

The Holy Spirit Brings Rest When We Obey

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

A real problem with this stuff there's a real problem with this that you'll see immediately and yet the answer to it is the key to everything, to everything that we do together, everything in our lives. But, there is a problem with those verses. If you look at Colossians 1, you've seen it yourself I'm sure but just have thought, "Oh well, I'm not seeing it the way pastor thinks I should." Colossians 1:15, "He is the image," that is Jesus, "Of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation." It's right there.

If I were Marty Overby I'd say, "We've got a time warp problem here." And that's right, that's what it is. In America now we never have difficulties with communications, we have communication problems. But there's a time warp problem. If Jesus is the first-born of all creation then you and I know Jesus as the person who was born say 4 BC 6BC. And if he's the first-born of all creation there's a time warp problem there because he was apparently born in say 4BC. But I mean, Abraham lived 2000 or 4000 whenever. So there were lots and lots of people, China existed long before 4 BC so how can Jesus be the first-born of all creation?

And then of course, we have the problem that we saw before in Ephesians 2:10 which really just intensifies the whole difficulty. Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." And it's just an intensifying of the time warp problem because we're saying Jesus who was apparently born in 4 BC actually was the first-born of all creation so he existed long before the first man ever did and then the Bible says that we here were created in Christ Jesus. Whereas of course, we all feel we were created when we were born in such and such a hospital in Minneapolis, or Belfast, or Ireland, or China.

So, there is a real difficulty. I mean, it's all kind of mixed up and you recognize that at the time and of course, I have tried to explain what the inner meaning of it is, that obviously the only way to interpret these verses is that God first begot his son Jesus. He is his only begotten son and way in eternity which is not endless time but is timelessness. In the timeless space less world that God is in he begot his son Jesus and he wanted his son. He loved his son, and he loved what his son was, and he wanted his son to be seen in all his wonder and glory but he saw that his son could only be seen that way if there were many, many beings who were part of his son so that his son would be the first-born among many brethren and all these other beings would show forth all the wonder of Jesus.

Would show forth his humor and his style, would show his love in this way, his kindness in this way, his gentleness in this way, so that Jesus in all his wonder and beauty would be seen and so that the Father himself would have the delight and joy of his son and of many sons. And of course, he saw daughters like his son Jesus. And so he there and then created all of us in Jesus and you remember, how we said that occurred in a millisecond because God conceives, creates, foresees, and solves, and redeems all in one millisecond. With his great mind he doesn't have to work as we work. And then he had to set forth all of that but he realized if these little beings of his son were to be in his son they had to share his son completely and share his son's free will. And he knew his son loved him because he wanted to.

So he had to give all these little beings freedom and he knew that if he did that then they had to

have freedom inside his son and so his dear son had to – and you remember, I tried to give the example of a baby kicking inside a mother, his son Jesus would have to bear all their kicking. And yet, if they were to continue to have any chance of fulfilling God's own desire for them to be his children his son had to hold them within himself whatever it meant whatever it meant. However much pain occurred in him, however much crucifixion occurred inside, this son had to bear that for the sake of the vision that his Father had and for the love that he had for his own body because no man hates his own body, you remember, but sacrifices for it. And so Jesus gave up himself for the church, his body and he bore all that pain.

So, through all the centuries Jesus bears that and holds us within himself so that even a Hitler is within Jesus and Jesus bears that right up as Hitler kills the 45th thousand Jew Jesus bears that inside himself and bears the pain and the agony of that right up until the end until there comes a time when Adolf Hitler dies, make his decision and the Bible says after that comes the judgment. Then comes death and after that the judgment. But until that time these are saving days and Jesus has come not to condemn the world but to save it and he bears all of us in himself.

And then of course we said, then the explanation of it is then God had to actualize all of that so that all of these little beings could be part of it so that it would not be just a little mental play act that he has in his mind but it had to be played out and of course he created time and space and gave time for all of us to be born, and all of our sons and daughters to born, and to play the whole thing out that actually had occurred in a millisecond in his mind and heart. And so that we say is the only explanation of these incredible verses that you have in Colossians and in Ephesians.

Then of course, it's highlighted in that Ephesians 2:4 I believe it is where it just makes fun of the whole concept of time and sequence. Ephesians 2:4, "But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." So of course, what that means is that even when we rebelled against God and did everything to destroy Jesus and were dead in our sins, and dead to God, even at that time which presumably was before the foundation of the world because the lamb was slain from before the foundation of the world because God foresaw that all this would happen, even then God when we were dead through our trespasses made us alive and raised us up and made us sit with him in the heavenly places.

And so of course, it just baffles you. How, I mean God foresaw this and he foresaw that but he didn't make it happen but it happened centuries ago. How? Then comes the great burden for us, "Well, I love you pastor, I respect you, but how do you make all that real in your own life? I mean, my mind is not able to conceive all that and maybe your mind is, and maybe some other minds are but I'm juggling these things and have I to walk down the street thinking, 'Okay I was crucified with Christ. No. I was created in Christ Jesus for good works. But I'm here, but I was there, but I...'" It just becomes a bear.

Moreover, if you do it like that you become more and more the center of everything. You're trying all the time to make this all real in you and so in the midst of a situation where we're saying you don't really exist on your own you're just a part of Jesus and Jesus is everything somehow instead of all your attention being upon Jesus it's really on yourself trying to realize all this and trying to make all this real and so you get involved in introspection but introspection is a small part of it, you get involved in the power of positive thinking, auto suggestion, trying to make this real,

trying to grasp it all and carry it all. And of course, when you see God's children have entered into this they are not walking as if they have a whole lot juggling on their head that they have to kind of keep from falling off. They're walking with a light, and I still think we should hold onto the word, a gay spirit and a joyful spirit and they don't seem to be heavy at all with all these things.

Because, there is no way, there's no way in which you and I – this is the earth caught in the midst of time, there's no way in which we ourselves can either leap up there or bring this down. No way. I mean, we are caught in time and what we're talking about is eternity and there's no way with all our manipulation of our mind and our thoughts, there's no way in which we can bring that down. And if you live trying to you'll just end up in a miserable subjective personal experience where you're preoccupied with your own struggles and Jesus explained that clearly to us. John 16:7, "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 when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. 'I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.'" And the Greek means impart to you, "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and impart it to you."

Only we are utterly and absolutely dependent on the Holy Spirit making these things real in our life. We cannot do it ourselves. We can't. The Holy Spirit's express task, he was appointed for this, was to take of these things that happened to us in Jesus in eternity and make them real in us here on earth. That's his task. His task is to glorify Jesus. Glorify doesn't mean, "Oh you're wonderful Jesus. You're wonderful, you're great, you're great, pat you on the back." Glorify means let Jesus be seen as he is. Let his glory be seen by all people. Let him be seen as he is. The Holy Spirit's task is to let Jesus be seen as he is by taking what he achieved for us and in us and imparting it to us so that people see Jesus in us and they glorify him. But only the Holy Spirit can do it.

And I know fine well that some of you are sitting there the way I sat and said, "Oh yeah, yeah, yeah that's the Holy Spirit. Yeah, that's right. Well, we need his help." We don't need his help we – he is the only one who can do anything. He doesn't even need our help but far from needing his help, we cannot do anything. This is a supernatural business you can't – I mean, if you jump really high, I don't know what the high jump record is but certainly we can't jump more than seven feet anyway, so if you can even work up to jump seven feet sometime that's as high as you can get off the ground, that's a fair bit short of getting to there. There's no way in which Jesus of whom we are a part can live and express himself in us unless by the action of the Holy Spirit.

You can want Jesus to be real in you. You can want Jesus to have his free way in you. You can want with all – well, you know this, you can want with all your heart Jesus to be himself in you. You could say, "The good that I would I cannot do. I want to do it. I want to do the good. I want him to be real in me." But you can't make him real because you're in time and you're trying to bring timelessness into yourself. You're caught in a time warp here. You're a little human speck and the great Jesus is to come down to you. You can't – there's a bit in the Bible, you can't bring him down. You can't bring Jesus down to you. You're a little speck of nothing. Only Jesus himself has

control of that and he has entrusted that to the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit alone can manifest Jesus in you and me. He only can.

It's the key. He is the key to everything. He will deliver us from Ernest O'Neill. He will deliver us from Myron Kliever. He will deliver us from Marty Overby. He will – he will deliver us from everybody else who good heartedly want to help us but they're just little specks themselves. He will deliver us from Andrew Murray, dear man that he is. He will deliver us from Watchman Nee. He will deliver – because, all these people are little people like us, they have no ability to touch what God did when he made you in his son before the world was. Which you and I are able to put into words but who here is able to appreciate the full meaning of that? The Holy Spirit is able to make that real in us.

I have often told you about Leslie Duke who is now in heaven who was in my class in school in Belfast, was that tall. He is interesting, you remember, in that he was one of triplets and he had a brother called Edmund Duke who also became a Christian to whom James Galway, you remember, attributed some of his skill in flute playing because he played with him in the Belfast Orchestra back then. But Leslie Duke was what we would call a little retarded, a little simple, a little backward. But Leslie came to our Christian Endeavors Society and prayed through and received Jesus and in the Belfast telegraph office you remember, what Leslie did was the newspapers came off there, sat there, he moved them onto there. That's what he did all day long.

But Leslie came to me when my dad died and expressed his sympathy and from Jesus' heart. So, Leslie was very simple, nobody would say he was bright at all, he didn't know all these things, but the Holy Spirit had brought Jesus to him. So you see, we don't need to be bright, and clever, and intelligent, and sharp but we do need to see that only the Holy Spirit can do this in us. Everything depends on the Holy Spirit, everything.

If you don't settle this you'll never come to peace in this thing. You'll never come to peace in it. You'll never come to the second rest of the people of God. You'll never come to freedom from self. You'll never be delivered from your own personality. Only the Holy Spirit can do these things. But where the Holy Spirit comes I don't know if you've ever lain in bed at night and thought, "I'm frowning. I'm frowning. Why am I frowning? I am frowning. Stop frowning." And once in a while you're able to stop frowning and you're able – "I should relax here, why am I tense?" And you feel everything draining away. That's what happens when the Holy Spirit begins to be able to direct you and to be listened to by you.

The Holy Spirit brings a freedom from all that strain and stress of trying to make all these things real in yourself and then he brings a similar peace and rest to a fellowship. He brings a peace and a rest in the family, just a sweet rest. It's the Holy Spirit alone who can make these things real, he only. That's why prayer times and chapel times become sweet. That's why you no longer need another little treat, "Oh, if I could only have another little treat it would brighten my day." You're not dependent on going from treat-to-treat. You're not worried about what's going to happen next year, or what's going to happen in my future. The Holy Spirit really does bring eternity into your life.

He really recreates Jesus in you. He makes you what you are. That's it he makes you what you are. You are part of Jesus but you can't bring yourself into a realization of that however hard you try. The Holy Spirit does that because he works a miracle. He breaks down that barrier between eternity and time. That's something you can't do. With all your thinking, with all your mediation, with all

your praying, with all your trying, you cannot touch that because you're a little speck of space time creature and you can't touch eternity. The Holy Spirit alone can.

That's the greatest need we have here. That's our greatest need. It's good to know the truths because the mind needs to be able to believe for something. Jesus said, "Be it unto you according to your faith." But it's only the Holy Spirit who can make that real. When the Holy Spirit comes he deals with it – there are several big problems that you know that we have. First of all, we have a guilty conscience and that's the first thing that God deals with us on when we come to Jesus, can we have our sins forgiven? But then we become aware of the selfish will, "I want my way. I want my rights. I insist on my own way. No, I want it done my way. No, you're not going to walk over the top of me. No, I'm a real person I have the right - selfish will."

But after that, even when you come into – and this is normally what we talk about when we talk about the clean heart and being crucified with Christ. But really what we talk about there is the crisis death to self, crisis death to self. But then you become aware of this independent soul where, do you remember, Peter said – Jesus said, "The son of man must be crucified." And Peter said, "That shall never happen to you Lord." And Peter was impulsive, so he even contradicted the Creator of the whole universe. Well, that's what we mean by soulishness. The soul has ways of speaking and thinking that are not Jesus or the independent soul, we're facetious, we'll make a joke at the wrong time. And you know it's the wrong time it cuts the atmosphere like a knife, spoils the presence of Jesus. Or, what can equally well be a problem is we can be very forceful, very forceful and we can bring a thing into order but a terrible expense, terrible expense. Strength of our soul pulls him into order but Jesus is wafted off the scene and it just disappears. So the thing comes into order but Jesus is nowhere near and the person that you're dealing with is not Lord Jesus – thank you, he's just, "Okay I'll do it I'll do it." Independent soul and that's of course is the daily crisis of dying to self.

Only, only the Holy Spirit can bring those about. We're so blind to so much of this that we'll never bring it about. Even when we do see it we can't do anything about it. We keep on being facetious, we keep on being forceful, we keep on being clever, all that kind of thing. But this is so true "the good that I would I cannot do the evil I hate that is the thing I do." We can't do anything. You can't do anything. You know all these things, you know them clearly, you kick yourself, you say, "I have to change." You cannot change. The reason is that the Holy Spirit alone can bring Christ into you and can reproduce Christ in you, and can make – can make real what you are. That's it. That's probably the best way to put it the Holy Spirit can make you what you are.

You realize when you first hear the gospel, "Ah, I am something different from what I appeared. I appeared to be a fallen little creature. I'm not, I'm part of Jesus." But then the issue comes, how do I become that? I am that but how do I experience that? Only the Holy Spirit can. So everything is dependent on the Holy Spirit. And it is – well you can sense this morning even, it is a beautiful and a fragrant, and a restful, and a quiet, and a gentle life that he brings into your life. "His ways are ways of pleasantness and all his paths are peace." It's from one of the Old Testament books. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all his paths are peace. The Holy Spirit, that's him. His ways are ways of pleasantness and all his paths are peace.

The Holy Spirit makes all that real in you. And so I agree with anybody here who says, "Hasn't the church become independent of the Holy Spirit?" On the whole we have, because the Holy Spirit for most of us in church and for us in seminary was an influence that comes upon a meeting at times but he is not the executive agent of the Godhead. But in fact, Jesus says, "If I don't go away he will

not come to you.” That’s how real it is. “Everything has happened to you in me but now I have to leave because I’m really in eternity and the Holy Spirit will come to you and he is the one that will be in you and he will take of the things that are mine and he will share them with you. He’ll impart them to you.” So Jesus said, “He is my successor. Don’t look at me, look at him and he won’t draw attention to himself he will bear witness to me. So if you will listen to him and if you will obey him, he will make everything that is in me real to you and he will bring glory to me.”

That’s the other side, Acts 5:32, “God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey him.” Whenever the Holy Spirit reveals something to you, if you obey him and you move into it whether it’s a revelation about your own heart, or a revelation about the way you speak to other people, or a revelation of your own attitude to your work or to life, if you move into that he will continue to lead you on. If you judge that he’s only giving you it for light and advice and you’ll take it under advice and you’ll consider it, he is grieved because he did not give you it before you needed it, he gave it to you to act on right then. So, if you act on it right then, then he leads you on to the next step. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey.

So it’s quite interesting, you can have a group like us and we can all listen to this and then the Holy Spirit will be faithful and will give us light and some of us will just – I mean, it will be no big deal we won’t say, “Oh, I’ve ignored the Holy Spirit.” We’ll just take him lightly, we won’t act on it and then his voice will become fainter and fainter and we’ll all carry on, we’ll all be Christians together. But some of us will instead listen to him, take him seriously, and be so afraid of losing him that we’ll do what he says and then he leads us on, and on, and leads us through these things however many years it takes us.

So it’s interesting that the Holy Spirit will act in accordance with the way we respond to him. And of course, when you get even two people who are moved by the Holy Spirit and obey the Holy Spirit, and respect the Holy Spirit, you get heaven right there. That’s heaven. Not just that they’re saying the right words, not just they’re sharing the same truths, but there’s the heaven of Jesus’ heart and presence there. There’s a peace and a rest. I actually think you don’t get old as fast. I actually think he keeps – ladies don’t like wrinkles, so he keeps actually wrinkles out of your face, or he keeps the energy and the life of Jesus in your face so that nobody sees the wrinkles as old wrinkles but as wrinkles of smiling, or wrinkles of joy, or wrinkles of compassion or feeling. So, it changes everything. I mean, it does change. The Holy Spirit changes this temporal life into an eternal life.

But obviously, I’m not selling him as a cream that does something with your wrinkles because the only reason he comes is to glorify Jesus and that’s probably one of the greatest errors we make, we say, “Well, I’d like to have the Holy Spirit so that I wouldn’t have so much trouble with myself. So that I wouldn’t have trouble with this irritability or this critical spirit that I have, or this self-pity that I have, I want to be free from it so sure I want the Holy Spirit.” Well, that’s just selfishness. “I want the Holy Spirit because I’ll have an easier time with life.” No, you are nothing but part of Jesus. Now, wouldn’t you like to live like that so that Jesus would have your life, would have his own life here on earth? Well, if you want that the Holy Spirit only is able to bring that.

Let us pray.

