

Jekyll or Hyde?

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I don't know how many of you have actually read Robert Louis Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde." I read it over again this week and those of you who have read it know that Dr. Jekyll, the good respectable doctor was at times taken over by the murderous lustful Mr. Hyde that was his other self. Towards the end of the novel, he writes it all down, of course, in a confession and he describes how the drugs ceased to work, how he was able to call up the worst part of himself, that Mr. Hyde.

But how the drugs ceased to be able to get rid of that Mr. Hyde and indeed as the years went on, that Mr. Hyde began to take him over completely. He says this: "All things therefore seem to point to this: that I was slowly losing hold of my original and better self and becoming slowly incorporated with my second and worse. Between these two, I now felt I had to choose."

"Between these two I now felt I had to choose." And so do we because there isn't one of us who has even heard of that story, who does not recognize that Stevenson spoke for us because every one of us knows that there dwells within us a self that our friends do not know and have not seen. We too have felt at times that we're losing touch with the better self that our friends see. Stevenson, of course, even though he was a dear child of God, and you can see that in some of his poetry, he did not tell the answer that God has given for us.

And here it is at this communion table. This death of Jesus was the death of all our old selves. It was the death of the human race -- that's the meaning of it. This table sets forth the death of Jesus Christ of Nazareth in 29 AD. And all of this dear book that we have here, all of this dear book tells us that when that man died, he was simply setting forth a complete remaking of the race that had taken place in him even before the foundation of the world. So loved ones, every one of us here in this room can be free, once and for all and forever, from that Mr. Hyde within us, that's true.

Now, loved ones really if you choose not to believe it, that Hyde within you will kill you, it really will. It will destroy you and as the years pass it will just get more and more subtle in its manifestations. Loved ones, you cannot live with it, without it taking over your life. You have to as Jekyll himself said, "You have to come to a place where you choose between the two." And the truth this morning is that God is offering you an opportunity to believe what he has said he has done in his son Jesus. That he has destroyed that old self part of you that manifests itself in temper and anger and envy and that was destroyed with Jesus and you can believe that this morning and you can go out of here in the power of that, that's right.

Don't sit there and say, "Oh, I don't know how to make it real." Believe, believe -- that's what God has said, simply believe. Believe that it is done away with in Jesus. Believe that when he died that was destroyed with him and you will see that the power of it in your life will be destroyed and the Spirit of Jesus will begin to take over, and loved ones that's it, you know.

Forget all the deep theology and all the labyrinthine twisting of our own minds. That's the plain simple Gospel: that you can be free this morning because God has already destroyed that part of you that is spoiling your life and if you will simply believe that, the power of that reality through the Spirit of Jesus will begin to manifest itself in you. Just three simple steps. First, if we

confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Be real this morning about your sins, just be real, confess. The Greek word "confess" means "raising your hand and agreeing with God". "I agree Lord, that is a sin" -- that's it. That's usually where the trouble is, where you're trying to pretend a certain thing is right and it's not. First of all confess, repent and believe the Gospel. Second, repent. Change your whole mind -- that's what repent means. Stop thinking of yourself as living your own life. See that that self has gone and that your life is now in the hands of the Son of your Maker and he can live again his life in you if you'll give him room, that's it.

Thirdly, "to as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become the sons of God." Receive Jesus' Spirit into yourself by faith this morning and go out and let that Christ Spirit live in you. The Christ Spirit that actually controls the swallows as they soar in the sky. It's that Christ Spirit that makes the breakers roll on the Hawaiian beaches. It's that Christ Spirit that makes the snows lie on Everest. It's that Christ Spirit that makes the daffodils come up in springtime. Accept that that Christ Spirit is in you now and respond to him, that's it.

Loved ones, your life can change this morning, really. Now if you want to take part in communion that's what you need to do. None of us are members of this church, you don't need to be a member of this church, you just need to be real about those things. So, loved ones 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.

We do not presume to come to this Thy Table, most merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in Thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy Table. But Thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so by faith, we will eat the bread and drink the wine, that we will proclaim the Lord's death till He come.

Grant us therefore Lord Jesus so to eat this bread and so to drink this wine that you yourself may come inside us and may possess us and may fill us and energize us. Lord Jesus we want to live that life above self, freed from ourselves and our own enslavements, and possessed and controlled and delivered by you.

The Lord Jesus, on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and broke it and said, This is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of Me. In like manner He took the cup after supper saying, This is the cup of the New Covenant in My blood, this do, as often as you drink it. For as often as you eat the bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death till He come.