

Gift of the Holy Spirit

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

There is someone called Bob here this morning who wrote me a letter and in it he said, "You've been saying that the Holy Spirit is a 'dynamic' and what do you mean by a 'dynamic?'" So I'd like to try and talk about that loved ones. I'd point out to you that "dynamic" is not only an adjective but is a noun and in the dictionary it means "an energizing or motivating force".

You remember, during the first part of August, we talked about the general problem that all of us have in our own personal lives. The problem is we have evil desires within us and we lack often good desires that we would like to have. That's exactly what Paul said in Romans 7:15, "I do not do what I want. [There are times when I want to feel good desires and I can't feel them] but I do the very thing I hate. [There are evil desires within me that I am not able to control]." And you remember, we shared at the beginning of August that most of us deal with these inner desires or motivations within in the same way as we deal with a headache -- we try to deal with the symptoms. We take an aspirin to try and cut off the nervous system that connects up the pain with our perception of the pain.

We do the same with these desires. We try to bring in external compulsions that will make us do good. In secular business, we do it by offering incentives to the salesman to sell more. Really, the ideal would be that he would want to get up and get out every morning and just sell for the joy of selling, but he doesn't find that, so we offer other incentives, promotion, or commissions to make him do it. We, on the whole, deal with our own personal lives the same way. loved ones. We hold carrots out to each other to make us do the good that we don't feel comes naturally from within us. So I'd ask you to look at your own lives and see do your own lives not operate that same way? Why do you get up in the morning? It would be nice to say, "Oh, just because I love to get up in the morning," but often it's because of fear of what the boss will say if we don't get up, or it's because of fear of what our wives will say if we don't get up.

It's the same with the evil desires that we have. We tend on the whole not to be able to get rid of them from within so we try to use external compulsions from without to hold them down. So, many of us are not caught like Allan Howe [U.S. Congressman] because of fear of society. That's why we don't get caught in the red light district of Salt Lake City, because of the fear of what other people will think or what other people will say. Many of us hold down a great many of our evil desires because of fear of what other people will say or because we have been brought up to respect certain standards. It's not that we feel naturally free of these evil desires, but we have all kinds of inhibitions that we use to hold them down.

Now of course, that's why so many of us are just wild neurotics, or we're on the version of becoming a wild neurotic, or we are a kind of semi-sophisticated civilized being that has tremendous internal conflict within that we cannot get rid of. That's why loved ones, most of us do not deal with that failure inside us to have good motivations and that presence inside us of many bad motivations. Most of us don't deal with those inside at all. We simply control them or we limit them, or we discipline them by all kinds of external compulsions. Of course, that's the tremendous conflict that keeps hitting -- it just rings us dry. Many of us here, I'm sure, are run dry in one area or another because we are a battlefield of EXTERNAL compulsion trying to control and INTERNAL motivating force. It is hideous. That's why we often feel we are a "Jekyll and Hyde".

Now, God knows that and that's why when he allowed his son to die on Calvary -- though it was just a death apparently of a political criminal on this space-time continuum yet in the cosmic world of reality where time and space do not exist. The Father who made us put us into his son on Calvary and destroyed there all the selfish perverted personality that has produced these strong evil desires of ours. That's what God did. He actually did that loved ones. That's the only way to get rid of those things. Not all the drugs in the world, not all the transcendental meditation in the world and not all the power of positive thinking in the world can deal with those evil desires because they themselves are only a product of a personality that is perverted, that has determined to live on dependence on the world for its security, significance, and success. That's where all the problem comes from.

Now God put all that in Jesus and destroyed it there and recreated us anew by giving us HIS dynamic. The dynamic that makes God God. The dynamic that makes God a loving father is the Holy Spirit. That's the energizing and motive force that makes God the kind of person he is. Now loved ones, Jesus came to earth to destroy the evil desires in us once and for all and to give us this Holy Spirit. That's why he's called the HOLY Spirit. He's a spirit of holiness. He's a spirit that makes us like God. To be holy is to be like God. It's not first an ethical concept you know, strangely enough. Holiness is not first an ethical concept. It does become that in connection with society but it's first and foremost somebody like God. That's what holiness is. The Holy Spirit is a spirit of supernatural life that makes you like God from within. Of course it solves all that chaos inside and that's why Jesus came.

Now many of us here believe all that you see. Many of us here believe all that and that's the first great watershed that separates some of us from the others here this morning. Some of us really believe that -- but that's all we do, we just believe it. We are like those demons that are mentioned in James 2:19. We read it before but it might be good just to remind yourselves that this degree of belief is mentioned in scripture and yet is inadequate.

James 2:19, "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe and shudder." Now a lot of us do that. A lot of us say, "Oh, you mean God has destroyed all that is evil in me in Jesus? Great, that means he has nothing against me?" "Right!" "That means he has forgiven me?" "Right!" "Oh, good -- I'm clear!" And that's where we stay. Loved ones, hundreds of us live in that -- now, you know they do, dear ones. You know because I lived in that for years and felt I was a Christian. I believed that that's what had happened and therefore there was no reason why God should have anything against me, which is all right, and that he had forgiven me my sins, which is right. What I didn't see was that BELIEVING is not enough -- that even the demons believe all that and they shudder because they won't let it be made real in their own lives. It's not BELIEVING that enables you to become a child of God -- it is RECEIVING. It's receiving.

Would you like to look at that? It's John 1:12, and this is one of the first distinctions, loved ones, between two groups of us this morning that some of us "believe" and some of us "receive". John 1:12, "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God." "To all who received him." And that's what old Peter said in that Pentecost day. They asked him, "What will we do?" And he said in Acts 2:38, "Be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

In order to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, you have to not only believe that you were crucified with Christ but you have to actually reckon yourself dead indeed unto sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. You actually have to be willing for that to be made real in your life. Only then

are you able to receive the Holy Spirit. Now loved ones, could I just stress that just the last time because I know many of you just know it off by heart -- but loved ones, you will not be able to receive the Holy Spirit unless you are willing for the crucifixion which took place on Calvary to be made real in you.

Now dear ones, it may not be complete in you or you may still be smoking or you may still be losing your temper, but if you enter into the position where you say, "Lord God, I know that Jesus did not die instead of me. I know he died and I died with him and Lord, I'm willing for that to be made real in me. I ask you by the power of your Holy Spirit to bring me into the same death to self and death to my own will and my own way that Jesus experienced." Loved ones, God will send the spirit of his son into your heart and that's what becoming a Christian is, receiving the Spirit of Jesus into you.

Even when that dear Holy Spirit first comes in he will bring something of Jesus to you. That's what the Bible says, the Holy Spirit will take of the things of Jesus and impart them to you. [1 Corinthians 2:13] Now that's why a person who becomes a Christian experiences a real change because they receive a new energizing and motive force within them so that they find new attitudes coming up from inside them. Now, that's what that means in John 16:14 loved ones, if you'd like to look at it. John 16:14, "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." The Greek word for "declare" actually means "impart or share". So "he will take what is mine and share it with you" -- and that's what the Holy Spirit does for a person who takes that step of identification with Jesus in his death and willingness to obey the Holy Spirit.

Now then, another great watershed takes place because the Holy Spirit begins to want to spread his life in you. That's why I said to you we shouldn't be surprised if we grow out of this auditorium. I think we should be concerned if we don't outgrow it. really -- because the Holy Spirit always expands, you see. He's always moving out. You remember the way Jesus went into the highways and the byways to bring people to come into the marriage feast? Now the Holy Spirit is always doing that. He's always acting. He's always going out looking for dear sheep -- and so that's what the Holy Spirit does in you.

So he begins, you remember, the house illustration we used. He begins to try to find his way into every area of your life. Now some of us just say, "Stop there! Wait a minute! Holy Spirit, I've given you my Christian religious life, and my inner life, but I can't give you my business life, and my social life and my sex life. I can't give you everything. And I do have a life to get on with, you know. I mean, there are limits!" Many of us say that loved ones. Many of us say, "Holy Spirit, I'm willing for you to bring some truth to me but I'm not willing to give my whole life for Jesus' glory. I have a lot of other things, you know, that I have to take care of and I better get on with them myself."

So many of us say, "No" to the Holy Spirit and we come into the position, loved ones, that Paul talks about in Galatians 3:3, you remember, looking at it before probably. Many of us come into that attitude, Galatians 3:3, "Are you so foolish," he says to the Galatians, "having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?" And many of us come into that spot, you see -- the Holy Spirit begins to say to us, "Are you willing for people to criticize you and to put you down and yet to be satisfied with that?" And the flesh gets up -- the flesh is the independent personality that wants its own way -- and it says, "No, I'm not. I'm not prepared for that at all." We grieve the Holy Spirit once there.

His voice is a little fainter the next time. He says, "Will you start reading the scripture again each morning before you go out to work?" And we say, "Well, I'll try." But we don't do it. And his voice is fainter the next time and it's not long before we become just BELIEVERS. You can call us Christians if you like -- it's questionable if we are at all. We become part of that great group of church-goers who believe it all, but aren't like Jesus at all.

Now there are others of us who, when we come to this great watershed say, "Yeah, Lord I want everything. I want your death to expand through every part of my life and Holy Spirit, whether I'm a bank clerk, or whether I'm a shopkeeper, or whether I'm a businessman, or whether I'm a housewife, Holy Spirit I want to go for Jesus. That's the only one I care for, THAT'S the person I'm going to live for for the rest of my life. Holy Spirit, change me whatever way you want. Make me like Jesus." And we take that attitude and we say, "You can do whatever you want to me." The Holy Spirit expands through all our personalities -- and loved ones, he begins to change us completely and to bring in a whole new set of motivating powers within us.

They're all different kinds. In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit was talked of in terms of the oil that was poured on the prophets, and the priests and the kings when they were anointed for their office. They poured oil on them and the oil is regarded as the symbol of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament. The oil or the ointment that was put on them had certain effects and those are the effects that the Holy Spirit has miraculously for those of us who surrender completely to live for Jesus' glory. It is miraculous, really, loved ones.

Here's one of the effects in John 12:3 and some of you know these examples -- we've looked at them before. This is part of what it means when we talk about the Holy Spirit as a dynamic in your life. He brings about attitudes within you that are foreign to you and that you cannot produce yourself. John 12:3, an example of oil or ointment and the effect it has, "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." When you allow the Holy Spirit to fill you completely he fills your life with a fragrance of Jesus that is supernatural and that no one else can imitate.

It is not the "sweetie sweetness" of the pseudo Christian. It is not the "I wouldn't hurt a fly" of the one who is pretending to be a Christian. It is the strong sweet fragrance of Jesus himself. Your soul becomes a garden of spices. Your conscious becomes a delight to you and not a smell in your nostrils. You yourself become a delight in the office where you work. You become a pleasure in the church where you worship. You become a blessing in the home where you live. Loved ones, it is a supernatural fragrance that the Holy Spirit brings upon you and brings into your life. It's a beauty that no man can create and no woman can create. It's a supernatural fragrance.

I'll tell you where it comes from. It comes directly from Jesus himself. The Holy Spirit takes the fragrance of Jesus' own life and creates that fragrance miraculously in you so that no longer do you find you're constantly arguing with people in the office to try and persuade them to be Christians. No longer are you coming to church and saying, "Do I agree with that? Do I agree with that?" -- but there's a beauty and a fragrance in your life that is the most precious thing to you and everything else is a detail after that.

Oil was used in the old days to strengthen the body. Those who allow themselves to be filled with the Holy Spirit find that they have supernatural strength. Many of us are good at this, "How are ya?" "Oh, I'm doing fairly well, bearing up you know, bravely carrying the cross." -- and

everybody knows it. Everybody knows it. Our loved ones know it at home. Our friends know it. Everybody knows what brave suffering soldiers we are. Loved ones, when the Holy Spirit fills your life you're able to bear unbearable sufferings and pain with absolute joy and with effortlessness -- and in a way that isn't masochistic. You're actually even able to enjoy and glory in the things that you're suffering for Jesus' sake.

Now that's what you get when you look at old Paul. If you'd just glance in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. It's just a different kind of human being that this dear Holy Spirit creates. 2 Corinthians 12:7-10, "And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong." Now loved ones, the Holy Spirit does that. He changes the power, and strength and ability you have to endure pain and hardship.

Those of us who have been involved in athletics at all know at times they used to use oil in the old days just to make the old joints supple and flexible. Now, when the Holy Spirit comes and fills a person's life that's the kind of personality he gives them. Suddenly they're flexible and supple. Suddenly they can become all things to all men. Before you're filled with the Holy Spirit you drag yourself to pray, you drag yourself to church, you drag yourself to witness, you drag yourself to talk about God --but after being filled with the Holy Spirit you can be whatever Jesus wants you to be wherever you are.

I don't know how often you find yourself in the position where your dear wife or your dear friend needed something said to them -- not a rebuke at all, but something loving, something that was just right for them. You knew there was a dear broken bleeding heart in there and you knew you had to say something to speak to it. You know how you felt: clumsiness, awkwardness, all the difficulties and the frustrations of your own personality that you've inherited from your mums and dads, and you just couldn't bring it out.

Loved ones, how many times have we husbands and wives sat across from each other and failed to say the thing that needed to be said? But loved ones, those of us who live together in houses and rooms, those of us who live together in dorms, those of us who work with each other in the office, how often have we found that our business attitude and our business behavior prevented us suddenly opening out and being Jesus to a certain person? Loved ones, that's because that is a miraculous result of the Holy Spirit in you. The Holy Spirit fills you with that flexibility when you're at last willing to live for Jesus and for his glory alone.

There are other things that you can get just symbolically from the oil in the Old Testament. The oil in the Old Testament was made up of different ingredients. There was one ingredient that was called myrrh. It was probably the kind of thing that the men brought to Jesus when he was first born. Myrrh is used to ease the pain and take the soreness out of a bruise. Before you're filled with the Holy Spirit somebody insults you or criticizes you, or puts you down, and you cry yourself to sleep that night, or you bravely bear it but you know you have received a mortal wound. Courageously, you overcome it or, as old Plato said, "You at least blot the face out of your memory that created that pain in you." But loved ones, when the Holy Spirit fills you with himself he takes all the soreness out of those bruises and you can walk through the days in the office, and

people can say all kinds of things and can criticize you, and put you down, and can talk behind your back, and there's a peace and a freedom from resentment.

Loved ones, it's true. Don't sit there and say, "Ah brother, you mean you overcome resentment?" No, there is no resentment - really, really. Now don't tone it down. Don't dilute it. There is no resentment. The Holy Spirit takes away the soreness of the bruise. In fact, really in a way, you feel like pitying them because you know you've been crucified in Christ and they aren't doing it to you they're doing it to that old dead person that used to be and you feel like saying, "Look, don't kick that old dead horse you'll hurt your foot!"

It just brings loved ones a miraculous detachment from yourself. You see, it's ourselves we're bound up with. We're always protecting our miserable selves. We're always defending our miserable selves because we think that's it, that's it. Loved ones, it isn't. That old self was destroyed as it needed to be thousands of years ago on Calvary but you cannot make that real by manipulation of your thoughts. You can only allow the Holy Spirit to make it real miraculously in you. He takes the soreness out of all the bruises.

Another of the ingredients was calamus. Calamus was used to counteract the acids and take the sourness out of the stomach. I don't know, but before the Holy Spirit fills you you're always kind of looking out, "Yeah well Billy Graham, yeah he's okay there, but he's wrong there. Yeah, and my friend that neighbor, well she's okay on that but she's wrong on that. And this other person yeah, they're quite nice but they're a wee bit critical, aren't they?" You're always seeing the little things that are wrong in others. You see these apparent saints walking by seeing no harm in anybody, and for a while, we argue they're dumb. They just can't see what's really in front of their eyes.

But loved ones, when the Holy Spirit fills you with himself he takes the sourness out of your stomach, removes all the acid and you never have met a sourpuss. He never allows you to see the sourpuss in others. He enables you always to see the Jesus in other people -- now that's true, loved ones. Don't say, "Ah Pastor, you mean you see the wrong thing but the Holy Spirit enables you not to notice it?" No, no. The Holy Spirit gives you clean eyes, gives you a pure heart, gives you a stomach that is clear of any acidity or sourness and enables you to meet other people for the beautiful people that they are in Jesus. Loved ones, that's a miracle.

I don't know about you but I tried psychology and auto suggestion for a long time trying to control the old mind because I believed these were the right things to do. Most of us do, don't we? We all agree that's the right way to live. For a long time I tried to do it myself, but you can't. It's a result of the Holy Spirit. That's part of what it means when we say the Holy Spirit is a "dynamic", he's a motivating and energizing power that changes you completely and enables you to be different inside.

Another one is cinnamon. Cinnamon was a spice that was used to stimulate and to motivate and to produce effortless activity. That's what the Holy Spirit does. When you sit worn out and weary and tired or utterly made passive by depression and you just can't get this heavy body up to do anything, loved ones, that's the way life is until the fullness of the Holy Spirit brings that stimulating effortless activity that makes nothing a problem or a trouble. You know how different it is to have a person who is always willing to do anything that you ask the them to do. It's entirely different, isn't it? In fact, you also know some people that if they have to do something outside their ordinary job they haven't time, "Everything's on top of me". They're always complaining.

Everything is always down on them. They can never do anything but just manage through to the end of the day and creep into bed and fall asleep.

Loved ones, that's the way we are without this dear Holy Spirit who produces an effortless strength in you and enables you to always have energy for whatever God allows you to be asked to do -- of course, that's the secret. What we fail to realize is that if we're asked to do something it is because God has allowed it to be asked us. What we normally do is we try to judge for ourselves. So it's the whole difference between lumpish, awkward, heavy, people and people who are light and effortless as a feather. The Holy Spirit brings that, loved ones, and you can trust him for that.

That's why we talk about the Holy Spirit as a dynamic. You remember when Jesus said, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." The Greek word is "dunamis" and the "u" changes to a "y" in English and becomes "dynamite". That's what "dunamis" is. That's what the power of the Holy Spirit is -- it's a dynamite that produces a new life in you that is utterly and absolutely different. Now loved ones, that's what God does -- he gives you that Holy Spirit and fills you with that Holy Spirit as long as you will continue to regard the Holy Spirit as your Lord and master and obey him moment-by-moment and day-by-day. The truth in Acts 5:32 is true, God gives the Holy Spirit "to those who obey" -- and that's it -- not to those who are trying to obey, but those who say, "Holy Spirit, I'm going to obey you whatever the cost, even if it means Calvary. I thank you that it has meant Calvary for me." That's it loved ones -- it's a supernatural life.

Somebody said a couple of weeks ago, "Ah, another sermon on the Holy Spirit?" But actually, you could go on for five or six weeks and I hope to go on for the next 40 years -- no 80 years. I'm going for 120 -- because he is the precious gift, loved ones, that our Creator has prepared for us. Oh I pray that you'll see it that way and you'll see that why God has given us supernatural standards is because he has given us a supernatural power to reach those standards. That's God's plan and so let us never lower the standards, but let us never take our eyes off this precious gift.

What do you need to do to receive him? Acts 5:32, "God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey." All you need to do is bow your head in a moment and say, "Lord, I need that kind of life and I am willing to do whatever you, Holy Spirit, tell me to do if you'll bring me into God's will for my life." That's it. The Holy Spirit then will give you some direction, even this afternoon. Loved ones, watch out because it will probably be so utterly contradictory to your normal way of life that you'll have a tendency to say, "No, no, I won't do it!" But do it, do it. If you say to me, "What if it's not the Holy Spirit?" The Holy Spirit will check you before you get too far out on a limb. If you read the Bible every day and you continue to fellowship with other loved ones in Jesus you won't get away out after some evil spirit. You can afford to trust that dear voice. So really, that's the secret loved ones. Anybody here could begin that kind of life this very moment -- really.

Shall we pray?

Holy Spirit, we do believe that you're real because you have created the church, and with the church the first hospitals, and the first schools, and all the civilization that has come to this dear old broken world. Holy Spirit, most of all, you have created this Bible and made the life of Jesus possible and we have seen you reproduce that life in others here. Holy Spirit, we would ask you to come in and change our lives. Holy Spirit, all of us here may not know all the details but will you tell us them -- will you show us? We may not know everything that's involved in being crucified with Christ, but Holy Spirit, we ask, will you show us what that means in our lives? Holy Spirit,

if this is our Creator's plan for us, that we will be filled with you and be governed by you as the dynamic in our lives, then that's what we want. So we commit ourselves to obeying you as our Lord and Master in the same way that the disciples obeyed Jesus. Holy Spirit, we tell you we're going to put our faith in you and we're going to expect to hear you either verbally through someone else, or through the reading that we'll do, or Holy Spirit, through an attitude inside us, or an impression, or desire within us that makes us feel that we should do something this afternoon. Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to obeying that, whatever it is, and we trust you to grow in us as we obey you more and more -- and as we surrender more and more, Holy Spirit, will you fill us more and more until we're a replica of Jesus Christ and we're a delight to our friends, and to our relatives, and to our colleagues? We ask this for your glory, amen.