

Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I would just like to introduce the whole truth loved ones, and then if you have questions really just ask them and I'll try to share what Jesus has shown me. We've often talked here, in Sunday morning service, about our ruling passion, our ruling passion. And those of you who know a little English literature know that it's Alexander Pope's phrase, the English poet and he used it to designate the overwhelming motive of a person's life. He said, "That's their ruling passion. That's what makes them tick." And, we've often shared here how that differs with all of us.

All of us used to laugh at our little brothers when they were told they were going to get a bicycle and that became their ruling passion. That was the whole meaning of their life. And we live not far from a little girl who has got a pony and it doesn't matter when you go past her garden there's the old pony chewing the grass and she's reading a book lying up against his legs and she's always with the pony. That's her ruling passion, that's all she thinks about.

Probably all of us could identify our ruling passion and I would ask you in all honesty what is it? Don't answer the way you're supposed to, but answer truthfully, what would you say your ruling passion is? What would you say is the main motive of your life? Probably we'd all reply differently. Some of us would say, "It's that job of mine. That job, that means everything to me. It's my satisfaction, it's my security, it's everything." Some of the mums might say, "It's my home. That's it, my home. I do think about the home continually. I think, 'How can I decorate that room differently? What needs to be done to the outside? What can I do to make the garden nicer?'" And some of us might reply, "It's my 650, my Honda 650. That's what I live for and boy this weather I really appreciate because I can get out on that bike just almost every day."

And yet we've talked often that all of us know fine well that it's stupid to live for those things. I mean, we know it. We've all seen homes in ruins after 50 years. We've all seen jobs lost overnight. We've all seen the value of money disappear in an inflationary spiral. We know it's dumb but somehow we find ourselves like little squirrels always storing in the nuts for the winter, or like the lion wanting to rule the jungle and we find ourselves with motives that aren't too different from any of the animals. And yet the obvious difference between us and the animals is that we know we were made by a personal Creator who made us to have a relationship with him. That's why he made us the crown of creation. The animals can't have any relationship with him, but we can and we know that's what we were made for, that's the whole purpose he made us, so that we could put our relationship with him above everything else. And we know that and yet we still have real trouble doing it.

We know that that's the plan, that we would concentrate first on our personal relationship with him and he would add all the other things onto us, the money, the clothes, the food, the shelter. But we somehow find that we aren't doing that. In fact, probably most of us here would admit that even when we've tried to do it it's been very difficult. I mean, it's just been hard through the day to think primarily of God. When we go home at night after supper we don't immediately think of getting down and talking to him. We tend to watch the TV, or we think of going out and enjoying the sunshine. We would admit that it seems that our personalities have got into such ruts of living for these lesser priorities that even when we want to live for this personal relationship with our Maker, we find we can't do it. Our personalities seem to dominate our wills so that we're not really free to do what we know we should do.

And many of us find ourselves in that dilemma. We find that yes, if we would put our relationship with God first he would infuse into us his Holy Spirit, his own life and that Holy Spirit would give us his characteristics, his love and his joy and we would have direction for all the rest of the lesser priorities that fill our days. But somehow we find ourselves in the dilemma that we can't give ourselves to God without the Holy Spirit and we can't receive the Holy Spirit until we give ourselves to God, and somehow we can't get ourselves out of that mess. We find ourselves burdened with personalities that will not change.

And so many of us, I think, have reached that point. And it's at that point that many of us have seen the reason for Jesus' death. Many of us at that moment have at last seen the reason for Jesus' death. Because, the first thing Jesus explains to us is, "Look, you've only got this lifetime to change, you know. This is what this lifetime is for. You've only got this lifetime to change from all those lesser priorities that you're living for and get on to the real thing. You haven't got beyond the grave. You have to do it during this lifetime and if you don't my Father has no provision for you in the real life that's to follow. He has no provision for autonomous little independent personalities."

And yet we have difficulty saying what we do with those incorrigibly independent personalities. It's then that we see when Jesus died God destroyed these incorrigibly autonomous, and independent, and rebellious personalities in him. And that if we believe that and are willing to stop living for all these lesser goals, then God will give us his Holy Spirit and his Holy Spirit will enable us to live the right way up with our relationship with God the be all and end all of our lives.

Now, when we see that loved ones, when we see that Jesus died for us to free us from these personalities that we cannot make do what we want them to do, then when we see that and submit to the Holy Spirit, and ask the Holy Spirit to change our lives, that's what we call conversion, or the new birth, or being born again. Some of us say we're saved, some of us say we've received Jesus, some of us will say we've received the Spirit of Jesus because Jesus himself is really at God's right hand and it's the Holy Spirit that is here among us and can communicate to us, Jesus.

The Holy Spirit you know is actually dealing with each one of you here. Yeah, you may think it's because that person asked you to come to church this morning, but it isn't. The Holy Spirit is dealing with each of us here in this room this morning. And when you receive the Holy Spirit and begin to lean on him and depend on him, then you begin to find your life turning from all these silly lesser priorities that make you feel such a clown when you get to 80 and see that you've wasted your life in things that disappear. The Holy Spirit enables you to turn from all those lesser priorities and live for your maker and you begin to enjoy your relationship with him. And that's what happens when you're born of God.

Now of course, the big thing about it is that you begin to lean heavily on this dear Holy Spirit. This person, he's a person, he's invisible but he's a person and you begin to lean on him and trust him. And so you're so anxious to get freed from this grip of a personality that had chained you so long to the money grubbing and the grubbing for the better home, and the grubbing for everybody's approval and everybody's acknowledgement. You're so glad and so anxious to get free of that that you just lean on that dear Holy Spirit and you say, "Holy Spirit, whatever you want to do I want to get out of this hell of selfishness that I've been in, I'll do what you tell me."

And so the Holy Spirit prompts us to get up in the morning to pray, and we get up. He prompts us to

read the bible, and we read the bible. He prompts us to witness, and we witness. Now that's what's the life of a new Christian is like. A person who has allowed the Holy Spirit of our Creator to free them and deliver them from themselves and to begin to make the relationship with their Creator real, and vivid, and living, just like with a person. Now that's what it is to be born of God loved ones.

And if you continue with the Holy Spirit he begins to lead you into more and more things. He begins to show you all the implications of Jesus' death. Not only that it is because of Jesus' death that God is able to give you the Holy Spirit but that it's death for death. It's all or nothing. That now that you have allowed the Holy Spirit to come in and take over your life you need to go on and come into a death to all those lesser priorities, to the motorbike, and the car, and the house, and the money, and your position with your peers, and your status, and your reputation, to getting your own way in your life. The Holy Spirit begins to show you that you need to come into a full death to all those lesser priorities.

And many of us of course, just respond to that like flowers to the sunshine. We just open to that and we move on with the Holy Spirit and we stop living for those things and we begin to put God first above everything else. And the more we do that the freer we become and the more joy that comes into our lives, and the more peace, and the more love bubbles up from our hearts to other people, and the more every day is a new magnificent experience. And many of us just walk on like that until we begin to see what God's primary purpose for our lives is and we see that he is prepared to anoint us with the Holy Spirit for power to perform that purpose and we simply ask him to anoint us and we're baptized with the Holy Spirit.

Many of us walk that way. Many of us don't. Many of us go exactly the opposite way. For the first weeks or months we do what the Holy Spirit tells us, but more and more we begin to identify the Holy Spirit with our own minds and we begin to get a little restless under this control of our lives by another person. And at the beginning the Holy Spirit tells us to speak and we speak. Boy, we're too concerned not to lose him not to speak, and so we speak. The Holy Spirit says, "Say to that person whom you work with, tell him about Jesus and tell him about what you've experienced." We tell the person. It may be a terrible mess of our relationship that we've developed but that person is touched by the Holy Spirit however embarrassed we are by it. And at the beginning of our life with the Holy Spirit that's the way many of us move when we're first born of God, when we're first saved, when we're first converted, when we're first born of the Spirit, we just do what the Holy Spirit tells us.

But many of us begin to regret that. And we begin to think, "Well, this is silly that was rather embarrassing what I got into yesterday under the Holy Spirit's guidance. Now I better just use my mind and use my mind to decide whom I should speak to and whom I shouldn't speak to. And I better start filtering the Holy Spirit's guidance through my mind to make sure it's right." That would be safe. If we had got to the point with the Holy Spirit where our minds were renewed but our minds are still unrenewed, our minds still operate the way they have for years. They are preoccupied with our status in the eyes of our peers. They're preoccupied with what other people think of us. And so these old minds of ours begin to contradict the guidance of the Holy Spirit and we begin to sense, "Well no, I better not be silly about that. I'll try friendship evangelism with this person. Maybe over a period of the next 20 years I can get to know them well enough. Maybe, they'll go to a Billy Graham Crusade. Maybe they'll hear KTIS."

You know, the old mind, the old mind begins to cancel out the voice of the Holy Spirit and we begin

to retract and we begin to grieve the Holy Spirit out of our witnessing lives. Our life of course begins to be boring and predictable again. We lose the glory of the unpredictable the Holy Spirit brings and we begin to get up every morning and say, "Often have I washed and dressed and what's to show for all my pain? Let me lay abed and rest, 10,000 times I've done my best and all's to do again."

And we get into that old business, "Here we are again another day. Okay, let's go to the office." And it's because we've stopped following that dear dynamic person that God first put into our hearts. The same with the tithing loved ones, the same with the tithing. The Holy Spirit says, "I want you to tithe and then I want you to listen to me and trust me for what you've to give beyond that to your Father." And at first we shudder at the whole idea but we're too concerned in those early days, we are just out of that hell of selfishness and we want to stay out of it and we want to hold onto the Holy Spirit who can keep us on the cross and so we say, "Yes, Holy Spirit."

And those are exciting days because we do what he tells us and we go out on wild limbs and we find ourselves in some tough financial situations. But, we're still alive here we are all still alive and we haven't starved to death and the Holy Spirit brought us through those and we kept doing it. But then the old mind begins to work and we say, "This is silly. This month is just tight, it's just tight, we'll pass this month. I'll just put something in the plate and we'll pass with that tithing business." Then the next month the mind has begun working and maybe it's after tax income, maybe that's the secret, we should tithe the after tax income. Then the next month the after social security deduction income, and then after the next month the after food cost income.

And before we know it we've drawn right back and we've grieved the Holy Spirit right out of that area of our lives and our financial life is beginning to get sticky. It's boring of course, but worse than that it's beginning to come apart. And we're trying to gather the whole thing in under our control again, take it back from the Holy Spirit. Many of us loved ones, go that way.

Many of us move right back. We start moving back to the old priorities. We start living for the home, living for our reputation, living for our comfort, living for what other people think of us and we begin slowly to grieve the Holy Spirit right out of our lives. Now, it's interesting a person at that stage does not necessarily look too bad. Now, that's interesting. Because, there's one very wise Pole among us who has said, "That a person on the way down often looks better than a person on the way up if they meet at the right point."

And so many of us kind of comfort ourselves and we kind of think, "Well, I go to church, and I do read the bible, and I give some money, and I do what I can for God, and I'm better than so and so who hardly knows Jesus at all." And so we comfort ourselves on the outside so it's not on the outside that we notice the problem, it's the inside. We notice the lack of the Holy Spirit's voice. We can't get guidance. People talk to us about the voice of the Holy Spirit and we say, "I can't hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. Is it through a minister it comes, or is it through someone else?" And we get on those lesser levels of guidance. Our prayer lives are dead. The bible doesn't feed us anymore. That's where we miss the Holy Spirit. We miss him inside.

Now loved ones, the verse that applies to us is Galatians 3:3. And how many of us have deteriorated into these sad old defeated lives? Galatians 3:3, "Are you so foolish? Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?" And that's it. That's where many of us stand. We began with the Holy Spirit but we're now ending with the flesh. We're back into control of our own lives. And you know, we're saying, "Praise God I'm a Christian." But you know it trembles inside.

There's a shake in the voice and there's a shake inside and we don't do too much witnessing nowadays. We haven't talked to anybody about Jesus for a long time. We can hardly remember the last person we led to Christ. Our prayer times have got kind of short. The Bible study we rarely do. We keep coming to church because we hope that something will happen but the voice of the Holy Spirit has grown so weak that we don't know what to do.

Now loved ones, the situation is the same as that described you remember, in that parable by Jesus. He said, "There are some people who receive the word but thorns grow up and they find themselves overcome by all the cares of the world." And that's the description of people who have not gone on into the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They're Christians who have begun to withdraw the control from the Holy Spirit and begun to take it back into themselves and they are really masters of their lives. They never do anything now that they haven't worked out themselves. They never go out on a limb with the Holy Spirit nowadays. Their life is absolutely predictable and tight. They have it organized and scheduled to a 'T' nothing can break into it least of all the Spirit of God. And they keep on using the language of Zion and they keep on talking about being saved, but to all intents and purposes, they're living as dead people, they're not alive spiritually anymore.

And they've really gone back to being overwhelmed by the priorities and the responsibilities of this life. Indeed, if you know of something of this in your own life, you know that's what happens, you become overwhelmed and burdened. I mean, life becomes just too much. In fact, it becomes too much that you give up the Christian side of it and you begin to concentrate on the rest. Now loved ones, that's what happens when you're not baptized with the Holy Spirit.

If you say, "Well, why is that?" well, there are several reasons I think. One reason is found there, if you'd like to look at it, in Acts 19:2. Paul came to some people who had been converted when Apollos preached at Corinth and in Verse 2, "And he said to them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' And they said, 'No, we have never even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.'" I think that's the reason with some of us. I think some of us here have failed to be baptized with the Holy Spirit because of the diluted preaching that we have listened to, and let's keep clear of blaming the preachers you know. It's too easy to blame the poor souls that do their best, but because of the diluted preaching that many of us have listened to we've all felt or been encouraged to think that we could have our cake and eat it.

That is that we could have the fullness of the Holy Spirit within us and we could have our own way as well, that we could have heaven and our own way at the same time. And so many of us have settled into a controlled surrender and we're surrounded by people who live a controlled surrender. So many of us are ignorant of the fact that it's all or nothing, it's death for death, it's life for life, it's you give over the whole control of your life to the Holy Spirit or you give over none of it because eventually you'll take back what little you've surrendered.

And many of us don't see that. Many of us don't see that if the Holy Spirit isn't absolute master of all then he isn't master at all and we haven't seen that. So some of us simply don't know and what we need to do is hear this morning and then decide to put our relationship with God above everything else and to make the Holy Spirit again master of our lives, and to go out of here this morning determined to do the first thing the Holy Spirit tells us to do. And I tell you, if you just do that the Holy Spirit will move over and take over the rest of your life too, if you'll give him the chance.

Others of us are like those people in 1 Corinthians 3:3. Paul says, "For you are still of the flesh" that is you're still carnal. That's what a Christian becomes who isn't baptized with the Holy Spirit, they become carnal, fleshly, their life begins to be governed by the outward needs of their body, by food, shelter, clothing, all the old priorities. The demand for other people to give you attention, security, significance, happiness, those become the governing priorities. "For you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving like ordinary men?" And that's what happens to a Christian who is not baptized with the Holy Spirit, they end up living like ordinary people with all the jealousy, and anger, and envy inside them that ordinary people have because they're not living under the leadership of the Holy Spirit but under their own leadership.

Now, some of us are like that. Some of us don't want to give over our whole lives to God. Some of us have acquiesced in the society that wants its own way and wants to get a bit of everything else as well. And with those of us, it's a question of will. We're not convinced that the only way is absolute surrender and we'll still be fighting that. We're not just ignorant about the thing, we have a fair idea that that's the way we're supposed to go, but we don't want to go that way.

We want to control our lives. I want to marry the person I want to marry. I want to have the kind of bank account I want to have. I want to have the kind of job I want to have. I do not want to spend my life as they call it full-time for Jesus. And so many of us don't want to let go and that's our problem, we're just carnal. We're just rebellious carnal people who hate God but outside we say, "We love God. We believe in God." But we hate him. We don't want his way in our lives.

Now some of us loved ones, I know it's hard but loved ones some of us here are like that. Some of us have minds of the flesh that are enmity against God, that will not submit to his law, neither indeed can they submit to his law because we have directed them, "You're not doing that." We're remaining God in our own lives. Now, some of us are like that.

Now if you say, "Why do so many people enter into the baptism of the Holy Spirit differently?" Mostly, for those reasons. Some of us open up to the Holy Spirit like flowers to the sunshine. We keep on yielding, yielding, yielding. He shows us what dying with Jesus means, we move on into it, we ask him to anoint us for the tasks that he's given us either to pray in the church, or to be a visitor in the church, or to go abroad, or to teach, and we just receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We just ask.

Some of the rest of us are ignorant about the thing. We didn't know about it but once we hear we just go and it doesn't matter what kind of a church really you're in, but we just go and we hear that you can be baptized with the Holy Spirit and we fulfill the conditions. We say, "Lord, I want to put you first in my life above everything else. I'm prepared to die to all those other silly priorities of security, significance, happiness. Lord, will you baptize me with the Holy Spirit?" And he does it.

Some of the rest of us still are not convinced that the surrender needs to be so complete and we need to be convinced by God's word and by the sword of the Spirit coming down again, and again on that recalcitrant will of ours. And that's why some of us have a struggle and some of us haven't.

Now loved ones, how are you baptized with the Holy Spirit? Dear ones, it's just you know, it's just so simple. You just give yourself wholly to God. You recognize that that's why you were put here

on earth, to give yourself wholly to God. To do what your maker wants you to do. Loved ones, you may say, "Oh, I've done that." Loved ones, if you have then there are certain marks that you'll have in your life. You will know that you're filled and baptized with the Holy Spirit by certain marks.

Here they are, Galatians 5, if you'd like to look at them. Your spirit inside will be like this loved ones, whether you're a waitress, or whether you're a chef, or whether you're a teacher, or a pastor, or a doctor, or an engineer, or a plumber, or a housewife, these will be the marks in your life if you're baptized with the Holy Spirit. Galatians 5:22, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

Loved ones, the spirit within you will be the spirit of the Holy Spirit and you'll find those things coming up from inside. If you say to me, "Brother is it not, that other things will come up and I'll have power to stamp them down?" No, that's repression/suppression, that's not cleansing. The baptism of the Holy Spirit brings deliverance from all those things. Deliverance from the things listed there, if you look at them, in Galatians 5:19. "Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

And loved ones don't squirm around it, don't say, "I haven't been drunk for years," but the old envy gave you real trouble last week. And don't say, "Oh, I've never had any party spirit." And yet you're as selfish as Satan. Don't say that, look at the whole thing, look at the whole thing and these things loved ones, are what are cleansed by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And then you have available in your life the gifts of the Holy Spirit and they're in 1 Corinthians 12:8.

1 Corinthians 12:8, you don't have every gift at the same time but you have a deep trust and confidence and have proved it in your life that whenever you need these gifts the Holy Spirit gives you. "To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are inspired by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills." That's why those are called gifts. Not everybody has all of those.

The others are called fruits because if you have a tree, an apple tree, it bears fruit you can't stop it but these are gifts that are given by the Holy Spirit to certain people as they need them. So the one is absolutely essential, if you haven't the fruit of the Spirit you're certainly not baptized with the Spirit. But maybe you don't speak in tongues, or maybe you haven't healed anyone, that doesn't necessarily mean you're not baptized with the Holy Spirit. But you need to be absolutely confident that the Holy Spirit can give you these gifts and you need to have experienced some of those gifts in your lifetime.

Now loved ones, that's what happens to a person that is baptized with the Holy Spirit. So you can know, there's no problem, you can know if you're baptized with the Holy Spirit. If you're not sure yet I have a miserable little tract. It's just a blessing loved ones it is so hard but it is just a

blessing and some of you know it so well. It's a tract, and no I don't have more here so don't come over and ask me. I think they should be in the bookshop. These are, this dear man, oh years ago he wrote it and it outlines the works of the flesh. "Are you baptized with the Holy Spirit? Well not if you have a secret spirit of pride, an exalted feeling in the view of your success or position because of your good training or appearance, because of your natural gifts and abilities, an important independent spirit. Not if you have a love of human praise, a secret fondness to be noticed, a love of supremacy, a drawing attention to self in conversation, a swelling out of self when you have had a free time in speaking or praying.

You're not baptized with the Holy Spirit if you have the stirrings of anger or of impatience, which worst of all you call nervousness or holy indignation. If you have a touchy sensitive spirit, a disposition to resent and retaliate when disapproved of or contradicted a desire to throw sharp heated flings at another. Not if you have a jealous disposition, a secret spirit of envy shut up in your heart, an unpleasant sensation in view of the great prosperity and success of another. A disposition to speak of the faults and failings rather than the gifts and virtues of those more talented and appreciated than yourself."

Loved ones, if any of those are present in your life see that you need to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. See that you're born of God, you've received Jesus but you're not baptized with the Holy Spirit. Somewhere along the line in your life you've started to take back, take back, take back. And you've taken back so much that the Holy Spirit no longer has much say in your life. And if that's the situation, change today. I wouldn't wait. Change today. Change today and give yourself to him and say, "Holy Spirit, the next thing you tell me to do, that I will do. I don't care what it is. I'll sing the hallelujah chorus backwards. I'll do anything, whatever you want." Loved ones, it takes that kind of determination, you'll do whatever the Holy Spirit tells you to do. And then the dear Spirit will begin to get you back into some kind of converted relationship with Jesus and then he'll begin to take you forward into the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

I should keep my word loved ones, is anyone able to withstand the heat so much that they have to ask a question? I'll tell you what you could go because I know it's rough, if you like to remember questions next day I really would promise that I'd speak just briefly maybe, well 12 minutes, next day and then maybe that would be a good idea because it is rough.

Lord Jesus, I trust you for every brother and sister here in this room this day. And I trust you Lord, for any of them who sense that you were speaking to their hearts. And oh Lord, I trust you to enable them to see they don't need to wait for some big service, they don't need to wait for next Sunday, they need to obey your voice now. They need to start tithing if you're telling them to tithe; they need to start speaking in the office if you're telling them to speak. Holy Spirit, they need to start obeying you because God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey him. And oh Holy Spirit, I trust you to lead them on in then to your baptism. I ask this for Jesus' glory in their lives and for their own salvation and deliverance.

Now the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and ever more. Amen.