

Letting Jesus In

John 6:57

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

The phone rings at home and somebody else answers it and they say "it's for you" and you say, "Who is it?" and they say it's your bank -- and the killer is, there are about a thousand such phone calls that stir up the same anxiety inside in your tummy that that one does. Loved ones, have you ever thought at times that I am just like a puppet, a puppet that is controlled by strings that my bank manager pulls, that my professor at college pulls, my mom pulls, my boss pulls and I just react in a certain way and my life is hardly my own. Have you ever felt that? Sometimes you just step back for a moment from your own life and you look at it and you think I am hardly living. I am just a bundle of reflex responses. My life isn't really my own. I seem to have all the life squeezed out of me. It's not only the people that you fear that seem to squeeze it out of you but it's even your own silly habits that you've gotten into, the people you want to smile at and please so that you are hardly in charge of your own life.

You know, it would be amazing to see how many of us really do feel like that. We feel that all the life is squeezed out of us and often we look back to when we were five or six years old and we think, then I was a person. I was small but I was a little person, I was real, I was living. Now I am more like a robot that is driven. I'm a driven man or a driven woman. My options seem to be cut down by all the necessities and the needs I have to meet. I have to smile at this person, I have to please that person, I have to pay this monthly payment, I have to do this thing, I have to do that thing, I have to get up at this time, not because I want to get up but because I have to get there in time. I wonder how many of us feel we are hardly even alive inside. It is interesting, loved ones, isn't it that sometimes you look at yourself in the mirror physically and when you look at yourself in the mirror introspectively or psychologically, you think I have just become like all the rest. I used to think I was different, I used to think I was an individual, I used to think I had something to give this world that nobody else had to give, but I am just in the same rat race that everybody else is in.

Loved ones, I do think a lot of us feel like that. I think a lot of us would like to break out and try to find ourselves and try to find out what we really are and what we'd really like to do and be. I think a lot of us have the feeling that if we ever did find that out, we'd be actually more valuable in society than we are now. It is incredible how many of us die without ever finding ourselves. In fact, it's amazing how many of us die without ever really knowing who we really are. You know the efforts that we make at trying to be ourselves. We say, "All right. I am not going to get up in the morning. I am not going to go to work. I am not going to smile at this person. I am not going to smile at that person." You keep it up for a couple of days and your world is all falling apart and so you sidle back into it. You do what we all did, remember in the Jesus movement of the hippy days, we all decided that we'd be different so we all grew the same beards and we all wore the same jeans and we all did the same things and sat down in the middle of the same intersections on campus.

It seems as if there are invisible fetters that are almost spiritual in their nature that bind us to these things that control us and really that's true. Every time we try to shake loose of them we just get more entangled. Loved ones, there is only one person that lived above those fetters and then was able by His death on the Cross to break those powers. That's what God says happened on

Calvary, that Jesus broke the powers of the elemental spirits of the universe that bind us to our boss's smile. It's not the boss's smile that is wrong, it's not even us appreciating his approval; it's this other sinister power that gets underneath that and makes us a slave to that smile. It's not that we shouldn't get up and do our jobs and get up at some time in the morning but it's that we don't do that because we freely want to do it, it's because we feel bound to do it because of fear of the consequences. It's those elemental powers of the universe that were destroyed by Jesus on Calvary. God put those powers into His Son and destroyed them so that Jesus lived above all that and lived freely. Loved ones, I believe that's part of the meaning of that incredible verse. "He that eats me has life." The only way you and I can be free is to actually absorb or consume or abide completely in this who is the one free person in the universe. He is the only one who won't take advantage of you. He's the only one who won't make you a stereotype. He's the only one who won't overrule your free will. He's the only one who can free you to be what God originally made you to be. Loved ones, that's the only way to be free. You have to actually absorb this person into you.

I'll just read it. (John 6:57) "As the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me." I really do believe that's why Jesus said what is an extreme set of words, "He who eats me will live because of me." He wanted to point out that it's not our belief in His death, it's not our belief in some theory of the Holy Spirit, it's not our thinking a certain way about Him, it's eating Him. Even though we eat this bread and wine as a symbol of that, it's eating Him. Loved ones, you have to reach out and draw Jesus into you by faith. It is He Himself who will give us eternal life and it's He Himself who will give us liberty to be ourselves. You see, I think why so many religious people are so boring is they don't eat Jesus, they don't receive Jesus into themselves, it isn't a living, personal relationship with a free person. It isn't. It's a relationship of their mind to a set of beliefs or the relationship of their emotions to certain ways of expressing and ways of saying Hallelujah that the group has. It's that kind of thing that they get into and they say they are really receiving Jesus but they're not. They are receiving all kinds of words about Jesus; they are accepting all kinds of beliefs about Jesus, but not Jesus himself.

Loved ones, that's who we need. We need Jesus, Himself. If your life is getting a bit dead or dry or you don't know who you really are or you are finding yourself becoming a robot, grasp out for Jesus today, Him, His whole self. In a marriage your bodies interact but it's about more than that, you can see that. He somehow is able to come right inside you by your own desiring faith. He is able to come right inside you and you experience a new personality inside you. That's what it is and that new personality will be you as you are meant to be. That's a beautiful thing. He won't make you as He is in Billy Graham, He won't make you as He is in Dan Fowler or Ernest O'Neill or Stan. He won't make you as somebody else. He'll be Himself as you so that you actually for the first time come into being what you really are. That's it. So it is a miracle but you have to grab all of Jesus. It's Jesus you have to draw into yourself by faith.

There is nothing corresponding to it in nature. Even the intercourse -- you can see that -- sexual intercourse, even that doesn't express it because it's still two bodies -- but somehow Jesus is able to come right into you and is able to be inside you so that you actually sense there is another mind inside mine and there is a rising series of optimistic thoughts that I am not producing myself. That's what it is and He will come into you if you are willing to let Him be Himself in you. That's it. So loved ones, that's why they are incredible words. They just make nonsense of the English language, "He who eats me will live because of me." That's what it is and that's why we eat the bread and we drink the wine here this morning.

If some of you here have never taken communion all I say is that it doesn't matter. We don't have a membership here except in so far as we all take part in things and take part in the fellowship so there is no membership barring you but I would say to you if you've never taken communion before, be very honest that you're willing and you want Jesus to come in. You do need to do that because there are certain words in scripture, "He who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks damnation unto his own soul." So you see, don't take it lightly. Don't think it will make me feel better. No, unless you are actually willing to receive the Son of God into you and to then enjoy living with Him moment by moment, then don't. Just pass the bread and wine on. It's far better to be honest and real like that until you're ready to receive than to be hypocritical. But loved ones, to the rest of us I would say it's Jesus we need. It's not a new theory of the baptism of the Holy Spirit; it's not to see clearer what it means to die to self. It's not sanctification or justification or half a dozen other things about Jesus, it's Jesus himself we need this morning and you can draw Him into your life by faith if you're desperate enough to be a real person that's free. I pray that you'll see it as God has shown it to me and that you'll do it because it will make you the person you were created to be.

Now loved ones, if you're ready to receive will you stand and receive 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.