

Deliverance From an Evil Heart

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Sometimes it is good to break from the Roman series and I try to do that whenever God's Spirit seems to be guiding me to. So this morning I'd like to mention to you that some of us here this morning are what we call Christians, and some of us aren't Christians, and I know that word means a lot of different things but broadly speaking, some of us here this morning have at some time in our lives confessed our sins and repented of them and received Jesus' Spirit into us and some of us here have heard about it a lot, but we really never have ever done that either privately or publicly.

But many who have done that, many who are Christians here this morning, share one thing in common with those of us who aren't Christians. Not all Christians, but many Christians share something in common with people who aren't Christians. They have a dirty heart, they have a dirty heart. That is, they're sitting here this morning and I don't know that you can help, as one man said, "The swallow is flying over your head but you can prevent them building nests in your hair" and you can't prevent all kinds of thoughts from the whole world that is around us, flying around in this room, you can't.

You see a nice girl or you see a nice guy or some half thought occurs to your mind, or some half moment of worry about the car or some half moment of grief or covetousness about something you saw in a window even on the way to church this morning. You can't help those half-second thoughts occurring, but many of us find that our hearts rise to those. In other words, our hearts act like blotting papers, they absorb those things and they don't only absorb them but they rise to them and they carry on so you can't help the half-second thought that Satan or the powers of the world send into our minds. But many of us here this morning, who have received Jesus as our Savior, find that our hearts are still unclean. In that, when that half-second temptation comes, we embrace it.

There is something in our heart that is not really clean. We find it, of course, when it gets that iron grip on us; it can get an iron grip on you in worry. We don't normally think of worry as a sin, but it is, you know because God said repeatedly, "Have no anxiety about anything, do not be anxious for anything, what you eat or what you'll put on." But many of us find it in worry. The worry when you think, now what am I going to do about the money, what am I going to do about the car, what am I going to do about the job, what am I going to do about my wife, what am I going to do about my children and it gets an iron grip on you. You know what I mean, it just holds there, right about there usually and it just grips you and keeps gripping you and you try to break away from it but you can't.

That's really because your heart is not yet clean, truly. It's really you worry because you don't fully trust God, and you don't fully trust God because you partially still trust yourself, and you still partially trust yourself because you still partially want your way. So many of us find that an unclean heart shows itself in worry and anxiety that grips us and will not let go.

Many of us find it in resentment. We have real carnal fits at times. We fall into real carnal fits. We either go all cold and run a cold war with our husband or our wife or a cold war with our friend or our colleague at work or we just sink into ourselves in self-pity and kind of cry ourselves to sleep. So many of us find our unclean heart shows itself in the resentment that is within us, resentment at what people are doing to us, at what the world is doing to us, at what God is doing to us.

Many of us find it in covetousness and greed. It's okay to look at a motorbike, it's okay to look at a car, all right to look at a house, all right to look at a coat but the killer with many of us is, we not only look at those things but we think about them and keep on thinking about them and even when we're trying not to think about them, the heart is going back to coveting them and to being greedy for them.

Now loved ones that's what I mean by an unclean heart. It may not show itself outwardly at all, you see. I think I could stand up here and look very holy and still have a very unclean heart inside, and that's the case with many who have received Jesus as their Savior. They've turned away from the outward things. For some of us it was smoking, some of us it was drinking, some of us it was swearing, some of us it was stealing, some was lying. We've turned away from the outward things in our life, from the sins that everybody talks about that Jesus died for, and we've received his Spirit into us.

But we still find within us an attitude that does not look like our outward lives at all. In other words we find we have a heart that keeps on sending up all kinds of dirt. Now that's what Jesus said and you might remember the verse is Matthew 15:19. I suppose somebody was asking him, "Oh well, now is it eating the right food or drinking the right liquids that make you holy?" and he said, "No, no that isn't what makes you holy or unholy at all, those outwards things."

Matthew 15:19, "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man." "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander." And many of us who have received Jesus into our hearts find that there still exist within us those things. That's what this book teaches, you know. This book teaches that that's the situation.

Galatians 5:17, "For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would." Many of us who call ourselves Christians find that. We find that the Spirit of Jesus is within us, He makes us want to come to church, makes us want to read the Bible, makes us want to pray, gives us a lot of good desires, but alongside his Spirit, there seems another spirit that is working against that Spirit within us and that is the spirit that seems to pollute our hearts.

Now most of us have taken the attitude, "Well, that's life, that's life -- it's an eternal struggle between good and evil, that's what life is about. That's the best that God can offer us." That's what most Christians do, they have received the Spirit of Jesus into them and then that Spirit has to fight against the spirit of carnality or the spirit of self that is within them and that's the battle, that's the battle of faith. So, most children of God have settled down to an eternal struggle to overcome those things.

Now loved ones that's not the way, that's not the answer. I think I can explain why to you. It's in Romans 7:15 that the problem is stated. Most of us even who have received Jesus, this is what we say: "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." In other words, the Spirit of Jesus within me wants to do certain things, but I end up doing the very thing I hate. "Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good." So there's a part of me that's saying that's good. "So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me." Loved ones, that's the problem, it's sin.

Now let me explain sin. Sin is living as if there's no God and it's living in dependence on the world and your ability with your mind to get from the world what you need. Instead of depending on God and depending in faith on Him, you depend on the world and on your ability to manipulate the world to get what you want. That's what sin is.

All the church statements of doctrine agree on this one fact -- it's strange, they disagree on all kinds of things but they all agree in this one fact: that even in the regenerate man or woman -- that is, in the man or woman who was born of God -- even in the regenerate man or woman there continues within the power of sin in the form of the carnal nature. Now they all differ as to what you can do about it but they all do agree about that, that even in the person who is converted, who is born of God's Spirit, who has received Jesus as their Savior, they still find within them a heart that is unclean and that is dirty. A heart that is governed by sin, which is an attitude of independence of God and dependence on the world.

In other words here is what it's like. Do you remember ever reading "Gulliver's Travels" and you remember he found himself in a country of dwarfs and Lilliputs? I remember a picture in that book where old Gulliver was laid down to sleep and the Lilliputians had come and tied all kinds of ropes to him, do you remember that? They tied ropes to his hairs and his ears and all these little-little people put stakes in the ground so that he couldn't get up and when he wakened, he was tied completely to the earth.

That's what it's like to have the power of sin governing your life. It's like being tied to the earth. "I want to be generous, but oh I am so dependent on money for my security that I can't bear to give it away", or "I want to be free and easy whether I buy that car or not, whether I get that house or not, but oh, I am so dependent on owning that car or that house for what other people will think of me that I just must have it." We're tied, tied through our dependence to the world and to people so that we can't do what we know is right. It's like a man or woman tied.

You know if you have the power of sin in your life even though you're Christian, you're probably experiencing that, you're thinking "the good that I would, I can't" -- I'm tied in all kinds of ways. "I tried to move this way, I can't, try to move that way, and I can't. I can't get clear."

A man freed from the power of sin is Gulliver standing up free, no ties at all, no ropes to him, they're all broken and he is able to move as he wants and he is not tied to the earth at all and he's free to depend on God alone. Now, how do you get from there to there?

And you see what so many of us believe is "Well, I get out my little pen knife and I go to work one rope by rope and I cut this one, deal with greed, saw through greed, have a rest for a couple of years. And then go to it on anger and I saw another rope, three years rest now because I got greed and anger under control. Then I work on pride." By this time we're about 67 years of age and yet that is the attitude that most of us who are children of God, have. We call it growing in grace.

It's not growing in grace at all. We can't even begin to grow in grace because we are not free from the power of sin but we are manfully trying to saw through these things and that's the way most of us do. Loved ones, there is a you here that has had all those strings broken, that has had the power of sin broken and that can be made real in you in a moment by faith. That's it.

Actually you can't do it by working out, you can't, and that's the tragedy. We're told so often pray

more, read the Bible more, but you can't get rid of those things by working at it. Maybe after 50 years you only have 2500 strings tying you to the earth instead of 2600, but you'll still be tied. The only way is by faith.

You remember in the desert, Moses with the Israelites complaining as always, about what they hadn't got, what God hadn't provided for them, hadn't provided water. Do you remember what God said? He said to Moses, "Go to this rock that I'll show you and strike it and water will gush forth." Now that's what faith achieves. Faith is believing what God has said and then doing what He tells you to do.

Now that's what it is, it's believing what He says and then doing what He tells you to do, whether it makes sense to you or not. Now many of us who are suffering as children of God under the power of sin, we would say, "Strike the rock? That is dumb!" or "I'll screw a faucet into this rock and then maybe we'll get some water and I'll lead some pipe from the spring." Now loved ones, that isn't faith, that's trying to use your own ingenuity to bring about something as with those of us who are trying to cut through the ropes, who claim we're growing in grace.

"Oh yeah, I am trying to overcome this power of sin within me by my will power and by reading books on positive thinking and by trying harder." You may as well screw a faucet into the rock and start leading pipes up. It's experienced by faith, not by work. It's experienced by faith, not by work. See, the power is sin. That's what prevents you doing what you know you ought. Sin is the power and there's only one kind of person who is freed from sin and you could find out who that is in Romans 6:7.

Romans 6:7: "For he who has died is freed from sin." The person who has died, that is, the person who has died has no longer the pull of the things in the world or the things in the earth, no longer the pull to be liked by everybody because it doesn't matter whether anybody likes him or not. A person who is dead is freed from the power of sin. But there is a way to die without dying. Look at 2 Corinthians 5:14, "For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all;" and that's what so many of us who are children of God know but we don't know the next clause, "therefore all have died." When Christ died, all of us died too. How does that become real in your own life?

Well, it's in Romans 6:11, loved ones. Romans 6:11: "So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." That's what faith is. Faith is believing that when Jesus died, you died also. When he was crucified to the world and the world was crucified to him, so were you and then it's doing what his Spirit tells you to do and you're freed in a moment from the power of sin. In other words, freedom from the power of sin comes by the same means by which freedom from the guilt of sin came. It comes by faith, not by trying but by faith.

In other words, holiness comes not by self-discipline and by will power, though those all follow holiness, but holiness itself comes by faith. It comes by faith in your death with Christ and your resurrection with him, and then in your being filled with his Holy Spirit, but it comes by faith, loved ones.

You see I think a lot of us here in this room are still trying to bring it about ourselves. Well you can't, it comes by faith, in a moment. Just as Moses heard God saying to him, "There'll be water will come from this rock", so you hear God saying to you, "Your unclean, impure heart was crucified with my Son, I destroyed it and there's a clean heart for you, I have it here on a shelf in heaven,

you can have it now", faith is believing that.

Then you remember God said to Moses, "Strike the rock" and Moses didn't say, "What has that to do with giving water?" He struck the rock. God is saying to you all kinds of things that don't seem to you connected with the reality of your freedom from the power of sin. Do it, whatever it is, do it. It's the Holy Spirit telling you. He is telling you to take certain attitudes, or he is telling you to take certain views of things, do it. Follow the Holy Spirit. Do what he tells you. Strike whatever rock he tells you and you'll find water coming forth that will wash you clean.

Now loved ones it's a miracle but it doesn't matter what man you look at whether it's Moody or Wesley or whether it's Finney or whether it's Nee, doesn't matter who you look at. All the men of God and the women of God that have been used powerfully by him have found that their inner impurity could only be dealt with by faith, not by human effort, and that's the miracle of it you know, and that's the only way that you'll ever have a completely clean heart.

Of course, when you have a clean heart then the opposite is happening. What Jesus said, "For out of the heart come anger and strife and jealousy" -- then from out of the heart come love and joy and peace and long suffering, and then the Christian life becomes natural and not a bear of a burden to carry.

So, will you think about it, loved ones, that just as you entered into freedom from the guilt of your sins, by faith that Jesus had died for you, so you enter into freedom from the power of sin by faith that you have died with Jesus. If you say, "What are the conditions?" Just to be willing to have a clean heart, that's it. Would you be willing to renounce all sin in your life? Would you be willing never to sin again, would you?

See, I think a lot of us kind of sigh and say, "Oh thank goodness, I don't have to be willing for that", -- you'll never be free from sin. Well, actually you can be free from sin and that's what God wants, but the real issue is would you be willing ever to be free from sin, would you? Would you ever be willing never to be able to cry yourself to sleep at night, to pity yourself, to be filled with resentment, to be filled with greed, to get your own way whatever it cost, would you?

Well, that's what's entailed in coming to the place where faith springs up in your heart to grasp Jesus. I know this is terrible, I know that I shouldn't do this, but I'd rather ask you, have you any questions? Is there any way I could make that plainer?

See, it's so true and it's life and I want you to know it and I want you to have no excuse that will prevent you from entering into it. First step is to believe it's possible, see that's the first step. First believe it's possible. Anybody want to ask anything? Don't think, "Oh, I'll spoil the atmosphere if I ask. No, it's better to be sensible and this is practical and God wants us to be free from unclean hearts.

(Question from Congregation): How do you get the faith?

Rev. O'Neill: Good, how do you get the faith? A lot of people think you pump it up and so a lot of people say "I am dead, I am dead, I am dead, I am dead, I am dead" and they try auto suggestion and it's not that brother, you're right.

The first thing is to go to the Holy Spirit and say, "Holy Spirit I believe that this is possible

and I believe you can do this for me. Will you show me if there's any sin in my life that I am not really willing to let go of? Will you show me if there's any way in which I am not ready to be wholly purified in Jesus on the Cross? Will you show me any way in which I am not ready to be completely recreated?" And then brother, the Holy Spirit goes to work and at least with me over a period of months, He showed me, closer, closer: pride, ambition and then it eventually gets to the self. That's what holds all the strings attached. It's the self, and he eventually shows you how wretched and grotesque and monstrous that self is and how it appears in God's eyes, how hateful it is and how it sets itself up as God and then, when you come to a place where you say, "Lord, I am willing, I am willing", there's nothing to do with that but to wipe it out. "I am willing for anything whatever it costs." Then it's amazing. Faith is the gift of God. Faith springs up in your heart, that's the beauty.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit comes easily. Faith springs up in the heart that is fully consecrated. It's not a matter of "I must make myself believe", we have been crucified with Christ, the moment we say, "Lord I accept that", that moment faith comes down from God, the Holy Spirit comes down in answer to faith, that's it brother. I know it's amazing but it does, faith springs up in a fully consecrated heart.

If you loved ones say, "Oh I have real trouble with faith" you don't have trouble with faith, you have trouble with sin, you have trouble with un-confessed sin, that unconfessed sin holds faith down. Faith is the gift of God to any man or woman who is willing to enter into what God has done for us in Jesus.

One last thing, "Dear Jesus thou hast bled and died for me." Think about it, your own nature, your carnal nature, your perverted personality. Do you see if that had been the only perverted personality in the whole world, do you see that the only way God could destroy it was by destroying His Son? There's a real way in which each of us has to say, "Dear Jesus, thou hast bled and died for me and me only", and loved ones, Jesus has taken the dirtiest worst in you and me, taking it into himself and allowed his Father to wipe it out there forever.

What right have any of us to continue to live under it? What right have we? You wouldn't treat a dog like that, would you? You wouldn't treat a dog like that, you wouldn't kick his bleeding body under the chair and say, "Yeah, I am going to live this way anyway whatever you've done for me, I don't know what you did it for, I don't know why you died, I don't know what you bore all that for but I am going to live my own way, anyway."

Well, you wouldn't treat a dog like that. So, there's a deep way in which every one of us here has to say, "Dear Jesus, thou hast bled and died for me and me only, and now what am I going to do with you? Loved ones there's no need for any of us tomorrow to have one unclean thought or feeling in our hearts.

(Question from Congregation): What do you do when the atmosphere in the work place or office is so different from home or from church, and it seems to influence you?

Rev. O'Neill: Loved ones, you see it influences brother because there's something still of that inside us. That's the killer. I think what you find when you receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit is, he gives you words to say that are right. He gives you words to say that are right, but the killer with so many of us is we've received Jesus' Spirit inside us but we also fill up the spirit of self and so Jesus gives us words but we can't hear it for all the noise of the spirit of self and

so the outside world finds an answer inside us.

When you get rid of that once and for all, then you find yourself filled with Jesus' Spirit and you'll find he has an immediate answer for everything and that's why so many of us live powerless lives because we're not wholly dependent on Jesus. We're partly dependent on self so we become tongue tied when the opportunity comes to say something.

I think often, I think the first thing is, boy, we have the courage not to laugh at dirty jokes. The second step is, we have the courage to say what Jesus is telling us to say whatever the cost, even you see if it means crucifixion. See, that's the beauty about dying, they can't do anything worse to you than death and after you've gone through that it doesn't matter. That's what enables us to begin to obey.

Now it can't be without the power of the Spirit within us and that power of the fullness of the Spirit, loved ones, comes through you personally dealing with Jesus. "Lord Jesus have you really taken this power within me that keeps making me unable to obey and have you destroyed it? Then Lord, that's what I want, that's what I want", and you know if you ever say, "Oh did it really happen?" see Acts 15:9, God gave the Holy Spirit to them as he did to us and cleansed their hearts by faith. It's written in the Bible, Acts 15:9. "Cleansed their hearts by faith" -- not by endless effort, but by faith. Let us pray.

Dear Father I thank you for my dear friends who are listening so long and Lord we would pray for each other. Father, we do know that this is exactly where many of us are living and we don't want to live there and we do want to have clean hearts. So Lord we believe this is possible. Your word says, "You shall love thy God with all thy heart and soul and strength and mind", and Lord we don't believe you give us commandments that are impossible to fulfill.

So, Lord we come to you saying that we believe it is possible to have a clean heart and we ask you Holy Spirit, to begin to reveal to us any darkness there is in our own lives and Lord we would hunt down sin wherever we can find it and we would renounce it all until we can come to you Lord Jesus and say, "Lord what you did for me, I am willing to accept and receive." Then Lord we know faith will spring up in our hearts to receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Lord Jesus we commit ourselves to you to do this as long as it takes us in these coming weeks and months.

And 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 ever more. Amen.