

## Putting Things Right

1 Samuel 15:12-26

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I think you'll agree that one of the reasons why that Old Testament lesson we read is difficult for us to accept is because we have continued to try to persuade ourselves (in our generation especially) that there's nothing so bad that you can't fix without pain. Of course, many of us are beginning to see the writing on the wall in our society. We are beginning to see that it's that very attitude that is allowing crime and violence to get the upper hand until we ourselves begin to see the possibility of our society destroying itself.

So it does seem, loved ones, that if you don't accept that there are certain things that are so bad that they can only be dealt with by death, those things themselves will eventually grow so strong that they will destroy you and your society. I think that's what that scripture says very plainly. You can get to the point in your own life where evil spirits or wickedness or sin or selfishness get such a grip on your life, on the life of your children -- even believe it or not, in regard to the things you own, the animals, and the property -- that the whole lot become infested with the spirit of evil that we know exists behind the fabric of this universe. It gets to the very point where the only thing God can do with it is either flood it out with a universal flood or destroy it as he destroyed the Amalekites.

Now, loved ones, you are the same and I am the same. We have bits of fluff that we keep trying to get off our hands. We have sins inside us that we keep. We brush it off that hand, and it catches on the other hand. We try to brush it off that hand; it catches again on the first hand. We have sins that are so much part of us that we cannot get rid of them. That's why Isaiah cried out, "I am a man of unclean lips." He didn't say, "I speak unclean things." That's putting the blame where it ought to rest squarely. Not on the unclean words but on the lips and on the man behind the lips. It's the same with you and me.

We're nowhere near solving the problems in our lives until we admit, "Lord, I am a man of unclean lips. I do not just feel a little criticism and resentment toward my friends. I am full of it, full of it. I am criticism myself. My heart is criticism and I need to be separated from the sin that has become part of me." Loved ones, that's why Jesus died. That's why the Bible says, "He made Him to be sin who knew no sin." He took your sin that is part of you and He put it into His Son. He couldn't do that without taking you with it because you stick to it. You're part of it (sin). He put both you and the sin into His Son and He destroyed it there and raised you up new.

That's what this dear communion table means. That God did just that. He took the unclean part of you, which had to be all of you because it was part of you, and put it in his Son and wiped it out and made you new. You can experience that this morning, if you will consciously and deliberately bring before God all the sin that you know is in your life.

Communion is only effectual in the lives of those here this morning who will consciously and deliberately bring before God the things in their lives that they know are wrong. Only then is God able to flow the spirit of His Son's heart purity into you. As you go out that door this morning, you've to ask yourself, Could Samuel stand and meet you there at the door and say "What then is this

bleating of the sheep in my ears and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

If you take out with you this morning some of the sin that you know is in your life and that you have not put to death in Jesus, then no way are you going to leave any different from the way you came in. That's true. If you say, "What will really make this communion work for me?" that's it. If there's anything in your heart that you know is wrong, any practice, any habit, any words that you speak, any way you deal with your money or your job or your work or your friends, anything that you're doubtful about, whether it's in God's will or not, loved ones cast it into the fire this morning.

Say, "Lord Jesus, I know that was destroyed in you and I thank You. I am willing to let it go." If you do that, at the end of the communion service you'll sense the Spirit of Jesus coming into your life. You'll sense a spirit of Sonship. You'll sense that God is your Father and that He has forgiven you. So that's how God deals with us this morning.

Loved ones, will you deal honestly then in regard to everything in your life? Don't have any bleating of the sheep or any lowing of the oxen. Don't have anything that you've tried to protect this morning. It makes all the difference between a full, glorious, clean life that has the beauty of the waves in Hawaii washing through. That's the way we're meant to be.

Our hearts are meant to be clean. Our lives are meant to be joyous and spontaneous but that can only be if the spirit of God flows freely through them. And He can only flow freely through where He is not hitting lowing of oxen here or the bleating of sheep there -- where there is no obstacle because all obstacles have been confessed and let go of.

So loved ones, that's the vital part that we have to do at communion this morning. The Savior has done the rest. We have to do the confessing and the repenting of our sins. So will you stand now to 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.

Dear God, in these moments of quietness, while the bread and the wine will be brought around, we would deal with you about our own lives. Lord God, we know that your eyes are purer than can behold iniquity and we know Lord that we are either destroyed and remade here on earth or we are burned out forever in hell. And so Lord, we would deal with You as dying men and women who know that we're getting ready for a great journey that we almost take. Lord now is the time. Now is the time to seek the Lord. This is the day of salvation.

We see there's no easy way to get rid of the sheep and the oxen and the unclean spoil. We see there's only one way and that is the violent way. We rid ourselves of it this moment by the exercise of our wills. We thank you Lord Jesus that the power of these things has been destroyed by you on Calvary. You took these things and you allowed them to be destroyed with all their dominating power and rule over us. So we see that the moment we say yes, that moment their power has gone. Lord, we would each do that as the moments tick away during this service.

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 to receive thy Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, that the bread we break may be unto us the communion of his body, and the cup of blessing, which we bless, may be the communion of his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him and he in us.

The Lord Jesus, on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and broke it and said, "This is My body which is given 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 wine you proclaim the Lord's death till He come.