

Exhortation to a Deeper Life of Prayer

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I really think Jesus is telling me to just lead us in a few thoughts and then into prayer. Next Sunday I'll speak on the spiritual man. Will you look at Ephesians 6:18? That is the verse I felt I should share on and then we should worship the Father. Ephesians 6:18, "Pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication." That's the reason Jesus, who was closer to God than anyone else, got up a great while before day and went into the mountain and prayed. And he would often pray all night. That's because the only way you can touch God is by praying to him yourself.

I just want to share briefly tonight that it's very easy for everything to go dead on you if you personally do not have a daily time of prayer. That sounds a bit like some mystical stuff but that's the source of all deadness in your life. Either that or known disobedience. If you don't have a set time of prayer then this teaching that goes out to you on Sunday evening is just poison to you. I'm going to stop right there. If I were to ask you to stand up this moment and say honestly when you pray and how long you pray, how would you answer?

And I don't mean your best resolutions, or your most ideal plan that you'd like to fulfill. I don't mean this kind of answer, "Well, I'm planning to spend an hour each morning in prayer and I've been planning that for five years now." Do you see that all the teaching, all the spiritual teaching in the world is just poison and death to you unless you're touching God yourself? And eventually of course the whole body becomes moribund. The whole body becomes poisoned with death if it has a great many people who are seeking knowledge, knowledge, and who think they can get into the baptism of the spirit by understanding it better. Do you see that you can receive the baptism of the spirit without understanding anything, but just by wanting Jesus and hungering for him?

You don't need to know all the things in these diagrams. If you just hunger for Jesus and want him above everything else, enough to get up at five o'clock, or four o'clock, or six o'clock, or whatever time will give you that quiet twilight zone along with God. I mean, that's what you need. If the house wakens up at 6:30 you need to get up at six. If the house wakens up at seven, you can afford to get up at 6:30. If the house wakens up at six, you've to get up at 5:30. You have to get that time when there's quietness and when you and God can be alone, leisurely alone not pushing or rushing.

God will not yield to your deadline loved ones. Those rushed prayers may as well not be said. Those prayers where you get down and give it a 15 minute burst are no use. God does not yield his secrets to those who demand that he fits into their schedule. He yields his secrets to a man or woman who is prepared to be sufficiently disciplined to set their alarm for a certain time in the morning and get up at that time. In order to do that you need to go to bed sufficiently early the night before. Don't you see it yourself? If you were in love with a girl and you didn't have enough discipline to arrange your schedule so that you could meet her at the time you said each night, then the girl would justifiably doubt if you really loved her.

Now God is just a dear, plain, straight thinking person. He judges your love and mine by our plain keeping of a promise to meet him each morning. Now if you say to me, "Well is it alright in the evening?" Yes, except that many of us have found when we've pushed it to 10:30, or 10:45, or 11 o'clock at night we're worn out and we're not giving God our best time. If I asked you how many of you are baptized with the Holy Spirit I know a lot of you would say, "I don't know." And a lot of

you would say, "No." And some of you would say, "Yes, I am."

Now let me push you a little on it. Don't you see that it's a shame that that should be the kind of answer you give because you know that we preach about the Holy Spirit? We've preached now for three years. We've had seminars on it and we've read books on it. Loved ones, the truth is there's only one who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and that's Jesus. And he'll do it when you're prepared to give him enough time for him to get to the bottom of your heart. But you know there are half a dozen things in the back of your mind that you intend to surrender. There are a half a dozen things of obedience that you intend to enter into but you're always intending. And all the intentions bring nothing from the Father and you cannot bring Christ down. You can only allow Christ to baptize you with his Holy Spirit and raise you up into himself.

But how many of us are still struggling with bad temper, anger, and envy? And we're still saying, "I know pastor shares that you can be free. I'm getting free and I will become free sometime." Or we keep on arguing, "Yes, some people get baptized with the Holy Spirit but they aren't free of those." Loved ones, God has shared a lot of light with us over the evenings and the mornings. Now is he not able to give us the life to walk in that light? Of course he is.

I honestly think that what is most needed in our body in these days is more of us seeking God privately in prayer so that we would come to the service this evening prayed up and praising God. Then it seems to me that you would expect healings to take place as we worship the Father. In the past when Jesus has prompted me to speak like this it has been for a purpose and it's hard to get me off my scheduled preparation because I was trying to stick with what I prepared. So it's usually because Jesus is very anxious for some of us to come into line on some of these issues.

So I push you again, is it getting a bit dry for you? Is it getting a bit cold and a bit dead for you? Well, it's because you're not seeking Jesus and you're not seeking his mind. You're seeking him too much for what you want from him. Maybe you do want a victorious life, maybe you do want power. Jesus wants you to seek him for himself, to seek his mind. Loved ones, you've only to look at the chaos in our own society let alone in the world to see that there's tremendous need for a small body of people who would know the mind of God.

Not people who would know what God's mind was for Moses, or people who would know what God's mind was for Paul or Peter. But, people who know the mind of God tonight for their life. How many of you wonder about what you're going to do? Every time there's vagueness or doubt in the guidance of God's people, it's because God's people are not looking directly into God's face because God said, "I will guide you with my eye." So Hank is looking at me and when I look over he looks over because he sees my eye moving. And God says, "I'll guide you with my eye." That means you have to have your eyes on God's face. You have to be looking at him in prayer.

When we bow our heads you have to lay aside even the request that the brothers and sisters make for intercessory prayers and you have to get hold of God. And there's no way to get hold of God but to hunger for God with all your heart. And if you say to me, "Is there some easy way that you know of?" There is none. In the darkness you cry out to the Father and you cling to him, you hunger for him, and you picture him there looking down upon you. You see Jesus at his right hand and you reach out to them with your whole spirit, mind, and emotions. You forget all the lectures on the difference between soul and spirit and you go for God with all your being.

Loved ones, that's the only way I know how to get through to God. It means you have to be

desperately anxious to get through to God. It means if you're satisfied with stones then you will not go for bread. If you're satisfied with the crumbs that fall off the tables from other people's revelation you will not go for the master who sits at the head of the table and breaks you his own personal body and gives it to you.

Unless you get through to God personally it's always going to be what the psychologists call a second hand experience. You're going to listen to someone up here and you're going to say, "Yes, I feel something like that." You'll try to stretch the imagination and exaggerate and make excuses for the difference between your personality compared with his and you'll try somehow to believe yourself into thinking, "Yes, that's what I've experienced." But there'll always be a great doubt at the bottom of your heart.

Loved ones, the only way to get rid of it is to get hold of God yourself in private prayer. So I'd just push you on it. What is your daily prayer schedule like? Now you who say you're seeking God with all your heart, you who feel that you're a little deeper, a little more serious than most church goers or most Christians, you who even think that God has called you to full-time service, or has called you to go out with some missionary organization of some kind, how long do you spend with your Lord who gave his life for you each day? How long do you spend with the one to whom you're looking forward to spending eternity with?

You're looking forward to spending eternity with this dear person. Now, how long are you with him each day? I honestly think that discovery in our own lives of Jesus face-to-face in our private prayers would begin to move towards revival. I think that if we just repented on that area alone that would be a bit move forward. And everything else stems from that. When you break before God as far as honesty about your own prayer life is concerned, then the Holy Spirit is able to breakthrough that hard crust of ice and get down to all the other things that are wrong.

It might be good now if we would seek the Lord. It's just an old fashioned saying that I'm not very fond of but it seems to express what you're to do. Seek God, get hold of God, look to God, and look at God tonight in this time of quietness. Pray if the Holy Spirit guides you to. Confess if he guides you too. But don't let's be concerned with a good prayer meeting, or a good prayer time. Don't let's be concerned with a good praise time. Don't be burdened with making it good. Kneel if you want to on that hard stone floor.