

Fruits of the Spirit

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I'd like brothers to really talk today about how to enter the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And you remember, that last time we talked about the New Testament experience of the Holy Spirit and we talked about receiving the Holy Spirit as being an essential part of entering into Christ where Acts 2:38 says, "Repent and be baptized into the name of Jesus for the remission of your sins and you shall receive the Holy Spirit." And the indication is in the New Testament that everybody was expected to enter into the fullness of the Holy Spirit as a complete experience in salvation. And yet you remember we saw that there were definite descriptive parts of the New Testament that revealed to us that not everybody entered into the fullness of the Spirit.

You remember in Acts 19 Apollos' converts entered into only the Jewish forgiveness of sins and I think many people do that today, enter simply into forgiveness of sins. Probably as with Apollos' converts through lack of light rather than through unwillingness to make a full surrender. Some people enter into the same thing as Philips' converts in Acts 8, they entered into a real forgiveness of sins through Jesus and a real baptism into Jesus but they had not believed for the fullness of the Holy Spirit and so the fullness of the Holy Spirit did not come to them so they were simply in that position. They didn't know all that the Holy Spirit could do in them.

And I think a lot of people in churches today are in that position, they just have not had full surrender or the fullness of the Holy Spirit preached to them and so they enter into only a partial experience. Thirdly you remember, there were the Corinthians that Paul wrote to who had entered into the baptism with the Holy Spirit for the gifts and ministered in tongues and ministered in healing but had not entered into the Holy Spirit as far as purity of life was concerned and so Paul had to say you are carnal you are fleshly, you behave like ordinary men, you're walking like ordinary men who have never met Jesus. And I think there are many people in that position today who believe their sins are being forgiven and even have some experience of the gifts of the spirit but have not purity of life in their own hearts.

Now, what I'd like us to share just for about half an hour is how to enter into the fullness of the Holy Spirit. What should be our practical application of the didactic teaching in the New Testament that all men should enter into the fullness of the Holy Spirit and of the descriptive teaching that some did not. I think the heart of it is our attitude should be a pragmatic attitude. We should not play about with semantic games. We should not take the position of those people who say, "Well, it is God's will for you to enter into a full experience isn't it? To enter into the new birth and to enter into the baptism of the Holy Spirit all at once. That's God's will for you. Now, if you've entered into part you must have entered into all."

Now, it's not wise to play that semantic game you see. Some people would say, "Oh well, doesn't it mean we've entered into the Holy Spirit, that we've all of the Holy Spirit that we need, but we're not letting him express himself in our lives?" Do you see it's silly to argue about whether you've entered into all of the Holy Spirit and you're not letting him express himself in your lives or you've entered into only part of the Holy Spirit and you need to receive more of him? It's silly to argue over that semantic question which is which. The vital thing is to take a pragmatic and a practical attitude to the people involved.

I think we shouldn't argue about superficial signs. I don't think you should get into the position

where you say to a person, "Have you spoken in tongues?" Because obviously, the Bible makes it very plain that not all people speak in tongues. I think it's foolish if you get into the position, "Have you had hands laid upon you and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit by that method?" It's silly to talk about superficial signs, you know, that are involved in the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's wrong even brothers, to talk about the way you entered it. It's wrong for me really to say to you, "I entered in this way brothers so you must enter in the same way."

Loved ones, I think we should be pragmatic about the thing. We should deal with the question, "have you the marks of a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit?" Not did you go through a Pentecostal experience, not did you go through a holiness experience, not do you think you've died to self, but have you the marks of the fullness of the Holy Spirit in your life? And deal with that issue brothers. Deal with reality. That is what will save us from all kinds of wild and vague introspection and uncertainty. Deal with the basic pragmatic fact, "You're filled with the Holy Spirit? Okay. Have you the marks of a person who is filled with the Holy Spirit?" And then when you've dealt with that see that it's beautiful. If I haven't those marks what I need is to be filled with the Holy Spirit not to try harder, not to pretend that I have the fullness of the Holy Spirit but to see I've entered into a partial experience like many people in the new Testament and now even though I'm in Jesus' and my sins are forgiven and I'm accepted by the Father because of his blood, yet I need to enter into more of the Holy Spirit.

But brothers I think our attitudes should be pragmatic. Okay, what are the marks of the fullness of the Holy Spirit? Well, maybe you'd like to look at very plain ones given in Galatians 5:22, the fruit of the spirit. Galatians 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law." Now, when a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit will bear the fruit of the Spirit naturally and effortlessly in their lives. In other words, you will find yourself not having to try to produce love and long suffering. You will find long suffering rising up from your spirit. Your spirit, your inner human spirit will be a spirit that is filled with the Holy Spirit and will automatically bear the fruit of that Holy Spirit.

You'll find in situations that there'll just rise up a gentleness in your heart; it will just come from within. You'll just know it's there. If I were to ask you or if you were to ask yourself, "Look, what is your spirit really like? What is your spirit inside you like at the moment?" You'd be able to see, "It's amazing, it's a miracle, but it's really a spirit of gentleness and of love." In other words brothers, you'll be able to describe yourself as one who is love. That's the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Some people have said, you know, "All the other fruits just really elaborate on the first fruit, love. Joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, are all expressions of love." In other words you'll be able to say in 1 Corinthians 13, "Not love is patient and kind," but, "My spirit, my spirit is patient and kind. It is not jealous or boastful. It is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way." And you'll be able to say your spirit that rises up from within you is that kind of spirit.

And brothers, here's the glory of it, if your spirit is not like that it's great to see that there's a fullness of the Holy Spirit into which you can enter that will make your spirit like that. And it's good to see that you don't have to try to keep repressing it or suppressing, or trying to will it forth and say, "Oh, I'm filled with the Holy Spirit because I'm a Christian. I know that so I have to really prove that I'm filled with the Holy Spirit." No, it will be just a beautiful

admission. "Oh brother, my spirit is not like that. I have a spirit that comes up that is not gentle and long suffering."

Now, the thing is to begin to identify that spirit. You see, the Bible has told us that that spirit would arise, you remember. In Galatians 5:17, it says, "This is the normal experience," and I'm afraid it's the normal experience of most of us who have come to know Jesus. We believe in him for the forgiveness of our sins. There comes in a beautiful sense of the presence of Jesus' Spirit. And in the early days and weeks we have no trouble reading the Bible, we have no trouble praying, we have no trouble witnessing, it's just a joy to do it. It's a joy to serve our Lord. He's given us everything and we want to give everything to him.

And then many of us have found that this begins to be true inside us in Galatians 5:17, "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would." And most of us who have entered into the forgiveness of our sins, and have received the Holy Spirit inside us, find that there's another attitude in us that grieves the Holy Spirit and works against the Holy Spirit. And we find that the Bible study isn't so easy to do. We find there is another desire coming up inside us to cut the Bible study a bit and get on with the rest of our lives.

There's a bit of us that in prayer life, there's a spirit within us of Jesus because we've really received the Holy Spirit of Jesus when we're born of God, but there's a spirit inside us or an attitude inside us that fights against that spirit that wants to go to God in prayer and says, "You've other things to do. You have study to do you have more things you're responsible for. You have to get on with your own life as well as serve God." And bit by bit many of us find that those desires inside us grieve and quench the Spirit of Jesus more and more until we find a daily resistance against God's Spirit inside us and we find ourselves really just in a position that Paul was in in Romans 7 where he says, "I find a law inside my members." And he says in Romans 7:15, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing that I hate." And he says this, "For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do."

Now many of us you see, in the Christian life have found that weeks, or months, or maybe years for some of us, there begins to work inside us that desire that opposes the Spirit of Jesus at times. Now, brothers it is true that if we would reject that spirit immediately, probably we would just walk on into the fullness of the Holy Spirit. But the tragedy is that we tend to look around at the rest of the Christians in the world who have had controlled surrender or half surrender preached to them and we say, - well, I remember it happened in my own life. I remember the voice inside me saying, "What would it be like to give everything to Jesus? To live only for him?" And I looked around at all the other friends at college and I said, "Nobody else is doing that. That must be a fanatical thought. I must get on with my own life, plan my career, make a good marriage, have a good home, and serve God all I can."

But I remember that voice and I do believe that the Spirit speaks to us early on in our Christian lives and says, "Would you give all?" And brothers, the only reason a crisis experience is needed in our hearts is because like the people in Corinth, we resist the Holy Spirit of Jesus. We resist him and we build up a back log of resistances against the Holy Spirit so that we are actually quenching him and grieving him. And that's why it becomes necessary for us to come to a point where we find, "What can I do? I'm not a Christian on the inside at all. I'm not in the position I

initially came to.” I realized, “I’m not a Christian inside at all. Inside I have all kinds of Jekyll and Hyde struggles. Inside I have a desire to criticize my brother, I don’t have any desire to love my sister, I have a desire to bite against them and the only reason I keep it down is because I don’t want to spoil my witness.”

But what I didn’t realize was that that witness was being spoiled anyway because it was coming from me, a stream of sweet water at times and a stream of sour water. And really it wasn’t a case of teenagers. I mean it’s silly to tell about teenagers, you’re either one nature or the other nature.

A nature, when you talk about a person being a generous nature, you don’t mean he’s a generous nature sometimes and a mean nature other times, or a pinch penny in nature at other times. You mean he’s of a generous nature, that’s what he is, that’s what he’s like. Now you are either of one nature or another.

When before we were born of the spirit they’re governed by an evil nature of the children of wrath. When we’re born of the Spirit and as long as we submit to the Spirit we are born of God’s nature and his nature is imparted to us. So brothers, really what many of us come to in our Christian lives is what I came to 13 years after I’d been born of the Spirit. I came to a place where I had to face it, was I a Christian or was I not? Was I governed by Jesus’ Spirit or was I governed by my own desire for my own pride, and my own self, and my own ways? And bit-by-bit I began to see that undoubtedly I was in Romans 7. I was not doing the good I wanted to do, it was the evil that I wanted to avoid, that was the thing that drove my life.

And I didn’t know what to do, you know. I read a book called Possibilities of Grace and I began to see there that some men had had to come into a new conviction of sin. And brothers, you know, I’m not arguing that we all seek second experiences or second crisis but it was so in my life, that even though I say here undoubtedly we can enter into a fullness of the Spirit as far as God is concerned all in one activity and experience with the new birth, yet it seems true that most of us have to come into a second conviction of sin, and a second believing, and a second repenting because our own first one is not continued.

And I believe even the brothers, you know, across the Atlantic who would be a wee bit slow on the whole business of baptism of the Holy Spirit, they would admit that this is the problem with many Christians. This is the reason that many Christians are not living in the fullness of the Spirit, because they have grieved the Spirit and they have quenched him in their lives and something else is needed. And that’s why brothers, that’s why we emphasize so much another event in your life, or a crisis of some kind because even though there may be a gradual, gradual awareness of your problem, there comes a moment when you at last decide to deal with that problem.

Well brothers, I can only tell you the way I got down to it. First of all I started to see that there was something in me that I couldn’t control. There was an attitude in me that I could not control. I tried to control it, tried to pray it down, tried to will it down, tried to suppress it, tried to repress it but there was something in me that wanted its own way, that wanted to be independent of God. Now, it was a great help to me to see that that something was something that was really beyond my control and I suspect that was the first step for me in any kind of deliverance.

You see, the self inside us wants to believe that it can destroy itself whenever it wants and that’s what kills most of us. Most of us feel, “Oh, I can control it whenever I really want to, it’s just I don’t really want to. I can stop being impatient whenever I really want to.” It was a tremendous

relief for me when I looked – I think it was Romans 8:7 where I read this, “For the mind that is set on the flesh,” and the flesh is just our independence of God you see, it’s not the physical flesh or the sexual part of us, it’s the mind that is set on the flesh independent of God. For “The mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law, indeed it cannot.”

And brothers that was a deliverance for me that I began to see that this thing inside me was really something that I could not control. It was something that was a part of Satan in me and I could not change it. It would not submit to God’s indeed it could not submit and for the first time I began to distinguish between the part that Satan had in me and my own self. Up to then I’d mixed them both up and that’s Satan’s game. He wants to mix up his rebellion in your heart with you. He wants to try to get you to say, “Okay, that’s you. You can’t let you go.” And it’s a big step when you begin to see, “But this isn’t the real me. The real me is deeper than that but this is something that has almost taken me over.” And that was the first step in my life.

The second great step for me was seeing that God had done something with that because I didn’t know how to get rid of it myself. And so Romans 6:6 was just deliverance for me. That can only be deliverance I think when a man is at the end of his tether. That’s why I say approach this in a pragmatic way. Deal with a person ask the gift of discernment to see where they are. If you minister this to a person who isn’t ready for it, they’ll just give up completely. But for me, this was life you know. What I didn’t know what to do with this place inside, this self that wanted its own way and wouldn’t do what God wanted and then I saw in Romans 6:6, “We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin.” And that was life that I saw that God had not only put my sins on Jesus and destroyed them, but that he had put sin in the singular, the old independent self that produced sins, he had put that on the cross and crucified that with Jesus.

That in some way loved ones that I couldn’t understand, God had put my independent rebellious carnal will and rebellion against God into Jesus and destroyed that in him and that I was actually living a lie. Persuaded by Satan I was believing that I was my own man that I was not bought with a price, that I could do what I wanted. I could have my own way, I could do what I wanted, I could establish my own rights, defend my own rights, assert myself and defend myself whenever I wanted and that all that was a lie and that I was actually under the control of this old self because I was refusing to believe that it had been crucified with Jesus. And so I began, you know, gradually to see maybe there was a way through.

Then the thing that baffled me; why did I not believe that? Why did I not believe that my old self had been crucified with Christ? And the Holy Spirit gradually showed me I didn’t believe it because I didn’t want to believe it. I didn’t want my old self crucified. There were bits of my old self that I liked. Alright, the anger was inconvenient at times but self-pity, I didn’t mind a good cry over myself at times. It wasn’t bad at night just to think how everybody was treating me and it wasn’t bad to kind of just mull over, mull over some of the resentment from the criticism I had of people because it sort of made me feel, “Well I knew where other people stood and I knew what was right and what was wrong.”

And I began to see that although there were bits of the old self that I didn’t like but there were many bits that I hugged to myself and I enjoyed and that I really, in a way, couldn’t do without. And so the Holy Spirit began to reveal to me in order to believe that your old self is crucified you have to be willing for it to be crucified. And so I just began to ask the Holy Spirit, “Holy Spirit will you show me what dying to self with Jesus on the cross would mean in my life at present?” And

for me it was a lot of different things. Anger for me was a method of pulling things back into my control when they got out of control because I knew everybody respects you when you get angry so you get angry to get them to respect you and get them to do what you want them to do.

And so the Holy Spirit made it plain to me, “If I take anger and self from you, you’ll actually be in situations you can’t control. Do you know that? You’ll have to leave the control to me. Now, would you be willing to let those things come under my control and not be able to control them or stop them yourself? Would you be willing for me to call uncle when I choose not when you choose? Would you be willing to face all the things that I would be willing for you to face however long I ask you to continue it?” Brothers, I had to be willing to face the consequences in my life of the Holy Spirit cleansing cleansing me from self, that’s what it was. I had to be willing to face the consequences in my life of me being crucified with Christ.

Lust for me even though I was married, lust was a problem. So for me the question was, “Would you be willing, if you die to self with Christ, and die like him to having a woman, would you be willing if I asked you never to have intercourse again in your life?” And that was it. You know, he didn’t ask me to do that afterwards but he asked me would I be willing and here’s the thing, the Holy Spirit by searching out the places in my life where I was not willing for Christ’s death to be made real, began to expose to me the part of myself that I treasured more than Jesus. And bit-by-bit he began to get me down to the nitty gritty that it wasn’t the envy, it wasn’t the jealousy, it wasn’t the lust, it wasn’t the pride, it wasn’t the ambition, it wasn’t the irritability, or bad temper, it was self.

I felt I had the right to myself. I felt I had the right to run my own life and I had the right to keep myself back from pain and hardship when I wanted to and I had the right to protect myself from other people. I had the right to look after myself and take care of myself. And I began to see, you know, it was self it was me Ernest O’Neill that was the problem and that that was the source of all these works of the flesh envy, and jealousy, and bitterness that I read about in Galatians 5:21, that it was the source of all those things. It wasn’t a matter of dying bit by bit, you know, to self, and to envy, to envy and selfishness, and jealousy, and pride. It was a business of allowing the Holy Spirit to bring me right to the ground of my heart where I saw it was myself I was defending and would I be willing for that self to be crucified with Christ?

With me it was really finally, I mean, he gets you down to besetting sin, each of us has a besetting sin that holds self down, you see. There’s a hard fallow ground that all of us have built up over – because we have a back log of resistances to God’s will over many, many little failures and surrenders. Now, on top of that fallow ground there’s a besetting sin like a cover of ice that prevents the Holy Spirit getting down. All of us have a besetting sin. I think mine probably was, “Would you be willing to be a failure for me if it’s for my glory?” I was a minister, I wanted to succeed. I wanted to succeed.

I even defended it – self is so subtle, I even defended and said, “It’s for God’s sake you want to succeed.” But I wanted to succeed I didn’t want to be left in the corner with nobody knowing what I was doing for God. And finally, you know, the Holy Spirit brought me to that point, “Would you be willing to be a failure for me? Would you be willing to be nothing for Jesus’ glory?”

Now brothers, I do emphasis that only the Holy Spirit can give you revelation on these things. Only he could give me revelation. Even as I say this, you know, it was real to me when the Holy Spirit made it real. It wouldn’t have been real if you had said it to me. I had to see the exceeding

sinfulness of myself. I had to think that this was a choosing – an intersection of two ways, a fork in the path. I had to either go this way and all into the full surrender and fullness of the Holy Spirit or I had to move out of Jesus. Actually, to be filled with the Spirit all you have to do is to stay in Jesus. The only way to avoid the fullness of the Spirit is to step out of Jesus. And I began to see that was the choice for me. Would I be willing to live for Jesus' glory alone and allow him to fill me with his Spirit so that was the only thing that governed my life?

And you know I've shared with you before, that there came a morning that the Holy Spirit witnessed that I was at a place of full consecration. A place of full consecration. I'd often thought I was at it before but I wasn't sure. Then I began to realize if you're not sure you're not at it. There was a moment when the Holy Spirit witnessed to me, "Yes, you are really willing to be nothing for Jesus. You're willing to be filled with me. Alright, I witness that in your heart." And I just knew it, I knew I was at a place of full consecration, or the human side of sanctification and then I just received the fullness of the Holy Spirit that day.

Just a quiet assurance that he had come into my heart and with me there was just a sense of cleanliness, and purity, and victory. There need not be that with you. For many people there's a weeping and a crying. For many people there's a laughing. For many people there's a speaking in tongues. For many people there's just a knowing. The heart of it is a knowing. You know that you are willing to do what God wants from you in order to be filled with the Holy Spirit and therefore that He must fill you and say you've just received the filling.

Now brothers, I honestly do believe that this is God's normal way into a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Really. I know there are other brothers and I'll try and talk about it next day, I know there are other brothers who will say, "Oh brother, you can enter into the baptism of the Holy Spirit with tongues without any of this stuff that you're talking about." Brothers, I honestly do believe that as it's outlined in Romans 6, "Do you not know that you who were baptized into Christ Jesus will baptize into his death so that you might be raised from the dead by the glory of the Father and might walk in the newness of life." I do believe that that's God's normal way of us entering into the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Now I agree with you, being ready to enter in is not the baptism. Being in a place of sanctification, being in a place where you're ready to be crucified with Christ is not the baptism. It is the condition of the baptism it is a place of full consecration. But that is the normal way to enter into it. Coming into a place of full consecration where you accept your identification with Christ, and his death, and his life, and his resurrection and the Holy Spirit fills you with himself and cleanses your heart. As Acts 15:9 says, God gives the Holy Spirit to them the Gentiles that he did to us and cleansed our hearts by faith. And he fills you with the purity and the nine fruit of the spirit and then he anoints you with that nine gifts of the spirit so that you can minister that life to others. And that's what I'd like to share next day the ministry of the gifts of the spirit.

But brothers, if you don't enter into an absolute consecration you'll find that you'll end up ministering gifts in the flesh or by the power of demons, but you won't minister the life of Jesus unless your own life has been crucified with Christ and only his flows through you. So I really do believe this is the normal scriptural way to enter into the fullness of the Holy Spirit that will bring real joy and delight not only to your own life but the people who live with you. Amen.

