

The New Birth

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

We're learning, loved ones, about communion and what we said last Sunday was that you can only have communion with God if you are born of God and it's very easy to illustrate that. I have this silly little dog that is about that size and 5 lbs and at times I'll say to him, "Do you want to go for a walk?" And you know his eyes are so full of intelligence that I am utterly convinced he understands what I say and then I try him with "To be or not to be? That is the question: whether tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows" -- and he is just dead, absolutely, and it just suddenly comes home to you, you know, if you had a little pet, you project your own thoughts into their eyes and if their eyes happen to look alive when you have a thought, you think they have the same thought -- and they haven't at all and so it comes as a shock when you say something to them and their eyes are dead.

Now, that's what it's like when, as C.S. Lewis says, "An animal lacks intellect." There's just a vast gap between you and the dog, just a vast gap. At times it looks as if that gap is narrowing because the dog or the animal appears to understand -- but it doesn't really. The gap is vast between an intellectual being and a physical being. That's the same if you're not born of God, you see.

If you're not born in your spirit, then communion with God is actually impossible and all you experience at times is the foxhole prayer that you cast up to God in times of great danger or despair and that he graciously answers. The rest of the times you spend your days pretending that you have communion with God and learning how your eyes should express feeling or how your heart should express love for God.

In other words, you're like the little dog; you imitate others who have that life. So loved ones, it is vital to see that unless you are born of God in your spirit, you will not experience communion with God at all. That is, prayer -- real prayer to God -- and you will spend your days trying to imitate others who experience that communion. I would just like to point out to you that that is the situation when you're dead in your spirit, you see.

It really means that that whole of you there (in your spirit), is dead. That spirit part of you is dead and you're alive in your soul and your body. Now, our little dog is alive there, you see (in the body). So he can experience nothing up here in the soul, but a person who is dead in the spirit is dead there and so, their interaction is between the world and their body, and their body and their soul, and they can't have any communion with God until they're born of the spirit.

Now you can imagine what a miracle it would take -- in fact, it's beyond me who could do it to implant in that little dog an intellect -- but it would certainly take a miracle to implant intellectual life into him. Now, do you see the vast miracle that is required to plant spirit life in a person who is dead in their spirit?

So, it is important for you to see that unless you are born of the spirit, you can't know real communion with God and you can pretend but you'll never experience it. Now, why are we dead in our spirits? Well, you know we've talked about it so often, we're dead in our spirits because we live off the world.

I won't elaborate too much about it, but instead of getting our love from God we get it from the world. We're born of the flesh and from the moment our mom pats us on the head right through till we receive our gold watch at retirement, we live off pats on the head. We live off the love that the world can give us, we live off the security that the world can give us. We scrounge and scramble for our salaries and our insurance policies. We live off the sense of significance the world can give us. We strive to be good at sports, then as we grow older we strive to be good at our job, then we strive to please our wives or our husbands or our children and then we live off the world for our happiness. We feel if we can get more thrills or more excitement or better boats or better motorbikes we'll have more happiness. So, we live off the world. That's why we're dead in our spirits and so our personality is hopelessly perverted that way so that even when we pray a foxhole prayer and we sense some life coming from beyond to us, yet we still can't live that way, our personalities are so perverted.

Now, of course the miracle of Calvary is that God in Jesus destroyed that perverted personality and has given us a new one that we can have by a miraculous gift from him. But loved ones, we have to receive it from him. Now, do you see, do you see the massive task that is required? You have a personality that was meant to operate that way. Now it operates a different way and God has to restore it to that. Now that is a massive miracle, that's a massive transplant operation.

Now what happens is, the Holy Spirit, with most of us, begins to show us not this whole situation that we have just described but it begins to convict us in the one part of our spirit that is still a little alive, begins to convict us in our conscience. So, we depend on the world for security and of course eventually you end up coveting, you do. If you depend on the world for security, you end up wishing you had what somebody else had and the word of God comes down to you and says, "Thou shalt not covet" and the Holy Spirit convicts your conscience of that. Not your mind -- your mind has often read the commandment "Thou shalt not covet", and you've said "Oh, yeah, I shouldn't do that, -- but now the Holy Spirit convicts your conscience and you sense, "I cannot do that and live, "I am dead in my sins and I am going to remain dead forever in outer darkness of hell unless I do something about this" and suddenly the Holy Spirit stabs your conscience alive.

For years you've been aware that you have borne false witness against your neighbor because you depend on the world for your significance and when somebody else is praised instead of you, you're unhappy, you're jealous, you're proud and therefore you end up telling little lies about your neighbor or about other people to make yourself feel better. So for years you've done that, your mind has known it for years, your emotions have felt the swell of self-pity when you've done it but now the Holy Spirit convicts your conscience and says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour because you will die forever in your sins if you continue to live that way." Do you see the difference, loved ones?

It's very different to perceive a thing in your mind and to have the Holy Spirit in graciousness begin to cut into your conscience. That's the first step towards bringing you alive in your spirit and it's a completely different experience from the purely mental one of knowing, "Yeah, I do seem to get a bit jealous at times", "Yeah, I know that I am a bit proud", but now the Holy Spirit convicts you in your conscience that you're going to lose forever any chance of fellowship with your God who made you if you continue to be this way.

It's the same with the happiness. For years you've depended on the world, on other people, on relationships, on circumstances for happiness. So adultery means nothing to you, adultery in your

mind, adultery in reality, anything that will give a thrill and so for years your mind and your emotions have known the sense of thrill from unclean thoughts and from having your own way with people.

But now, the Holy Spirit convicts you and says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery. Because if you do, you are guilty of the judgment and even if you have unclean thoughts, you are guilty of the judgment" -- and suddenly the Holy Spirit stabs you in a deeper place than anyone else could stab you because only He can touch your spirit and loved ones that's a very different experience, do you see? That conviction of sin is a very different experience from sharing things in your mind or feeling things in your emotions or even willing yourself to do certain things to improve your own life or to better yourself. At this point, you are the privileged receiver of the Holy Spirit's work in your spirit and that's a totally different experience.

Now, once a man or a woman begins to experience that, you are facing your God. You have to decide whether to suffocate that conscience, whether to grieve the Holy Spirit there and then, and whether to reject your God, or whether to follow on through and plead that He will do further work in you.

But loved ones, with anyone who is to be born of God it has to start with that stabbing alive of the conscience. Now there's no other way. You can't be talked into it, you can't look at this stuff tonight and say, "Well, it makes sense. I would like to experience those things." Because do you see, it's not your liking at all. You can't create spiritual life inside yourself. No more can my little dog create intellectual life. Only God can create spiritual life in you. And you have to depend on him to do it and you have to depend on his gracious working to do it. And you have to plead that the Holy Spirit will stab your conscience alive. And then if He ever does, then you have to run towards it.

Now loved ones, I would plead with you again to see that, that you have to want it with all your heart. All the great ones, you know, -- Pascal, everyone that has ever come to God-- has pleaded and hungered and yearned for God to bring them alive. So you know, never sit there and say, "Oh I have tried and I have tried and I have tried". loved ones, that's your place, that's our place. We have to hunger for our God to stab us into spiritual life.

And so be glad when the Holy Spirit begins to deal with your conscience and if I could share with those of you who are alive spiritually, be glad when God continues to deal with your conscience, be glad. Oh don't, don't show yourself to be followers of false prophets by hating it when God stabs your conscience and shows you more light to walk into. Be glad loved ones, rejoice in that, the child of God rejoices when the Father corrects him, the child of God rejoices when the Father shows him how he can be more like him.

So, it's vital before you're borne of God, to come into real conviction. Now, do you see that that goes against the normal shallow superficial healthy minded teaching? Do you see that? That goes against that. The normal healthy minded teaching is, we have everything we need, to be like God and we can be like him by just exercising ourselves fully as human beings and living as well as we possibly can. Now, that's exactly what Satan said in the Garden of Eden, "You shall not surely die, you'll be like God, knowing the difference between good and evil."

Now this is entirely contradictory to that. This is a mighty transformation. This is a convicting in your conscience that leaves you laid out flat on the ground, crying for mercy. Loved ones, it's nothing less than that, honestly. It's nothing less than grasping at the Savior's feet and saying,

"Lord Jesus help me, help me, help me. I can do nothing without You. I am lost, I have no communion with God at all. Lord, I want to have communion. Show me what I have to be willing to change in my life for you to make me alive spiritually". It's that kind of yearning, you see.

Every time loved ones you take the attitude in your own hearts you know or with some of the rest of us and say, "Listen, I have really been trying, I have really been trying and God isn't coming through" -- loved ones you're not nearly in the right spot. Old Pascal says, someone comes and they say to a priest, "Oh I have read a book for an hour and I meditated there for another hour, but I can't still find God" and Pascal says, "God is a hidden God and He will only reveal Himself to those who seek Him with all their hearts". You must seek Him night and day, night and day, week after week, only when you want God with all your heart will He come and reveal Himself to you.

So loved ones, being converted or being born of God is a mighty work that begins with the Holy Spirit touching your conscience and you know, that's why I shared as I did about well, you need your emotions healed to receive the love of God. No, you may need your emotions healed after you have received forgiveness in order to minister that forgiveness to other people but what you need most of all is to see that God loves you so much that he crucified you in his Son and wants you to be willing to experience that and to allow him to change your life and you need to see that you have to deal with your conscience.

So, the start of it all is dealing with your conscience and I don't know how many of you have made a point of getting down on our knees in your own bedroom somewhere and confessing your sins, really confessing them. I don't know how easy you think it is, but I would like to testify it that I wanted God so badly that I would have stood on my head and said the Lord's prayer backwards for a thousand weeks. I would have done anything to get God. And I remember looking at a little Billy Graham tract (I was a minister, I was supposed to know it all)-- I looked at a little Billy Graham tract to find out how you found your way to God and I did it, I did it, I did it! The confess and the repent and the committing your life to Jesus. I would have done anything to get peace in my conscience and forgiveness of my sins and a sense of communion with God.

Now, I just push you a little, isn't it very easy for us all to meet together here Sunday after Sunday and talk about these things so well that you understand them perfectly and you misunderstand the understanding for conversion, and you think, "I understand it, I agree with it, I do the things you say but somehow I can't have real communion with God." Loved ones, could it be because you have never, never ever, ever committed yourself to Jesus?

Maybe I could give my wife's testimony, because it was maybe more what many of us need to experience. As I was seeking the fullness of the Holy Spirit, so the blessed spirit came down into our manse in North Minneapolis and gave a real sense of his presence and she noticed a change in my life and at the same time the Holy Spirit began to deal with her own heart and her conscience. I thought she was a Christian as much as I thought I was an obedient Christian. I was a Christian but not an obedient Christian.

The Holy Spirit began to deal with her and she began to see - (my wife is a dentist and we think of ourselves as kind of intellectual, we're not, but you know you think yourself that way) -- and so hell was a very unsophisticated concept for us to entertain. But the Holy Spirit began to show her that she was going to hell -- that that's exactly where she was going. She was dead in her sins. She was not like God, she had never received Jesus as her Savior, she had never committed herself to him, though she had heard about it and knew all the teaching about it, but she had never committed

herself. So the Holy Spirit convicted her and give her a sense that she was going straight to hell for the kind of person she was.

She is a very nice person, she didn't do any terrible things, she really didn't but the Holy Spirit showed her that the things that she did and the self that she loved were in God's sight as bad as adultery, as bad as the worst sin you could think of, and so the Holy Spirit convicted her of sin and she would waken up nights feeling that she was going to hell. Now, that's how real it was and you know, if you knew her you'd know, "Boy, that kind of stuff is okay for somebody who is uneducated or somebody who can't read or somebody who can't intellectualize, but let's face it, college people shouldn't experience that kind of thing." Yes they have to experience that. If they are going to be borne of God, they have to see that they're starring straight into a loneliness forever unless they change and unless they convert and are born of the Spirit.

So, I remember one night, when I was fellowshipping with a dear man who shared with me about the fullness of the Holy Spirit. She had gone up to bed and she came down again she could not sleep, and she came down into our living room and it's very unlike her to do that, especially when there was this other mad evangelist in the parsonage with me but she came down the stairs and she had all her clothes on and we talked and talked, and eventually of course, obviously it came around and the conversation came around to whether she had ever committed her life to Jesus. And of course, she was, that's what she was down for, that's what she wanted to talk about and so the three of us got down at the davenport and we began to pray together and the other fellow, Bob, and I prayed and then she was to pray but she wouldn't touch it, because she didn't like public prayer and she didn't like talking out loud and I remember my friend saying, "Oh, you want to be, you're a child of your Father but you don't want to talk to him."

So eventually at long last, she did begin to pray and she began to confess her sins, some of them aloud and some of them were between her and God. But she did it, she confessed her sins. I remember Finney saying, "You committed them one by one, confess them one by one", don't confess them all in a heat, confess them one by one, face each one of them because each one of them indicate ways in which you are not willing to submit your life to God and as you confess them, the Holy Spirit brings more and deeper understanding of your rebellion against Him into your own conscience" and that's what happened with her.

You will find that. The actual confessing of the sins allowed or at least moving your lips to God will enable the Holy Spirit to bring greater revelation to you and you'll begin to remember things that you had never thought of for years before and that's what she did, she remembered things that she forgotten long ago. Loved ones, it's that deep cleansing that has to begin before you can move towards God. Now do you see that that's an actual work of the Holy Spirit?

That's important for you to see that. It's not enough here tonight to say, "Well, I do confess all my sins", no, the Holy Spirit is your counselor, you work with Him, you confess openly to Him and He then more deeply touches your conscience and brings up stuff that you never knew was there. You see there is stuff in your life that is preventing God's Spirit regenerating you and you don't know what it is. That's why it's so shallow to say tonight "oh I know, I know, I am born of God because I know what's wrong", no, there is stuff down there that only the Holy Spirit knows.

Now I am speaking to those of you who may have trouble with your communion with God, I am not speaking to those of you who are born of God. But those of us who are in doubt about our spiritual life, confessing our sins is an interaction with the Holy Spirit. It's a dialogue with the Holy

Spirit and so, she confessed and really, I mean it took half an hour, three-quarters of an hour, to get through that kind of stuff, and some of it aloud, some of it privately between herself and God. And then it comes to really in many ways the most difficult part, repentance. And we knew both of us that repentance is not just being sorry. We knew that.

We had seen people crying at altars and they were crying as much out of self-pity as anything else and some of them were crying because they didn't want to let go their sins. So it wasn't tears of repentance it was just "I don't want, let go, you're a nasty God wanting me to give up these things". So, we both knew that repentance is stopping doing the things. It's what Jesus said to the dear woman caught in adultery, "Do they condemn you? Neither do I, but go and sin no more, sin no more", and it was very tempting you know for her to think as I had thought, "Well, I mean I'll repent but I can't possibly stop these things, I mean I'll stop them for today and I'll ask you will you forgive me for the sins that I am going to commit?" Well no, not in your life. That's you saying to the Lord Jesus, "Lord I will stop sticking my spear into you today, but will you forgive me if I stick my spear into you tomorrow?"

Well, no one will be your friend in that situation. So, we both knew repentance was cutting all connection with your sins and that's the most difficult, loved ones and she struggled with that for half an hour, an hour. Was she willing to turn her life right round and to go towards God, not to live for herself, not to do the things any longer whatever it cost, to make whatever apology she had to make, to make whatever restitution to people she had to make, whatever was needed to put things right as far as she was able, was she willing to do it?

Now that's often where many of us stumble. Many of us see the Holy Spirit saying, "Will you make apology to that person?" and we say "Oh well, yeah, yeah, all right, okay", but we don't really mean it and we never do it and so we don't enter into anything real or the Holy Spirit says, "Will you stop that sin?" and we say, "Well, yes." But we know in our heart, I can't stop that, I wouldn't face the consequences of stopping that. Now, loved ones, repentance is doing whatever is needed to have done with those sins. Repentance is not assuring God of how things will go tomorrow, repentance is saying, "Lord, I am determined that moment by moment, I will live the way you want me to. I will stop doing these things."

Loved ones, believe me, repentance is stopping sinning. Repentance is stopping sinning. It isn't being sorry or filled with remorse or regret, it's stopping sinning. And the last step is asking Jesus to send his Spirit into your heart so that you can be born of God. And it came to that point where she had to invite Jesus to come in and take over her life and do what He wanted with her life and she asked Him to come in. Then, I remember my friend saying, "Has he come in?" and that was so strange to us you know, we were brought up Methodist "Yeah, I mean, "we got this far, don't push it", you know, and she said, "Well, well no, no I don't feel anything" and then I remember him saying, "Well, I mean it's not feeling that counts, but do you know that He has heard you? Do you know that He is in your heart and in your life?"

She said, "Well", and prayed a little more and said, "No, no I don't" and then it was so good, it was so good to see that that was because either the confession was not complete or the repentance was not complete. That was so good because we had seen other people at altars, you know, putting their arms around each other and trying to assure each other "now God loves you, you know he loves you, you know Jesus died for you" and that didn't seem right to us. It seemed "Oh you're trying to suffocate the sin almost" or you're trying to assure them against what they knew better and we saw that "Yeah, this is good, you mean Jesus' Spirit will come in if I honestly confess and I honestly

repent and you mean that the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit of truth knows whether I have done that or not" and all that was so good, it was so good you know to see that there was solid rock, there was ground under our feet, we weren't involved in a kind of pretending or a kind of psychological reinforcement game with the three of us in that living room. We were involved in dealing with our God.

We were carrying out a transaction with the Spirit of Jesus and it was so good to know that if we dealt fully with our confession and repentance, then we'd have an assurance that the Spirit of Jesus had come in. I remember about midnight, that night you know, she at last came to a place, after settling the confession and the repentance completely, after settling things that she had forgotten about or she wasn't willing really to come under God's will on, at last welcoming Jesus into her heart. And of course, her life changed from that day on and of course our marriage just changed completely.

Now, I wonder loved ones, is that light to anybody here this evening? Because sometimes I think that because we don't have altar calls and you know we don't, and I sense that on campus that would be the wisest thing, especially in morning service. But because we don't have altar calls, I wonder is it possible that there are some loved ones here that have kind of thought their way into conversion or into the new birth or they think that new birth is just a change of opinion or a change of your way of thinking?

Do you see that it is an actual mighty transaction with the Spirit of Jesus? That that's why so many of us stand on Romans 8:16, "The Spirit himself bears witness with my Spirit that I am a child of God". The Spirit within of Jesus witnesses that He is there, not feeling, not great feelings--there were no great feelings that night, no great feelings,-- but the Spirit Himself lets you know all is at peace.

I remember being with a brother -- I at one time did evangelistic services or meetings you know, around churches when I withdrew from the Methodist church and before we started Campus Church. I remember being with a brother in his car at a golf course after a meeting that we have had in the church and he had been in that church for years and had had no reality in his relationship with God, though he was regarded as a leader and as we say a "born again Christian" but he knew he wasn't and I could smell why he wasn't and so would you with the old nicotine filling the car because he knew fine well that God had been at that for a long time.

We began to talk, and began to talk the way we've talked tonight and he began to pray and began to confess his sins and began to repent and then came to the place of receiving Jesus' Spirit into his life so that Jesus could rule his life completely and do what He wanted with it and I said, "Has Jesus come in?" He said "Well", and I said, "You know you'll know, you'll know if Jesus is there", and he said, "Well, no, I don't know." And we talked round and round and round and then of course he revealed a big secret that was such a secret to anybody sitting beside him, "Well, you know I do have one sin that the Holy Spirit has been convicting me of", and he surprised me by saying, "You know I smoke 40 a day," and I said, "Yeah, I could tell that you smoked."

And loved ones, it's important to emphasize to all of us here that smoking for many of us may not be a sin now, I think probably for most of us it is a sin against the temple of the Holy Spirit, but I don't think you should point your finger at somebody, because the Holy Spirit may not be dealing with them about that and so it's important for you not, you know, to come along and say, "Oh yeah, anybody that smokes is a sinner but you can be proud as anything and you don't sin". So, you have to

watch what the Holy Spirit is dealing. You see, it's what the Holy Spirit is dealing with in a person's conscience that matters, not what you bring to their minds.

So, he said, "Well, I just can't give that up, I can't. I mean I have been at it for years", so if we were there half an hour, an hour, and at long, long last ---- after totting up the costs and seeing that he was only going one direction in his life if he did not deal with this and have done with it -- he would have no assurance of pardon, no assurance of forgiveness, no assurance of Jesus' presence in his life unless he dealt with this thing. At long last, you could feel the peace in that car. Now, I really mean that. You could sense the peace. It was just "Haaaaa !", I just knew that he had at last given that up. Do you see if a person can know that, the Holy Spirit can tell when you're serious.

See, He knows when your repentance is real. He knows when it's real and in response to that, He comes in and He regenerates you and you suddenly feel Jesus is your closest friend and God, your Father is your next door neighbor and the saints are all around you. It's a birth into a new world, it's a new awareness of all kinds of life around you that you've never seen before and it's filled with a perfect peace and a great sense of pardon and when some mad Irishman gets up on a stage like this and ploughs right down the middle with the law of God and the Holy Spirit convicts your conscience or something else, you just walk into the light, you walk into it joyously, you don't get mad at the guy, you don't get mad at God's word, you just walk into the light.

The Holy Spirit is bringing light to you and your spirit rises to it because the truth is, God will shake what can be shaken. God will shake what can be shaken, and what cannot be shaken God cannot shake.

So every time God's Word comes upon you, if there is something shaking inside, deal with it, deal with it! Get it out before God, don't argue with Him, don't say, "Oh you're wrong to bring that up", no we aren't meant to live like that, don't fight it, don't be found fighting and opposing God. Respond and say, "Holy Spirit, whatever is needed I want to get rid of that and whatever else is underneath that, I want to get to." But loved ones, "God will shake what can be shaken", and when you're born of the spirit, nothing can be shaken and I would attest to that even in regard to the fullness of the spirit or to conviction that precedes death to self with Jesus. Even what was to me a second experience of coming into a death to self on the cross, even that was a blessed experience, there was no loss of a sense of my salvation, no loss of a sense of God's peace but it was a new convicting that there were other things to be dealt with.

So, loved ones, when you have settled things truly with Jesus and He is in your heart, no man, no woman can shake your sense of peace and your assurance. Any questions loved ones? I meant to do more than talk about the New Birth, but I think it's good, I think it's right and that we talk about it.

Well, could I ask you then if you are not settled in your assurance, if this old mad Irishman can come down the middle with God's law and can shake you, will you go to God tonight and will you say, "Lord, I know that you only shake what can be shaken, so if there is something inside me here that isn't as solid as it should be, Lord I want to settle it and I want to get whatever conviction of sin is needed on my conscience and I want to plough right through real confession, real repentance until Lord, I know that You've stood at the door and knocked and that I have heard Your voice and I've open the door and I've invited You to come in to sup with me and You come in. Lord, I want to know that".

Now, loved ones you can, you can know that. The new birth is a mighty transaction with Jesus' spirit that is real and actual. It is not a mental gymnastic, it isn't. It's a real transaction with Jesus. So, if I could suggest to you, if you're born of God you know, just thank Him for that and just rejoice and next Sunday I'll talk about communion and the further steps in the Christian life but if tonight you sense well, "That's kind of foreign to me, I haven't done that, I've certainly prayed to receive Christ. I have certainly given over my life to Him but I don't have the reality that you're talking about there".

Well then, loved ones it's not complex. Confess, repent and receive Jesus and you can know you've received Him and if you say to me, "Well, brother I mean, could we pray with some of you?" Yes, there'll be people up here that you could pray with or you can go to the prayer room if you want to be alone or everywhere in this building there are plenty of rooms where you can settle through with God and there are some of us who can help you, but frankly it's at the end of the day, up to you and up to me. Jesus is there beside you, the Holy Spirit is your counselor. He will lead you into all truth.

I don't know how often I have spent, I remember one time spending all night with a loved one, a brother who was a Methodist minister in a summer camp and we spent the whole night, him and his wife, praying through to receive Jesus. So, don't be ashamed or don't be surprised, if it takes time, it does take time. And it may with you just be the beginning, tonight may be just the beginning and you're going into a series of days when the blessed Spirit will bring that dear conviction of sin that precedes deliverance to you.

Yearn for it -- and to those of you who are borne of God and who feel "Well, I have nothing to deal with", well, I yearn for the conviction of the Holy Spirit. I ask him, "Holy Spirit show me, show me where I can be more like Jesus. Show me where Jesus wants to be more Himself in me." That's the safe thing for anyone who has dealt with Jesus themselves.

So, will you do that loved ones? Will you do what you think is right? But I'd love you to see that pardon and assurance of forgiveness and peace does not depend on the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The baptism with the Holy Spirit is for ministry and for sharing with others, primarily. Really, a person is to experience pardon and forgiveness and peace through the New Birth. They can know God as their dear Father, Jesus as their loving Savior just in the New Birth experience because it is really everything and if they continue to walk in that they need nothing more because they'll walk into everything that God asked for.

So, well, shall we pray?

Dear Lord, we know You're here tonight and we know You only come to bless. We know You don't come to condemn but You come to save. But Lord we do see that the dear Holy Spirit never condemns either, He convicts. He lovingly shows us the things that You bore on Calvary. The things that You bore away from our lives. The things that You want us to let You bear away here and now, so that You will not have died in vain. Lord Jesus we thank You for Your counselor the Holy Spirit who convicts us of sin, and oh Holy Spirit, we would ask you, as Jesus' other self among us, to convict us deeply where we need convicted, show us the things that we are doing wrong or saying wrong, and things that we're thinking wrong, the things that our crucifying You again in our hearts every time You try to rise.

Holy Spirit convict us of those things. Will You convict us especially of the things that we do not want to agree with You, are wrong, those things that we're arguing about and trying to rationalize

and trying to protest that they're just human weaknesses or they're just personality traits that are special to us. Holy Spirit, strip away all our pretences and all our protestations and enable us to see these things are stark rebellion. They're plain and blunt rejection of our savior. These things are spilling your blood again in our lives.

Holy Spirit, we would plead with you for a conviction of sin that is deep and real so that we may deal with these things. We do not want to be lightly healed Holy Spirit, we don't want somebody to assure us we're forgiven. We want to be deeply healed. Deeply cut and then deeply healed, blessed Spirit, we ask for that holy cutting that You can do, that faithful wound of a friend. Holy Spirit, we ask you for that. We ask you to wound us as our faithful friend so that we may deal honestly with anything in our lives that our Father is condemning at this moment.

Holy Spirit we ask You now to show us those things and we would confess them, confess them one-by-one as You bring them up to our minds. Thank You for drudging deep in our subconscious. Thank You for bringing them up to our conscious minds. We would confess them now. We would agree one-by-one Holy Spirit as You show them to us, yes that is wrong. Yes, it isn't just a human weakness, it isn't just a personality trait, it isn't just something that my personality or my life ought to have in it to be healthy, this is wrong, this is sin against God, against thee, and the only have I sinned and done this wrong.

Holy Spirit, enable us to see it's our God that we've sinned against, it's not our human beings, it's not ourselves, it's our God. We have cut deeply into His heart with these things. We have declared ourselves rebels against them.

We would look especially dear Spirit for the point of controversy that we have with you at the moment. We would look especially for the point of disagreement where we're protesting and we're saying, "No, no, keep away from that, keep away from that". Holy Spirit we know that that's the growing edge of our relationship with You, that's what we should deal with. That thing that we don't want You to touch, that dear and darling sin that we don't want to admit. Thank You Lord for showing us that You can only be Lord if You have control of everything.

And now Lord, this repentance. Lord, to stop some of these things seems impossible to us and yet, Lord, we see that that is true, that on our own, of ourselves there is no good thing that we can do, and we cannot stop these things on our own. But Lord, we believe that you are dealing with us now because you can give us grace to stop these things. So Lord what You are asking for is a determination on our part that we will commit our wills wholly to obeying You in these concerns.

So, Holy Spirit will You show us if our repentance needs a change in our way of life even. Maybe a change in our friends, our relationships, maybe a change even in our jobs -- but assuredly a change in our own attitudes. Show us if it needs apology to some loved one. Holy Spirit, we know that here is where You're testing us. Are we really willing to forsake all for Jesus? Are we really willing to face anything for Him? Are we really so anxious to be God's child that we're willing to forego all pride, all opinion of man, all approval of ourselves?

Holy Spirit, will You reveal to us what is involved in truly repenting of these sins and truly stopping doing them and making whatever things right that need to be made right. Holy Spirit, help us to see tonight that unless we have a full and a ready heart to forsake these things, there will be no New Birth for us. Help us to see that repentance is a complete turning around of our minds, a complete changing of our attitudes.

Dear Spirit of Jesus, if You see any unwillingness in us, will You convict us of it now? Enable us to see if there's any sin that we're not willing to stop, whatever the cost. Then Lord Jesus, we look to You, You are our only hope Lord. Unless You come into our hearts and take over our lives, we are lost. Lord Jesus we know that we cannot ask You to come in and dwell in the midst of the very sins that killed You. Lord, we can only ask You to come in if we're willing to sweep this house clean and let You dwell alone, Lord of all.

Lord Jesus, we invite You dear savior and dear friend, will You come in and will You take over our lives and Lord whatever You want to do. Lord Jesus no longer my future and no longer my job but whatever You want me to do, that's what I am willing to do Lord. Lord, whether at home or abroad, whatever You decide. Lord Jesus, we want to be real about that; if You give your life unconditionally for us without asking, then Lord we say that You are asking us to give our life unconditionally to You without asking that it be lived in some place or in some way.

Lord Jesus, will You come in and be our friend and our Lord? And Lord Jesus from this day forward, we will make our first concern each morning, our communion with You. Lord Jesus, You will be the first one we speak to. It is Your dear Word that we will soak ourselves in each morning so that You may grow within us and make our lives a blessing and a delight to Your Father, Lord Jesus.

Dear Lord, I pray that any loved one who has welcomed You will thank You for coming, will never turn from You Lord again, and will never ignore You again and never put anybody before You. And dear Lord, I pray for any loved one here tonight who still needs to deal more deeply with You, that they will take these steps towards You in honesty, taking as much time as is needed to settle things with You who have graciously begun to deal.

Lord, thank You tonight if someone tonight even has just begun to experience conviction of sin, thank You for it, such a holy moment that they can be assured then that the God of the universe is beginning to deal with them. Thank You Lord, thank You for that. Thank You for that first step, thank You for the last step.

Now, dear Lord, we commit ourselves into Your hands for the things that You may want different ones of us to do, some to go home and some to deal with You in our rooms tonight, some to deal in the prayer room here or in the auditorium but Lord we would give ourselves to You and thank You for being here Lord Jesus.

Now the grace of our Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us, now and evermore. Amen.