

Jesus' Travail For You

Isaiah 53:11

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

If you have a Bible with you please turn to Isaiah 53:11. This is the real reason for taking communion and it's the basis of really taking it and not just eating bread and drinking wine. You remember it's the miraculous description of Jesus' experience on the cross, written eight centuries before Jesus was crucified. It's one of the greatest prophecies we have.

Read verse 11, "He, my righteous servant," originally Israel and really meaning Jesus, "He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. By His knowledge, shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and He shall bear their iniquities." Do you see the beginning of the verse, "He shall see the fruit of the travail of His soul," - and it's just "ma mal" in Hebrew. "Amal" is "trouble" or "travail," and the "min" is "from" or "after" or "in consequence of." So it means "in consequence of the travail of His soul, He shall see a sight that gives Him pleasure." He shall see and be satisfied or be pleased.

Do you know what the travail of Jesus' soul was? I think a lot of us when we first heard of Jesus' death thought, "Well it was the pain, the physical pain that He was bearing." Then we thought a little more about it and read a little more about it and heard a little more and we went a bit further and we said, "Well it was His own feeling of loneliness being away from His Father and being surrounded with all these people who hated Him." Then some of us went a little further and we said, "Well it's more than that; it's the pain that any of us would feel if somebody came in here and just started to swear in Christ's name. It would hurt us deep down because there's something in us that loves Jesus." We would say the travail of Jesus' soul was the pain of a pure clean loving heart being surrounded with so much hatred and so much dirt, and so much blasphemy against God.

Well loved ones, it was deeper than that. Do you know the moment when you have had real trouble speaking the truth to other people? You know those moments when you want to say what you really believe but you're afraid of what they will think of you? Inside you want to you want to say what you know is right, but you're afraid of what they'll think of you. And you find that even though you want to please God, for years you have been pleasing men and women and your whole personality seems bent that way. You know that feeling? Sometimes you say, "My personality is so used to this, I can't do it. I want to. I want to. I want to say what is right but I can't because my personality seems bent in that direction. I've got it used to this like a drug addict for years. I'm so used to praise, that I'm like a little puppy dog. I'll just beg almost for it. I sometimes go home at night and I'm surprised at what a fool I have made of myself in my own eyes, if in nobody else's, just because I've wanted them to praise me. I've seen what a conceited ass I am." Have you ever felt like that?

Now what Jesus did on the cross, and I know it's hard to realize, but what he did on the cross was take your personality that is so enslaved to people's opinions that it's bent that way, and He took it in His own heart inside His own Spirit. He allowed it to become Himself. Then He looked up to His father and He said, Lord "Burn this out and destroy it in me. Destroy it utterly and absolutely. Send it to hell in me." That's part of the travail of Jesus' soul. Loved ones, He bore the pain that

you and I could never have faced and that we would have had to face at the end of this life, and it would have utterly destroyed us.

If I could describe it to you like this: It's as if God is surrounded by an invisible curtain of pure holiness and He is here and you come through it when you die. And it burns you up if there is anything unholy in you. It burns you up. If there's someone who loves men's praises more than God's, that someone would turn heaven into hell, and so as he comes through that curtain of holiness he himself is repulsed. Now that's what Jesus bore on Calvary for you. Jesus bore the agony and the pain of that. So do you see how true it is that you don't have to get into Jesus?

See I think a lot of us misunderstand this because we think if tonight I repent really and I believe truly I'll somehow get into Jesus. The truth of this dear word is that we judge that one died for all, therefore all died. Every one of us here in this room were crucified with Jesus. Every one of us here, our personality, that intractable part of us that will not obey, it was destroyed and made anew in Jesus. It was. It is not as you think. You think when you lose your temper, "I can't do anything else because I'm made that way." That is the lie of Satan. God says He has put you into His son Jesus and He has completely renewed you. That has been done. It has been done.

The only question is whether you will believe that or not, and act upon it. Do you see why it is such pain to Jesus when you continue to say, "But I can't, I can't!" He knows you're not seeing that you're actually in Him. And that "can't" personality of yours was destroyed in Him and that He is in you. He is in you and He can through you. He is in you at this moment. See some of you don't really believe that tonight. You think, "No you mean He will come into me." No, the Bible says God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself. God has already placed us all in His son. He has already changed us all completely. The only question is whether you will believe that now and will live in the power of that.

Now do you begin to see? The verse says Jesus will see of the travail of His soul and will be satisfied. Or after the travail of His soul that He has borne for you, He will see a sight that is pleasing to Him. What is that sight? Well it certainly isn't thousands and thousands of people saying, "I can't help losing my temper. I can't help wanting the praise of men, I try but I can't help it." When Jesus knows all the time, "my son, my daughter, that personality of yours was destroyed in me and now I have become you, and you have become me. You can, by one little turn of your will and one little turn of your mind to believe that I have destroyed everything in you that will not obey." Jesus looks down on us tonight here in this room, after all of the travail of His soul that He has borne for each one of us, and He's looking not at all at our prayers or songs so much or our good intentions. He's looking at the way we are living tonight. He's looking at every one of us that is using the miracle that He wrought in our personalities to actually live like Him and obey him.

Do you see that? See it's like, it must be like a mom you know, who goes through all the agony and travail of bearing the child and at last the child is born and then the little one stops breathing. Won't breathe. The mother has travailed to give it life but the little one won't breathe or it won't eat. It must be that ten thousand times worse, when Jesus looks at us tonight and remembers the travail of soul that He bore to allow all that is wrong in you and me to be destroyed and then sees us not making a move but still pleading that we can't be like Him and He's saying, "you don't need to be like me. All you need to do is believe that my Father has put you in me and that I am in you and I can be like myself in you, if you will just give me freedom. Just believe that I am in you. Just believe that I'm able to love, believe that I am able to repeat again what I did on Calvary's

cross, to live independent of people's praise or people's approval in your life." Loved ones that is part of it. That after the travail of His soul He will see a sight that is pleasing to Him. You see that's the meaning of that verse, "He has borne our iniquities," not the punishment for our iniquities -- He has borne our iniquities.

There is not one unclean habit in your life that Jesus did not take into Himself and allow to be destroyed in Him. There is not one unclean way of thinking that you have that Jesus has not borne the pain of its destruction already on Calvary. In other words He knows you and me better than anybody else because he knows the worst sides of us that nobody else knows, because those are the sides that He bore on the cross, and He bore them so that we would live free from them. That's why we always say the victory is faith. The victory is -- do you believe that? Or do you still keep on pleading the good that I would I cannot do. The evil I hate is the very thing I do. Do you keep on pleading, "I want to care for God's praise and be contemptuous of men's praise. I want to but I can't." Loved ones, Jesus has destroyed that personality that was enslaved that way. You can, and that's the meaning of this communion service.

What is Jesus looking for? Spoils, the spoils of victory. That's the beautiful thing that He wants us to present to Him tonight, the spoils of His victory. New places in your life where tonight you are changing. New things that you've seen Jesus has destroyed, and I don't need to put up with them any longer. So Lord, I'm finished with them. That's it. That's what Jesus wants to see. And that's all you have to do to take communion seriously and really tonight, loved ones, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you if He hasn't already revealed, and He has revealed to me just tonight something. Now if He hasn't already revealed anything to you, just ask Him to reveal to you something that Jesus allowed to be destroyed in His dear heart on Calvary. Something that He bore travail of soul for and something therefore that you can be free of tonight and that you can stand up in his personality and say, "Lord I am finished with that. I will obey from this moment on."

Loved ones, what I thought might help, and what we did in Ireland, I remember in the old days, we would read some of God's laws. Usually we had it written into our liturgy and we would read laws like the Ten Commandments. I thought it would be good to read some laws in the New Testament that the Holy Spirit might use to bring home to your heart something from which the Holy Spirit wants to free you tonight. Will you turn to Matthew 5, and I'll just ask us to read two chapters, or parts of two chapters, and then we can pray, but it's Matthew 5 and many of us know these verses.

In Matthew 5:21, and these are just very plain down to earth commandments that Jesus has freed us to obey. And that it's a delight to obey and that it's natural to obey. "You have heard that it was said," verse 21, "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'you shall not kill and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment. Whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council and whoever says 'you fool' shall be liable to the hell of fire. So if you are offering a gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go, first, be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Make friends quickly with your accuser while you are going with them to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out till you have paid the last penny.

"You have heard that it was said you shall not commit adultery. But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away. It is better that you lose one of your members

than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better that you lose one of your members than that you let your whole body go into hell. It was also said whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce. But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the ground of unchaste, makes her an adulteress, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

"Again you have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.' But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to him who begs from you, and do not refuse him who would borrow from you.

"You have heard that it was said, 'you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you salute only your brethren, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." This means if any of us have anything between ourselves with another person here, or at home or at work, we should fix it this very night or first thing tomorrow morning. That's the way Jesus would see after the travail of his soul, he would see a sight that is pleasing. He would see that it was worth it all.

You see, just a few verses, loved ones, in Philippians 4:4. Just ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you if this has something to say in your life and about your behavior. "Rejoice in the Lord always." Now that means "don't complain." Do you see that? Some of us have a little trouble with the translation there, but it means "don't complain." Wonder how often, how often we don't see that as failing to rejoice, but it isn't. When we complain it brings pain to others. It spreads Satan's negativism and it destroys and kills. You can't rejoice and complain at the same time, you see, if you are complaining then you're not rejoicing. If you say to me, "Well can you rejoice when your house is burning down?", yes you can. Yes, many people have rejoiced as disastrous things have happened. They have seen God turn them around because they kept faith that He was in control. Whereas the complainers have shown that they didn't trust God at all. They were utterly caught up with what they could see, and they walked by sight and not by faith.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice," -- whether you feel like it or not. That is a command. "Thou shalt not kill," -- well I feel like killing today. "Thou shalt not covet," but I feel like coveting today. Well this is the same order. "Rejoice," well I don't feel like rejoicing. It doesn't matter it's a command. You will rejoice.

I remember a brother who went into one of the Anglican brotherhoods in England and that's the way the day starts. The brothers are all sleeping in their cells and then the brother whose job it is to wake everyone up knocks on everyone's door, knocks on the door and says, "This is the day that the

Lord hath made," and the brother has to answer him with, "We will rejoice and be glad in it." It's good in a way. It's good you know. Start the day rejoicing, obeying God's commandment.

"Let all men know your forbearance; the Lord is at hand." I just ask you who are in offices and me who are in offices all day: do all men know our forbearance? Or do all men know our irritability and our impatience? Do all men think it's amazing what he puts up with? Do all men think that of us, and the ladies among us? Do all men think that? "Let all men know your forbearance. The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." Do you see the command, "have no anxiety?" It's not an exhortation, it's not a piece of good advice, it's a command, "have no anxiety," so there is no room for self pity, "Oh but poor me. If you knew what I had to put up with you'd be anxious too." No, God says have no anxiety. That's a command. You have no anxiety; I'll take care of the thing. If you have anxiety, I can't take care of it. Have no anxiety about anything, "but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." And then this is beautiful. In verse 8, "Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things." No negativism.

Now if I could share one little thing with you, it's very interesting that those men and women who are suffering the most, in the Siberias of this world and in the prisons of this world, are those to whom those verses are most precious and are those who are most positive in their thinking. It is very interesting that it is often those of us who have so much and have so many good things that find it so hard to be positive, and to keep our eyes on the blessings of God. So, let's just go before God, and I'm going to do the same thing, and let's ask him to give us light, and just pray as God guides you, sometimes with praise and sometimes confession.

Dear Father, we come before you as a people who want to be honest and real with you tonight. Father we want first of all to thank you for Jesus, and Lord Jesus, we cannot thank you enough when we consider the travail of your soul for us, Lord thank you. Lord you have borne what we couldn't bear ourselves and what no other man could bear. Lord thank you. We can't understand how you still love us, having seen all the things that we are, and then having borne them in your own clean and spotless dear heart, but Lord we thank you tonight. We see that there is only one thing that we can do, if we really believe we are in you, Lord, there is only one thing to do, and that's to repent in dust and ashes and turn gladly from those things that you are showing us tonight, and to commit ourselves to a new way of life and to a new attitude, taking up our position in you. And from now on, we will treat ourselves as you, as you, treating this body as yours, and all our jobs as yours and letting you be yourself Lord. Thank you. Amen.