

I Can't!

Revelation 13:8

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Someone has said that a comedian laughs because if he didn't, he would cry at the state of the world -- and two of the comedians who are among the most serious commentators in our modern life at the moment are Woody Allen and Mel Brooks. Now in mentioning their names I am not at all recommending a lot of their movies because their movies often include the worst in our society as well as serious commentary, but it is interesting to see the confirmation of the truths that God is helping us to see by looking at a comment of, for instance Mel Brooks', in an interview recently.

The interviewer asked him, "Do you no longer believe there is a Supreme Being?" -- because of course you know a lot of his fun is based on belief in a Supreme Being -- and he said, "Yes, of course I believe there is a Supreme Being" and the interviewer asked him, "Well, are you afraid of Him?" and Mel Brooks answered, "No, I am not afraid of Him" and then the interviewer said, "Is there any power that you are afraid of?" and Mel Brooks thought for a moment and he said, "Yes, there is. When I get mad at somebody, and I sense within me a power that is stronger than myself and I realize that that power exists in everybody else who lives in this world, then I get scared."

It is interesting, isn't it, that both Brooks and Allen lay a lot of emphasis on that streak of perversity within us that makes us lose our temper. It's interesting that a lot of their present day work lays emphasis on that strain of perversion that seems to be deep down within each one of us -- that seems utterly uncontrollable. We so often talk about the hating, killing, Mr. Hyde that rises up within the quiet civilized Dr. Jekyll that everyone thinks us to be, and of course you know we have often discussed why it is that we seem to be bound by a chain to the words and the actions of other people. We seem to be bound by a chain to the circumstances we're experiencing, to even the very things that we own. We seem in our personality to be bound and enslaved by a chain to them so that instead of being free self-determining individuals that do what they really think is right, we seem to be bound in such a cause and effect stimulus response reaction to these things around us that we're forced to respond in ways that we don't want to and we can't control it and you know that all of us have experienced it from time to time. We will act or think on principle, just from time to time.

Normally, we act according to a blind stimulus response reaction to either what people have said to us or what things are happening to us or what kind of things we own. Loved ones, Jesus and his disciples have explained to us that that old personality of ours that is enslaved to the world of people and circumstances and things in that cause-effect stimulus response way -- that old personality has been destroyed.

Do you remember Jesus calls it, "It's your old self" and He says, "That old self was crucified with me, that's why I died." For those of you who have never heard it before it's stated this way in Romans 6:6. "Our old self was crucified with Christ so that we may no longer be enslaved." When did it happen? Well, in time, in our history, in our space-time universe. It happened around 1900 years ago, that's when it was manifested in the death of this Jesus in Jerusalem. But actually it happened long before that because the need to break the chain that binds our personalities to other people and other things and other events and other happenings and makes us slaves and robots, the need to destroy that and to recreate it was foreseen by God before he made us. Do you realize that? Our

computers can perceive our food needs and our oil needs a hundred years hence. Don't you see that the great Creator of the universe was able to foresee what we would do and how we would enslave our own personalities to people and things before He ever made us? It doesn't mean He made us do it, but He foresaw it-- and loved ones, He destroyed our old perverted personality in Him, His son, in eternity before creation. That might be new to you so I would ask you just to look up the verse where it states it.

Go to Revelation 13:8. And those of you have heard me translate this in the RSV before know that they have mistranslated it compared with the King James and in fact in Greek it is in a different order. Revelation 13:8. "And all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain." Now you have to trust me that if you look at the Greek New Testament, you will find that the adverbial phrase of time "before the foundation of the world" actually occurs after "that was slain". You see that. So "before the foundation of the world" goes not after "written" and does not modify the verb "written" but modifies the verb "that was slain". So the verse should read "And all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose name has not been written in the book of the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world" -- "whose name was not written in the book of the Life of the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world." In other words loved ones, God foresaw all that would happen and He made provision and He slayed His own son in His own eternal mind before He created the world, who were included in that death. I think a lot of us have a tendency to say "well, probably all the Christians, isn't that right?" No, look at 2nd Corinthians 5:14 and you will be amazed with the answer.

2nd Corinthians 5:14, "For the love of Christ controls us because we are convinced that one has died for all" -- that's for all people on the earth. Therefore, all people on the earth have died. Do you realize that loved ones? That means that every one of us in this room and every one of us in the lounge, and every one of us throughout the whole world were put into Jesus before the creation of the world and our old miserable perverted personality that makes it impossible for us to obey the best that we know, that was destroyed in Jesus.

In other words, God simply allowed us to live in this Satan dominated, self-gratifying world that is an absolute lie so that we would have a clear choice. We could either continue to live in this lie of a world that says that you're on your own, there's nobody will take care of you but yourself and you better use people and circumstances and things to make yourself as important and secure as you possibly can -- you can do that -- or you can affirm the actual truth that that personality that has become enslaved to that world has been destroyed in Jesus and has been recreated in his resurrection.

So here's the amazing thing. Nobody in this room will go to hell or will suffer eternal loneliness or will be alienated forever from God or will burn forever in their own selfish lusts because they have not been put into Jesus. They will suffer hell, they will burn in their own lusts, they will be alienated from the God who loves them because they have refused to accept what God has done to them in His son, and loved ones that's it.

There is not one of us here this morning who can say "I can't obey, I can't. There were other people who have been placed into Jesus and have been destroyed and raised within. They can, I can't." No loved ones, every one of us has experienced in reality the same deliverance in Jesus that everyone else has experienced and there is none of us here who cannot obey God's word to us in our conscience if we so choose this morning. That's what communion is. That's why it is open to everybody here,

that's why any of you can take the bread or the wine, who are willing to affirm that your old self has been crucified with Christ, that you are now in Jesus, that you're part of Him, that you have all the power that He has to obey his Father and to love and to do miracles.

All you have to do this morning is to choose that by faith and live like that in the coming days and you have that opportunity. Now I know it's a deep kind of truth. I know that. But loved ones, it is actually true that all that has needed to be done to enable us to be free people has been done and here this morning is another opportunity for you to listen to Jesus' spirit as He outlines to you a new liberty that He has provided for in your life, a new liberty into which He wants you to enter.

So will you listen for His spirit? And don't be discouraged, no, He says it. If it's the smoking, you can do it. A thousand times you might get up and fall, but you can do it because that chain that binds the nerve endings and their usage to nicotine has been destroyed, and you can do it. And you with the old unclean thought problem, you can do it because the old track in the cortex of the brain that has continually got used to thinking unclean thoughts at night, that was destroyed with Jesus, has already been destroyed by God's word in Revelation 13:8, has been destroyed and you can think cleanly, you can, and the same with all our other sins.

So this morning as you hear God's voice, stand up claiming your dear Savior Jesus and do what He tells you, because you can through Christ and the strength in you. Loved ones, if you are ready to, will you stand and I'll give the invitation.

You that do truly and earnestly repent of your sins and are in love and charity with your neighbors and intend to lead a new life following the commandments of God and walking from henceforth in His Holy ways, draw near with faith and take this holy sacrament to your comfort and make your humble confession unto Almighty God. Let us be seated as we pray.