

The New Creation and the Holy Spirit

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Let's turn to Colossians 2. I think God has given me something to say about the new creation and the Holy Spirit, the new creation and the Holy Spirit. The lesson is Colossians 2:1-15, "For I want you to know how greatly I strive for you, and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not seen my face, that their hearts may be encouraged as they are knit together in love, to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

I say this in order that no one may delude you with beguiling speech. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ. As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ; and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him."

Well we've often said to each other and you might even say ad nauseam you know, we've said it so often but it's good to remember that each one of us were brought up to believe that our first appearance was when you Amy came from your mother's womb, or me, or Colleen, when we came from our mother's womb. We have been taught that's the first time we ever existed. That was our appearance on earth and that we never existed before that.

And of course even from the point of view of modern science we know that we did exist before that. We existed in our mother's genes, in our father's genes, we existed in our grandfather's genes, our grandmother's genes, we existed in our great grandfather, and we existed in fact, in a strange way we existed in Adam from the very beginning of the world. We were in some way in that first man and even modern science says if we could just refine our techniques a little bit more we could show that you were there present in the gene of that first man or that first woman.

And of course we know from what God has said through Jesus and through his followers that we existed even before that, that we were life in Jesus, that before we were even born we were part of Jesus' life, we were life in him. You remember there's that verse in John that says, "Everything that has been made was life in him." So everything that's been made, I think it is about John 1:3, everything that exists was originally part of Jesus, it found its life in him. In other words, everything that exists now has come from his life and the very thing that keeps us alive is his life. We were all in him before we ever appeared here.

And we have all often said that God not only saw us at that time in his son but he himself saw what we would do and he was not caught by surprise when we rejected him on earth. Often you know we have the idea, "Oh yeah, God was kind of idealistic he made us and he made us to trust him and obey him and he put us in the Garden of Eden and suddenly he sees we're not obeying him and he's caught by surprise. And so he has to mount some kind of emergency rescue operation and then he thinks, 'Oh, I have to have my son die.'" Well of course it didn't happen that way at all.

God foresaw all of it happen and that's why you remember, in the Bible, I think its Revelation 13:8 God says, "The lamb was slain from before the foundation of the world." So God foresaw from before he created us in the world. He saw what we would do, he saw what we would develop and what we would become, he saw our old natures that we would grow within us and he saw that all that had to be started all over again. And yet he saw that if he was to be real he had to bear the consequences of the freedom he had given us and so he saw that he had to start the whole human race all over again but first he had to bear the pain of destroying the old human race.

And so he put the whole old human race into his son Jesus and he slayed it there from before the foundation of the world and then he started a new race. And of course you know what we have shared so often what he has done with us is he has allowed us to develop the way he saw we would originally develop. Even though he has already destroyed us all in his son Jesus he allowed us to develop the way we would have done before he destroyed us in Christ so that we could see this is the life you would choose to live yourself. This is what it is, I want you to see it plainly, I want you to have a real choice. I want you to see what you would have been like without my destroying you in Jesus and creating you all anew, and fresh, and clean. I want you to see what you would be like and then I want you to see what you are now in Christ but you must choose which you're going to be.

And so we are of course born into this fallen world and we live that old life. And what God is now saying to us is; "Now that's what your life would be like without me. Now I have actually destroyed you in my son Jesus and I've made you new creations and now you can choose that if you wish. Now choose." And that is the choice that we have before us in this present life and that's the meaning of those words that we read. And I'd just remind you of them because people don't often talk about these things and it's important for us to see that it's built right into scripture in so many places.

And there it is in Colossians 2:11, "In him," that is in Jesus, "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ." And what God is saying is – I think you know what circumcision is where they cut the foreskin of the little baby boy when they're young, circumcised, and they cut the skin away. And what it means is of course is not just cutting the skin away as they do with Jewish babies but it means cutting the flesh away, cutting the old self away. That's what circumcision means spiritually. It means the old self; the old nature is cut away and cut off us.

And what God is saying there is when Jesus was circumcised as a little baby boy, as a little Jewish boy, the old nature was cut away from us also. That's what it means, "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands." That is there's one that was made with hands where presumably the Rabbi cut the little skin of the baby boy but there is, "A circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ." And of course what God is saying is, "Your old nature is something that I have already destroyed in my son Jesus. It's already been destroyed, that has already been done."

And in Verse 12, “And you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.” And so God is saying again, “You were buried with my son Jesus. Your old nature, all that you once were was buried with my son Christ. That’s been done. It’s been done, believe me. And you’ve been raised up with my son Jesus and you’ve now risen up.” And that’s what he says in that Verse 12, “And you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. And you, who were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh.” You were dead in your sins and in the old nature, the uncircumcision, the old nature that was not destroyed, you who were dead because of your sins and because of your old nature, “God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, having canceled the bond which stood against us with its legal demands; this he set aside, nailing it to the cross.”

And God is saying, “This happened to you. This has happened. This is already done. This has all been achieved. You have been crucified with my son; you’ve had the old nature destroyed. That’s the situation. Now I’m allowing you to live now as if that were not true so that you can see what it would be like but really the truth in reality is that this has been done.” And this he says again in Colossians 3 you remember, the next chapter, he says in Verse 3, “For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” The first need for us to become a new creation is that we really believe that, that our life is hid with Christ in God. That’s it.

First of all we have to believe that and be prepared to live like that. And it seems to me that’s the great need that we each have, to be truthful and honest and to accept that what God says is true, that we have died and our life is hid with Christ in God. And it just seems to me so obvious that this affects every part of our life. And if our life is hid with Christ in God then it means it’s hid, it’s something that does not exist here on the earth anymore. Our personality, our reputation, our rights, our needs even, our position in society, that has all been done away with and is hid with Christ in God.

So that I know it sounds strange but in a store or here at home, I speak to myself too as to each of you, here at home or in the office when someone ignores us and treats us as nothing if we live in reality, if we believe that we have died and our life is hid with Christ in God then we will not be troubled at all. We will not be troubled at all. If somebody in the factory, some little girl or some little guy, treats you as if you weren’t there we will not be hurt inside at all because we know that our life is hid with Christ in God that we have no rights, that we have no right to their respect, that they have every right to trample over us because God saw that the only thing he could do with us, we were so evil, was to destroy us and we no longer exist. And the only one that exists is Christ in this body. And so all our actions and our attitudes will be governed by that conviction that we have died and our life is hid with Christ in God.

See there’s something in us that rises up and says, “Oh, but if I do that they’ll walk over me in the factory. If I do that the leadership will not have authority. If I do that the store owner will not respect me.” But all that comes from the old nature’s way of depending on itself to ensure that people do the right thing. But what Christ did when he died on the cross was he gave up his rights to call the angels down. He gave up his rights to strike everybody dead around the cross. He gave all his rights over to his Father and said, “Father, if you choose to defend your own honor and if you choose to defend what is right then you must do it. I leave it in your hands. I will not do it even if it hurts and destroys me Lord, it is your honor, it is your right, you must defend it.”

And we have to decide inside in our hearts have we died and is our life hid with Christ in God, and is it there for nothing in this world, or is it something. If we decide that it is something, that it is still in this world, there comes down upon us a whole set of burdens and responsibilities that will preoccupy us in this life. It will burden our spirits, it will weigh us down, we will be concerned with all kinds of things, this person's attitude to me, that person's attitude to me, how I'm managing to do this in my job, how I'm bringing this about, whether I'm defending the right and the truth or whether I'm – there'll be a thousand things. Instead of living the life of simple little children, and I'd just remind you of what our life was like as five year olds, as little five year olds, what did we do? "Daddy, John did this to me."

If you say sometimes we thumped John maybe we did but most of the time if our right was threatened or our existence was threatened we went, "Daddy, he's doing this to me." We depended on our dad to defend us. We depended on him. Our life was very simple as little children, very simple. We just enjoyed our father and our mother, we just enjoyed living, we weren't burdened with all kinds of responsibilities to ensure that this person did this, or this person treated me right, or I got this done, it was just a simple life. The first step in being a new creation is believing and living in the reality that we have died and our life is hid with Christ in God. And regarding ourselves as no longer in existence and no longer having rights that we have to defend, or a way that we have to endure.

When you think of it most of the strains and arguments that come about come about because, "Well, I feel my way is the right way and I have to get it done." And there is an iron in our soul about it and that's what causes an argument, that's what changes a discussion into an argument. A discussion is good where each one is putting forward, "Well, there's this, there's this yes, and there's that, and there's that." But it becomes an argument when there comes into our heart some kind of iron and we feel, "Yes, but this way is the right way," and we have to ensure that it's done.

But when we accept that we have died and our life is hid with Christ in God we do not exist, we have no right to our way. Our way is not the right way at all and our way does not even exist. We are dead and we are hid with Christ with God. Our life is hid, it's hid and that's it, that's the first step. Do you and I accept, do we really believe, are we willing to live as people whose life is hid, hid?

Now you know, pencil hid, I'm sorry you can't see it on the camera, the pencil and then you hide the pencil it can no longer be seen. It's no longer to be seen. You look out and you don't see a pencil. You look out and you don't see Amy, you don't see Colleen, you don't see Dan, you don't see Myron, you don't see Ernest, there's nothing to be seen. That's what it means to be hid.

The second step that I saw is we can talk about this together here in this room and I can use all kinds of little illustrations you know, the best I can to explain it. And you might even sit there and you might see, "Yes, I see it." And it might come to you light and revelation even at this moment, supernatural revelation you might say, "Yeah, I see that, I grasp that." You cannot make that real in your life. I can't. Even though you sit there now and you say, "Yes, I see that. I see that I am a new creation that my old life is done away with and there's a new creation created in my place." You cannot bring that about in your own life.

Only the Holy Spirit can bring that about. Only the Holy Spirit can actually create the new creation here on earth. Only the Holy Spirit can make the change real in you. We're absolutely

dependent. If our hearts do not go out after him spontaneously we fall back into self because we try to bring this about by the effort of self. And you know what we do, we try to bring it about by our mind, we think about it, "Oh yes, I want to think this afternoon about my life is hid with Christ in God now what does that mean? Yes, it means that and that. Yes, I must, I must act that way. I must no longer get mad when people overlook me, or when people ignore me. I mustn't get mad, I mustn't get irritated." And we try to bring this about by our own minds and our own wills and we fall back into the only thing that exists, self.

And we fall back into self and we live instead of the life hid with Christ in God, we live in this life standing on its own independent of God. The only way this can be brought about is by the Holy Spirit doing it and he will do it if we begin to honor him as the only one who really exists inside here. No longer looking at ourselves, but looking at him, looking to him, and obeying what he says, and doing what he prompts. And I can see it dreadfully in my life that if you grieve the Holy Spirit by not obeying him, or not listening to him, if you grieve him and I was explaining to Amy, she said, "What do you mean grieve?" Make him sorry, you know, if you make him sorry, if you cause him sorrow, if you hurt him and offend him by ignoring him or by treating him lightly, or by saying, "Yes, I will do that, tomorrow," or, "I will do that in a few minutes." If in other words we take his command or his direction and we change it a little, or we say to ourselves, "Well, he's just giving us warning we can set our own time to do this. We can determine when we obey him." If we manipulate or we pervert his direction then we grieve him and he has to withdraw from us. And as he withdraws strain and stress return and peace disappears and flies away.

So the only way the new creation that we have been made in Jesus, the only way that that will actually become real in us is if we look to the Holy Spirit and look to him alone. That is taught so clearly by Jesus in that chapter that we all know. Its John 16:14, he is speaking of the Holy Spirit. "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." The Greek word means imparted or sharing. "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine" that is the whole new creation that I have become and that you have become in me, "He will take what is mine" and he will share it with you. He will impart it to you. "All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you" or share it to you or impart it to you or make it real.

So Jesus took special care you remember in these two paragraphs here to talk about the Holy Spirit. In verse 7 he says, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you." And then he will take what is mine and make it real in you. So the Savior knew that the only way that creation would become real in us is if we honestly looked to the Holy Spirit and began to treat him the way the disciples treated Jesus. That's the only way the new creation will become real in us.

But I was saying to Amy the other day, she was talking about the simplicity and the joy and delight that we had as children, things were so light and easy and so few burdens, and I was saying that's what Jesus means when he says become as little children. It's his will for us to live in peace like that in this present life, in this adult life. It's his will that we would live as joyful delighted liberated children with no wrinkled brows, no worries and no strain or stress in our lives. And all the strain and the stress and the worry and the anxiety comes from the old self comes from the old nature and that has all been crucified with Christ. We bear a thousand, as Shakespeare says, "a thousand natural shocks that flesh is err to." We bear a thousand pressures and strains and stresses that are all connected with the old creation. And that old creation has been destroyed in Jesus.

Part of why God allows those strains and stresses to be felt by us is so that we'll know this is not truth, this is not reality. This is not what I have for you, this is wrong this is the old creation that I destroyed. Part of what you're experiencing is the darkness that that old creation feels now that has been condemned to hell. And what you're sensing is that condemnation. Now that has all been destroyed. Now accept that. Live like that. Now look to my Holy Spirit who will beget in you a new creation. Of course it ties up with what we've talked about this morning.

There is a whole life of achievement that God has for each of our new creations. God has a thousand things to do through us that he knows are possible for the new creation he has made. That's why he said "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which he has prepared for us before that we should walk in them." God has all kinds of things that he has planned to achieve through us, works that we are to walk in and that's the beauty of it. He doesn't say created in Christ Jesus for works that God has prepared for you to do, works that you have to achieve, works that you to bring about by your own effort. No, he puts it beautifully. He doesn't even say works that you have to run in. He doesn't say works that you have to jump in or works that you have to leap in. Just works that you have to walk in. He created you for good works that God has prepared beforehand for us to walk in.

So he has prepared a way of achievement for us to walk in, in the Holy Spirit. So there are many things not that we can not do though we can not do. Not so much works that we can not do at this moment but works that God is not able to do through us because we're living in weights and the burdens of the old creation. The Holy Spirit if we begin to honor him will begin to make our life light and free. And we'll be able to live a moment at a time and a day at a time in lightness and joy and delight.

There are so many human examples that would reinforce this to you but I just mention to you how much of your mind and my mind is given to this present moment, the psychologists say twenty to thirty percent. The psychologists say most people spend anywhere from seventy to even eighty or ninety percent of their minds thinking about tomorrow or worrying about the past. They spend very little of their abilities on the present moment but that's only a human explanation of how so much of our life is actually unused. And so much of it is burdened either with the future or the past but the fact is the Holy Spirit is able not only to use the whole 100 percent but he is able to bring about a new creation that the world has never seen.

It seems to me that's the greatest promise that God gives us. There is a new creation that the world has never seen and that God has created in you and the Holy Spirit is able to begin to make this real in this world. And unless that happens the world will never experience the full touch of Christ and you and I will die in some sense disappointments to our Father. So it is very important it seems to me that we come to an honest place where we are willing to live like people whose life is hid with Christ in God. And in order for that to be made real we begin to depend on the Holy Spirit, to honor him, to listen to him, to love him, and to yearn for him and to want him. And he brings a sweetness and a fragrance and a graciousness into our lives that enables us to wait for God's time and wait for His will. Let us pray.

Dear Father we ask you to kindly make this all real to each of us this very day. So that we will live not one more day in our old selves, not one more day in prison, not one more day fettered and chained to our past or restricted by our futures. But that from this day forth live gloriously free lives, freed from our very names, free from our self esteem, free from our self consciousness,

utterly preoccupied with you Lord Jesus and the new creation that you are bringing about in us as we look to you dear Holy Spirit who alone has been appointed by God to bring about the new creation in us here in this world.

Dear Father we look to you now and Holy Spirit we would listen to you and wait upon you and allow you to lead us out of prison, to lead us out of the desert and to lead us into the fragrance of the roses and flowers and the peace of Christ. We ask that your grace Lord Jesus to be with us and your love dear Father and your fellowship Holy Spirit be with us throughout this day and forevermore.

Amen