

Baptized with the Holy Spirit

John 21:18

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I'd love to just talk this morning, loved ones, and forget the sermon that I prepared. We'll let the Holy Spirit guide us. I'd like to ask you as your friend, each one of you, where you yourself stand in regard to God? Where do you stand in regard to God this morning?

I think it's easy for a lot of us here to say, "Well, we're all right. We stand okay in regard to God. We know that Jesus died for us. We believe that part of the reason we come to Campus Church is because we know you all believe that and these are the things that are most sure in our hearts. Jesus has died for us, our God has forgiven us and we believe this book that you so often preach from. We believe the Bible is His Word, we believe all the things that you're saying, and we believe the things that we're trying to do in Campus Church.

We believe in the whole attempt to get people abroad because we see that that really is the only way of making any contribution to the increasing chaos in the world. The only hope is that somehow ordinary people will catch a little of the peace that is in Jesus and we see that." Many of you who are older will say, "Yes, and we ourselves feel there is nothing else worth living for. We love to see young people here in church. We love to see the students. We believe in the ministry of the campuses and it rejoices our hearts to be part of this. We see we've lived long enough to see that there isn't very much else worth living for."

Now, loved ones, I think it's very near to a fair portraiture of all of us here this morning, if I were to say those words. I think you might agree. That's not a bad description of us here this morning, allowing for the fact that some of us are away because it's Memorial Day and we go to our parents' churches, some of us are here because it's Memorial Day and we've come here for a change. But those of us who have come Sunday after Sunday, I think you could say that that's where we stand, except that we might find ourselves in rather a static position in regard to God. Indeed the very words that we use to describe ourselves had a lot of static quality about them.

We believe this is God's Word. We believe our sins are forgiven. We believe the only answer to the world's chaos is the peace of Christ. All those things we believe. But could it be true to say that many of your lives have settled down in Zion and aren't moving very much spiritually? Could I ask you whom you led to Jesus last? Or could I ask you when you last spoke to somebody at work even vaguely about God? I understand and agree with you that you can't just out and say, "Are you saved brother?" You're just asking for trouble. You're just dumb if you do it. But when did you last speak to anybody about God?

Then, if I could push you a little -- when did you last have a prayer answered? I mean a real prayer answered -- not a prayer that you prayed with a thousand other people so that maybe they were the lucky ones and you weren't. But when did you last have a prayer answered? Then I would push you a little and say -- to what extent is this a cafeteria on Sunday that you are glad to get to so you can grab a bite to eat on the way through? Really you come Sunday after Sunday pretty hungry.

Now, it is one thing to come and get food and rejoice together in the food. But it's another thing

if Sunday after Sunday you just manage to get here with the last gallon of spiritual gas. You get in and get filled up and then back you go. Of course, God's will is that you would come filled yourself. Then could I push you just a little? Are you filled with the joy of God through the week? If I were to meet you Monday through Friday, how would you be? Would you have to work yourself up to be able to relate to me in the level of joy that we are on this morning? What if I saw you when you got up in the morning? How are you? And what are you like on Monday at the end of the day?

In other words, through the week, do you find yourself filled with God, filled with the joy of God, filled with the delight of God and able to tackle the things and the problems of the week with rest and peace? Now you see, I think what many of us can do when we come here Sunday after Sunday is we can hear me preaching this beautiful life that God has for us and we can keep on saying, "Yes, I know pastor. Sometimes I think you exaggerate a little but I know that basically it's true because it keeps coming from that Word. I see that. You seem kind of high too and I don't know if that's because you're Irish. I think that maybe it's real and I do see others here that seem to have more joy and delight than I have. But, I am getting there. I am getting there."

Do you see that there's a difference between the lower kind of Christian life where you know your sins are forgiven but then through the week it's a miserable long drawn out struggle against yourself? Do you see the difference between the lower kind of life and the higher kind of life where the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance?

The difference between that high kind of life and the kind of life that has the works of the flesh in it: anger, jealousy, envy, bad temper, depression, anxiety, worry -- the difference between those two kinds of life is an instantaneous experience called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. It isn't something you climb up to over years and years and years of trying. It isn't something that you get up to after years and years of coming to the right church or reading the right books or studying the Bible or trying hard. It is an instantaneous experience.

Now, let me show you in the scripture. It's Luke 22. This is Peter whom we always think of as being a very big man physically and very courageous and bold. It's Luke 22:54-62.

"Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. Peter followed at a distance; and when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. Then a maid, seeing him as he sat in the light and gazing at him, said, 'This man also was with him.' But he denied it, saying, 'Woman, I do not know him.' And a little later some one else saw him and said, 'You also are one of them.' But Peter said, 'Man, I am not.' And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, 'Certainly this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean.' But Peter said, 'Man, I do not know what you are saying.' And immediately, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, 'Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly. "

Now that was Peter before the Baptism with the Holy Spirit. That was Peter -- big, courageous, physically strong, yet scared of a little maid in the courtyard, unwilling to be counted for what he believed in. Loved ones, so often it is inconvenient to oppose the dirty joke. I agree with you. It's just not appropriate. Often it's just better to ignore the thing. But there are times when it's certainly right not to snigger with the rest. And there are other times when it's right to speak out and say what you believe.

There are times in business where it isn't terribly appropriate. You haven't the right to tell the boss that he's being dishonest in the income tax returns, that isn't your prerogative. There are times when you just have to bear it. But there are other times when you know fine well you should be counted whatever it costs you. There are other moments in our lives when it's not a case of what people think of us, it's a case of doing something that is actually inconvenient for us. This was inconvenient for Peter. He didn't want to mess up his life with his own trial following quickly on Jesus. He didn't want to continue but instead to work it out his own way. There are often situations like that that you and I face.

It's inconvenient or it's not the comfortable thing to do and yet the voice inside us says you should do. But we are scared or afraid either for ourselves or for our reputation and we keep quiet. That's what Peter did before the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. A mighty change took place. Just turn to Acts 2:14 and you'll find the mighty change.

You remember Peter wouldn't admit it before the little maid -- now he's standing before the crowd that crucified Jesus. "But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.'"

And then do you see in Acts 2:22: "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know - this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. But God raised him up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it."

Now that's a complete change - a complete transformation. No fear, no timidity, no discomfort, no fear of the consequences, no concern for himself, absolute freedom, absolute liberty to say what was true and to be real. Now the difference loved ones is there in Acts 1. You remember Jesus is speaking to the apostles and He says in verse 8.

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." And the fulfillment was you remember in Acts 2:1. "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Now that's what makes the difference.

If you say to me, "Well, where do I stand? I do believe my sins are forgiven. I believe this is a good place for me to be and I believe all the things that you're saying here. I believe all those things and I believe I am going to heaven. Well, where do I stand? Am I not baptized with the Holy Spirit?"

Loved ones, the situation I found in my life was that the Holy Spirit seemed to come into the darkness of my own heart like a little candle. Until He came into my heart, I didn't even know the heart was very dark. I said to God, "Lord, I want that candle to burn in my heart, I want to let it burn." I received an assurance from God that He was pleased with me, that He had forgiven my sins and that He would receive me into heaven. Then that candle started to burn brighter.

I think many of you are in that situation. The Holy Spirit is in you. That's how you have been born

of God. That's why you're even here this morning. He is in you. Now the flame is beginning to burn brighter and you're beginning to see some of the darkness in the corners of your heart (which you couldn't see until the Holy Spirit came in). Then loved ones, there came a time in my life when God said, "Now are we going to deal with those dark corners or are you going to try to keep this candle alight in your heart and maintain the darkness there?"

In other words, "Are you willing to let me take this candle and take it into every corner of your life until your whole life is filled with this light?" That's why this Book often talks about the baptism of the Holy Spirit as being filled with the Spirit. Loved ones, that's the difference. That's the difference between a person who is baptized with the Spirit and a person who is born of the Spirit.

A person who is baptized with the Spirit is filled with the Holy Spirit inside and therefore anointed with the Holy Spirit outside so that they have the fruit of the Spirit in their life and they have the gifts of the Spirit available for ministry. Those are power-filled lives. Those lives begin to walk in the power of the apostles. Those lives begin to be used by Jesus to transform the places where they work to bring people to Jesus week-by-week, month-by-month. Those lives, loved ones, are the lives of abundant lives. Those are the lives that God has planned for us. Loved ones, that's what we're called to and that's what you're called to.

It's a life where you are filled with the Holy Spirit. It's not a life where the Holy Spirit is someone whom you control. You must admit, isn't that a tendency of many of us here in this room? We know the presence of the Holy Spirit in us. Even those of us who may not be Christians, may not be children of God this morning, even we know the working of the Holy Spirit within us. But we hold Him within a box. We keep Him contained. We keep Him limited. But we do not let Him become the Lord of our lives. That's why many of us here will testify to Jesus being our Savior and will testify to being saved really "in" our sins.

We'll testify to having been forgiven our sins but we're not saved "from" our sins. And we don't know Jesus as our Lord. Because of course Jesus is not Lord at all unless He is Lord of all. You know that so well, don't you? We knew it as children in class at school. If we were willing to obey the teacher just on certain issues but there were even two issues that we would not obey him, then he was not really master of that classroom. He wasn't. It didn't matter. When it came to those two issues, we would do what we wanted. So he wasn't master. We were just letting him play master.

Do you see it's the same with Jesus? We're just letting Him play Lord until He is Lord of all in our lives. What does being filled with the Holy Spirit mean? I'll share a verse with you that I shared last Sunday evening. A dear verse in John, towards the end of John 21 loved ones. Jesus was explaining to Peter how he was going to die and it's reckoned you know that Peter died by crucifixion and Jesus was explaining this to him.

John 21:18 -- "Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish to go." That's the difference. When you're born of the Spirit, know Jesus as your Savior, know the forgiveness of your sins but are not yet baptized with the Holy Spirit, then you're young. You go where you want.

The Holy Spirit says, "I want you to call on that person. I'd like you to pray about this person. I'd like you to do this with your career. I'd like you to spend the afternoon speaking to that

person. I'd like you to read this book." You say, "Well, I certainly will think about that. Now it's a sunny day. I do have things to do for the wife. I do have things to do for the children. I have the garden to get done. I have several other things. I'll certainly try to work that in." That's what you do when you're born of the spirit and not baptized with the spirit.

You're like a little child. You go where you wish but then Jesus says, "There'll come a time when you grow old when another will gird you and you will be carried even where you do not want to go." That's what it's like when you're baptized with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit at last is Lord and Master of your life. You're at last giving up the control of your own life to Jesus and to His Spirit and you begin to live that exciting life that has the glory of the unpredictable in it and you find yourself delivered out of your old static ways.

Have you ever felt old? Have you ever been 20 and felt old? Then you're 25 and you feel old -- then 30 and 40 and 80. You shouldn't feel old at 80! I know there's a dear brother here who is 70 who doesn't feel old at all. You shouldn't feel old. But have you ever felt old? Have you ever felt "I am into a rut? Life goes this way; I go to church on Sunday morning, I have lunch, then I go out and do some gardening. Then in the evening I watch a little TV. On Monday I hit the office." Life is utterly predictable.

Loved ones, that's not the way with the wind. It's not the way with the breezes in the springtime or the summer. They blow wherever they will and you don't know where they come from and you don't know where they go. You see a bird flying in the air (it hasn't filed its flight plan with some control tower) and it just joyfully goes where it wants. There's a delight in all of nature that is God's will for you and me. But it can only be if you will come to the place in your life where you will allow the Holy Spirit to be the Lord of your life.

Loved ones, He has a completely new person to make out of you, utterly different. Do you know you're a robot? You're a stuffed robot at the moment, you really are. Compared with the way you would walk in the Holy Spirit, you walk like that. You're like a puppet compared with what God wants to make you filled with the Holy Spirit. And the key to it all is what the Bible says in Acts 5:32.

"God gives the Holy Spirit to them that ask." If those of you who were here last Sunday evening would bear with me, I'll just tell it quickly.

You're driving along. It's your life. Jesus stops you. Some preacher, some Sunday school teacher, some dad or mom, a Billy Graham crusade, a little tract somebody gives you, something in your life like a death causes you to stop. You stop. You see that Jesus is God's son, that he has died for you and that he wants to come into your life. You pray to receive Jesus and you receive Him in. He sits beside you and then you drive on and He says, "Turn left." And you turn left. He says, "Turn right." And you turn right. Then He says, "Go up that hill." But you say, "Well, it's very steep Lord. There's an easier way around. We do not need to go that way."

Some of us keep on saying that. We come to the next hill and we say the same thing. We come to the next sharp turn and we say the same thing. We come to the next place where we have to give somebody a ride in the back because Jesus tells us and we say the same thing. We keep saying, "No, no, no." Eventually we can't hear anything coming from the person beside us at all. That's one way to go.

If you go that way, your life gets more and more boring and more and more static and more and more dead. There's another way to go. You're driving along. Jesus says, "Go up that hill", you say, "I'll go Lord." He says, "Now go down, see that muddy road there, go right down through that. It doesn't

matter about how the car will look or what people will think of you. Go down through it." You go down it. He says, "Turn left" and you turn left.

Then you say, "Lord, I don't need to be doing this. I am going to get out." And so you get out and say, "Lord, will you come around?" Then you come around and sit in the passenger seat. You put Jesus in the driver's seat and you say, "Lord, wherever you want to go, that's where I want to go.

Whatever you want to do, that's what I want to do. Whatever you would like to do with my life this afternoon, that's what I want to do." And you give Him the right and the freedom to carry you where He will.

Now, loved ones that's the life baptized with the Holy Spirit. That's a life that begins to have a power of purity from within that lifts you and carries you on wings. Loved ones, that's for every one of us. It's for you. You're meant to have a fertile life. You're meant to have a life that begets and produces more and more children. You're meant to be a father and mother in Christ, to hundreds of people. Your life is meant to be prosperous and producing and creative. That's God's will for you, and for each one of us.

Now loved ones, I don't care if you're sitting there and saying, "Brother, that's for you. You're a speaker or a preacher and I can understand that." That's silliness, that's foolishness because the preaching is nothing and the speaking is nothing. Each one of us will stand before Jesus on the last day and He will say, "What have I done with your life?" And we'll say, "Well, we lived a good life. We were happy. We left things for our children and we set a good example." And Jesus will say, "I didn't do that with your life. Everywhere where I have come, I have begotten children for myself. Every body that I have lived in has produced others. Look around me. Here's Peter. Here are the sons and daughters that he had. Here's John, here are the sons and daughters that he had. Then you see here's a dear little lady whom nobody knew. Here are the thousands that she begot in Jesus. Here is a guy who worked at a bench all day -- at machinery. Here are the thousands that he begot." That's what it will be like loved ones. We're all in the same boat.

Can you tell me any other way to spend this life? I mean it is going quickly, isn't it? It's going fast. There's less and less sense to it. Every piece of news that comes from abroad makes less and less sense. "There is only one thing that matters in this passing world of sin -- that our lives should tell for Jesus and be of some account for Him. Let us then be up in doing, strong in faith and scorning fear, trusting Him to keep us faithful in His service here." Are you baptized with the Holy Spirit? Oh, I pray that you'll seek that. That's God's will for you. Let us pray.

Dear Father, we don't want to be among those who are lukewarm. We don't want, our Father, to be those who are lords of their own lives but still proclaim that You are their Savior. Father, we want Jesus to be our Savior and our Lord. Oh Father, we do not want Jesus to have died in vain. We do not want to give Him half the price of what He has paid for by His own life.

We believe that we are not our own, we are bought with a price. Father we want to give you that total gift of our lives. Lord Jesus, will you reveal to each one of us what it means to be carried where we would not even want to go by your Spirit. And Lord, will you bring us now to the place where we say "yes". We allow you to baptize us with the Holy Spirit that our lives may be rescued out of the death of self-rule and lifted into the life and delight of Christ's rule. We ask this for your glory and for the benefit of untold hundreds who are waiting for us to speak and to come. Amen.

