism with the Spirit, before he engaged on his own ministry. You remember he got up in the synagogue, and said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Now Jesus could not have done any of those things if he had not been anointed with the Holy Spirit.

Now what difference does the Holy Spirit's anointing make? Well if you divide the English word anointing into two you can that it is the same etymological stem as ointment. And that will give you a little illustration of the kind of difference the baptism with the Holy Spirit will make to your own life. If you'd like to look at the story about the ointment in John 12:3, "Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment." Now the greatest thing that the Holy Spirit does when he baptizes you is he fills you with the fragrance of Jesus himself.

Now dear ones, it's just different. If you try to put on that old sweetie sweetie stuff it will just turn everyone off. And you try to be lovey dovey and show care for them, you know,

philanthropic kind of care and concern. It will just turn them off, because they know it's something that you turn on. But when you really are willing to die to self, and willing to abandon yourself to Jesus for his purposes alone, and willing to allow him to baptize you completely with his own Spirit, then the Holy Spirit takes of the fragrance of Jesus' life and fills it into your life. And you just become a different person.

Now loved ones, your conscience, you know, becomes a delight to you. It just becomes a garden of spices instead of a place that sends up sour smells to you all the time. And you become, you know, a beauty in the church. Not one of those creatures that you meet every time you know, and "How are you doing?" "Oh, okay, struggling, you know." Or, you become someone that is prepared to represent Jesus as long as you yourself are represented. For, dear ones, when the Holy Spirit baptizes you he fills you with the fragrance of Christ. So, you see, you can work beside a person in a lab all day, not say a word about Jesus, and they sense the presence of Jesus.

Now brothers and sisters, do you see that's what we need on our campuses? Don't you see that we're going to get tired of sharing? Don't you see that the poor non-Christian is going to get tired of just sharing without the life? The sharing is alright if the life is behind it. But brothers and sisters, the "four spiritual laws" are death if there isn't a life to back them up. And do you see that we're going to find Satan creating a tremendous backlash against the whole move of the Spirit among us, unless our lives begin to represent the fragrance of Christ, whether we're talking about him or not? Well that's one of the great things that the Holy Spirit does.

Some of the other things, you know, you can find if you begin to take apart the oil that they used in Old Testament times. It wasn't just ordinary oil; it had different kinds of ingredients. And if you'd just look at those, it's just an illustrative way of showing you some of the things that the Holy Spirit can do in your own life. One of the ingredients was myrrh, you remember, that they presented to Jesus. And myrrh is used to take the soreness out of a bruise. Now when the Holy Spirit baptizes you with himself you can't be hurt. Now it's glorious.

Somebody cuts you right across, tears apart everything that you believe in, and everything that you value, and there's no pain. Now dear ones, that's good. Do you see that that is what witness is? You see, anyone can witness about Jesus when they're in good form and everyone is treating them nicely. But it's when somebody cuts you right down to size, and then instead of that bruise being felt in your heart, there rises out a great love for them. And you begin to look at them and say, "Oh, you poor souls you're going to stub your toe kicking that old dead horse down there, because you've been crucified with Christ. There's no self to defend. There's no reputation to uphold. There's no brilliant intellect to prove or to justify. You've been crucified with Christ. And the Holy Spirit fills you with that readiness to accept persecution or criticism without any soreness in the bruise."

Now dear ones, a real Christian, you can see, is someone who cannot be hurt. Now dear ones, there is no place for wrapping ourselves up and saying, "Oh, I got hurt today. If you knew the way they treated me." And loved ones, you know, even though we laugh at it, yet how often have we gone to bed crying with self pity inside if not out. Now dear ones, do you see it's because we have not experienced that baptism with the Holy Spirit that Jesus has to give us?

Another, you know, ingredient of the old oil is cinnamon. And cinnamon was used in the old days to stimulate, and to make people active, and alert, and alive. And when the Holy Spirit baptizes you with himself you're always ready to do things for God, you know. Before you're baptized with the

Holy Spirit, you'll do it if it's convenient. Well, if it so happens that you're in that place on Sunday, or if you feel like getting up this Sunday morning you'll go. But when the Holy Spirit baptizes you with himself you're always ready for Jesus' business. You're ready to go here or go there because your life is utterly devoted to him. It's not yourself plus him. It's not yourself and him when it's convenient. It's him and him only and so it's no trouble. Nothing is any trouble.

And loved ones, what a freedom from burden that is, you know. A lot of you are great souls you know. But, dear love you, you're Christians who are still carrying the heavy burden because really the full surrender has not yet come. And you're saying, "Yes I love him but," "Yes, I will do it but." And there's a great "But" in your life. And there's a great "Jesus plus" in your life. There's a great plus. It has to be "Jesus plus the little bit of satisfaction in the water skis", "Jesus plus the little bit of satisfaction in getting a good reputation," "Jesus plus getting a good financially secure job." Do you see that Jesus can only baptize and use those that care only for him--who are baptized with the stimulating power and life of the Holy Spirit?

Now it's so, you know, with the other ingredients. There are others. There's one called cassia and one called calamus. And the calamus was used in the old days for taking the sourness out of the stomach. I suppose it was a kind of Alka-Seltzer. That's really what the Holy Spirit does. When the Holy Spirit baptizes you with himself you have never met a sour puss. That's right. That's right. You don't see the sourness in people, and the sourness doesn't come into your own spirit. The Holy Spirit is bringing you the sweetness and the life of Jesus so positively, that those people could be saying anything to you and it isn't penetrating. It isn't coming in and poisoning. And so really a Christian is someone who never sees the un-Christ-like part of another person. It doesn't matter whether that person is a Christian or not. The Christian never sees the un-Christ-like part of them. They see the Christ-like part. And someone comes along to you and starts criticizing someone else to you and you say, "Oh yeah, but, boy, they really have patience don't they?" Or, "They can really sing well, can't they?" And, dear ones, do you see that when the Holy Spirit baptizes a group of people the place is like heaven on earth? Because there is no negativism, and there is no sourness. And there is no miserable self pity, and self love, and self sentiment. And all the touchiness goes miraculously.

Brothers and sisters you can see that's what the world really is trying to get at. It says you know, all it needs is love. It doesn't really know what it means by love but that's really what it wants. And that's what all the utopia visions are all about. And do you see that Jesus is able to make us such a body of people here on earth? But you need to be willing to come into this baptism of the Holy Spirit.

And you say you know, "Oh well, now pastor what will it cost?" Well it costs you everything, everything you are, you see. It means you need to come to Jesus and say, "Lord Jesus, I know you didn't only bear my sins. I know on Calvary when you died, I died. God destroyed all this miserable self pity, all this miserable sarcasm and irritability, all this miserable inadequacy and negativism with you. Lord, I'm willing for you to make that real in my life." And then let the Holy Spirit begin to work on you and begin to show how much of that self is still alive.

And then dear ones you'll come to a time when you see, "Yes, I am really willing, Lord Jesus. I don't care whether I ever get married. I don't care whether I ever am financially secure. I don't care whether I'm successful in my parents' eyes or unsuccessful. I don't care what happens to me. I'm willing to live or to die from now on for you and for you only." And then dear ones when that moment comes, when you come to the ground of your heart, when you come to a place where you

literally admit you are not your own you are bought with a price, and you belong to Jesus for him to do what he wants with, he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

And it has come to us all differently you know. Some dear ones have come to it with tongues. Some of us have come to it with just a clear sense of cleanliness and victory in our hearts that we've never known before. But the Holy Spirit will baptize you in a way that is just right for you. But dear ones, without that the witnessing is just heavy going. It's just heavy going. And it really usually resolves itself into ideology, a sharing of ideology.

Now if you say to me, "Now pastor do you mean that I should stop witnessing until I am baptized with the Spirit?" Brothers and sisters, God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey. You have to obey the Holy Spirit. You have to witness in order to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. No, you need to keep witnessing and obeying what God has told you to do with all your heart. But you constantly need in your prayer times to be dealing with Jesus about the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

Now brothers and sisters, I know that it's late. I could maybe take two questions if there were two questions. We usually do this in the evening and I know it's – maybe God doesn't want questions.

Question from Audience:

What about the laying on of hands to receive the Holy Spirit?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

It seems, dear ones, that the apostles had the gift of discernment and were able to see when a brother or sister was in a place of total surrender and a readiness to die utterly with Christ. And so they had that gift of discernment. And they laid on hands to confirm the faith that already was existing in the heart. But I think – I know there are brothers and sisters here who would believe strongly in that, I think they would agree, that it's only a confirmation. It cannot stimulate a faith that is not there. So it's important I think, to steer away from all purely physical manifestations. I think it's important to see the only reason Jesus won't baptize us with the Holy Spirit is because we really don't want to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. We don't want to live for him alone.

Question from Audience: (inaudible)

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

Brother, Jesus led us to set up the bookshop that we have and our whole ministry specifically, you know, to try to help a brother or sister who was involved with that. And in the book shop we've tried to outline clearly the steps in the Christian life. And so we have the right books under the right sections. And there is one on the new birth. Then there's one on baptism with the Spirit. And it's in two sections, one filling with the Spirit for purity, and anointing with the Spirit for power. And there are books there that will help you. I've tried to write a little booklet, "Free to Live," which expressed how God dealt with me and gives some guidance on how to enter in yourself. And I think we'll have that in the entrance hall. And you could get it in the bookshop.

But basically, brother, there are two facts to be faced. You need to face that we were crucified with Christ. That's the first fact. You need to exercise faith on that fact, that I have no right

to my own life to do what I want with it. I have been crucified with Christ therefore I am dead to myself. The second fact is, present faith in the Holy Spirit. Present faith in the Holy Spirit.

Now how to enter into both of those you need to ask the Holy Spirit, "Holy Spirit, why is Jesus not able to baptize me?" And the Holy Spirit will begin to show you disobedience in your life, or wrong attitudes, or wrong motives that you have. And as you bring those under him, then Jesus will bring you to a time when he'll say, "You are ready. I will baptize you now with the Holy Spirit."

So the heart of it is faith brother. But faith includes willingness or obedience plus belief. That is very brief, brother. I'm very conscious of the inadequacy of that. And that is why I point you to the books a little more and to that little book [Free To Live].

Question from Audience:

What about water baptism?

Reply from Pastor O'Neill:

Dear ones, I think the vital thing--you can't talk about the whole subject. But the vital thing to see is that it's in line with what Eric said, that water baptism and laying on of hands will not create a spiritual work which God alone can do. And so water baptism is important in its place as scripture outlines it. But it will not create the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Dear ones, it seems to me that the prevalent practice was that they were baptized when they believed in Jesus. And it seems that is so. Whether it was always immersion, whether they always had enough water or not, I don't know. That's not the big issue. I think the big issue is that, as far as the Father is concerned, when they went under that water, they were buried with Christ. When they came up they were new creations, coming out in a resurrection.

Dear ones, I'm sorry but I really think we have to hold it there. We don't normally do it on Sunday mornings. Sunday evening, tonight, dear ones, we have about half an hour of questions after the sermon. I'm trying to talk on the life of faith. So I pray that if you know that this is what you need you'll begin to seek God. And he'll give it to you in the way that you need it, you see. Let us pray.

Almighty God, we thank you that you made each one of us, so each of us is equally dear in your eyes. Now Lord God, we trust you to show us by the Holy Spirit how each one of us can come into the baptism with the Holy Spirit that is needed in order to be witnesses to Jesus, and so that your son may live again in this world and be seen and be heard, because he lives fully in us. We trust you to do this for your glory. Amen.

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