

## Jesus' Love Brings Deliverance

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

This being Palm Sunday, we should look at what Jesus did for us on this day. So you remember last Sunday we talked about the inner conflict that most Christians in the world experience. It's the conflict expressed by those words you remember in Romans 7:15, "I do not understand my own actions for I do not do what I want but I do the evil that I hate." You remember we looked at that famous Romans 7 that is regarded as the standard for the normal Christian life. We looked at the cry towards the end of it that expresses the experience of so many of us, "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Then you remember we said that that is an utterly wrong interpretation of Romans 7 to regard it as the standard of the normal Christian life. You remember we pointed out to each other that it isn't at all a description of Paul's life after he had been delivered by Jesus. It is a flashback description of his life as a Jew living under the law and unable to do what he knew he should do.

That in fact, Romans 7 does not end at that verse 24, "Wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" It ends at Romans 7:25, the next verse, where Paul says, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord." He points out that we are delivered from this miserable impotent moral life that so many of us are caught in. You remember he said that we're delivered from it because of the fact that is stated in Roman 6:6. That fact is that our self, our old self righteous, self seeking, self asserting self, our old sinful nature, our old carnal ego was destroyed and crucified with Christ. So that the body of sin might be destroyed and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. We are in fact delivered from that. It is because of that victory that is described in Roman 6 over the defeat that is described in Romans 7 as a Jew under the law. It's because of that that Paul in summarizing the whole thing says in Romans 7:25, "Ara oun autos, So then, of myself," that's what autos means. That's the order of the Greek words. "Ara oun autos. So then, of myself," if I'm left to myself on my own without Jesus, without His death, without my death with Him on my own, with my mind I serve God's law, and with my flesh I serve sin's law.

That's what we shared, you remember, last day. That in fact Romans 7:25 is a flashback description to the old powerless life of a Jew living under the law. That we who are God's children are through Jesus delivered into a life of victory that is above that. Of course I don't think you need me to tell you how unmanageable that miserable that old self is. I mean, we all know it. We all know how we've wanted to do certain things that we know to be good. And up from within us seems to surge from almost primeval savage depths of our being, there seems to surge a monster that we cannot recognize, that wants to strike out at a loved one or uses a cutting word to slice into some heart of someone we really love. Or uproots all our best resolutions to be clean and pure and seems to release in us a lion of lust and grotesque hatred that we cannot ever think is part of us. Isn't that what we all feel? We all feel that. We feel oh, this can't be me. It can't be me, this is not me, it's like another self I have. It's like another person inside me and that's why we talk about it as our old man our old self. It's the old sinful nature that we don't seem to even regard as part of ourselves. Loved ones that's what God's word tells us was crucified with Christ. That old sinful nature of ours that wants its own way, that asserts itself and defends itself and that wants to stand up for its own rights. That wants to make all the rest of us submit to it. That was crucified with Christ. That whole attitude in us was destroyed in Jesus.

The amazing thing is you see, when Jesus was born in Mary's womb, as his body formed around him in

Mary's womb, he also began to inherit the tendencies of our race. He did. He began to inherit the tendencies of our race that does not trust its maker as its father. Of a race that at times pretends that it doesn't even have a maker or it doesn't even have a creator. He began to inherit all those tendencies. Except that from the very moment he was born, he exercised his will to reject those. So he rejected this feeling that we have, that we have a right to our way. He rejected this feeling that you and I have that we want everybody to look up to us and respect us and acknowledge us and praise us. Every time he exercised his own will, he resisted that sinful nature that in fact he inherited as we did. Those tendencies only tendencies except that he rejected them. He didn't go with them. Then the incredible thing is this. After he had formed around himself a human nature that obeyed the good desires that his Father had put in his heart. After he did that, he began to take upon himself your carnal nature and my carnal nature. You know that's our problem. Before we were born of God, we were sometimes kind to people, sometimes unkind, but it's all a kind of natural thing that we inherit from our parents or from our environment.

After we are born of Jesus and born of the spirit there begins to be felt in us a real love of God and a real love of other people. Then it's not long before we find that our personality equipment that we have to express this seem to have a law of its own. It doesn't want to express that kind of love and it seems to work against that. That's the sinful nature. We find that we're working against something all the time trying to get it out to other people. Now you see when Jesus was born of God in the womb of Mary, he not only resisted this coat of mortality or carnality, but he transformed it into a personality that would express the love that he has in his heart. When he had done that, he then went a further step and he took upon himself your carnal nature and mine, your desire for your own way and your desire to stand up for your own rights. He took my desire to be respected and your desire to be proud or to boast or to want what you want. He began to take that in upon himself and he allowed that to be burned out of existence in himself. See, that's what Second Corinthians 5:17 means; "God made Him to be sin who knew no sin." He didn't have a carnality of his own but he was made to bear our carnality in himself. It had to be burned out in some human being and he took it into himself. "He was made sin who knew no sin."

It's the same truth, loved ones, as is in Isaiah, if you want to look at it in that famous chapter that we all know, Isaiah 53 and verse 5. The first two you know are well known, "He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities." Now look at the next line, "Upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole." In other words, what God did to his son, Jesus, actually made us whole. In fact God burned out in Jesus that old self of yours. The word of God says upon him was the chastisement that made us whole and with his stripes, we are healed. You and I have a tendency to think Jesus died so that God could forgive us. God had forgiven us long before Jesus died. God had forgiven us the very first moment he saw us straying from Him. What God did in Jesus was not simply to forgive us, but to take this old self of ours that will not obey Him and to destroy it in His Son. That's why the Bible says with the chastisement that he suffered we were made whole.

You know there's another verse, Isaiah 53:12, "Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many." We have a tendency to say, you know, he bore my sins, you know. I steal something. That's a sin. I steal something else. Those are two sins. So Jesus bore the punishment for those sins so that I wouldn't have to bear them. That's not the heart of it. The heart of it is the sin that produces those sins. The way you and I don't trust God. The way we trust ourselves. The way we want to make ourselves God. The way we want to stand up on our own hind legs and have everybody worship us. That's what Jesus bore on Calvary. He bore our sin. He bore us ourselves.

So really every one of us, loved ones, have a personal interest in this day because this is the first day of the worst week that the earth ever saw. We call it Holy Week. We call it Holy Week because it's the week in which the highest act of love was ever done. But really it was an unholy week. It was the week when the son of God became the sewer for the sin of the world. It was the unholy week that Jesus ever met. It was the week when he bore all of us in himself and destroyed us and remade us. I don't know if you've ever thought of it, but when he came into Jerusalem on this day, this Palm Sunday, and all the crowd shouted, "Hosanna to the King" and threw palm branches in front of him, his own inner being had no trouble with that. His own inner being bowed down to God and said Lord, I know this is foolishness. I know I am no national king nor meant to be, nor will I have the victory that a national king would have. He had no trouble with that. Loved ones, you and I were inside him. Every wish that you have had for people to look up to you, every desire you have had to be acknowledged and respected, every desire you have had for people not to criticize you but to regard you as wonderful, every desire that you have ever had, was in Jesus and put upon him at that moment. The most wretched selfish ambition of Napoleon, of Hitler and of Nero rose up in our dear Savior's heart to grab the attention and grab the acknowledgment. The desire of every little cheerleader and every quarterback for attention and adulation, he felt inside his own heart at that moment. That's the strain he bore. When he bent that carnal nature of everybody that has ever lived in the universe under the sweetness of His own submissive love.

So don't ask for whom the bell tolls for a moment. Don't ask what happened on Palm Sunday. You and I were there on Palm Sunday. We were part of the burden that that dear man bore. It's the same as when he looked at Judas at the Last Supper. You see the old eyes, the old evasiveness. The old sliding of the eyes away from the Master's face as he prepared to go out into the night to prepare the betrayal. Jesus had no trouble with his own inner being. He had no trouble with his own inner nature loving Judas with all his heart at that moment. Inside him loved ones, dwelt all your sins of indignation against those who have treated you unjustly. Inside his heart dwelt all that kind of righteous resentment that you have felt against people who have lied to you when you have often lied yourself to them. You know how uppity we get. How dare they to deceive us or to lie to us, when we have lied to other people a thousand times. Yet you know that stiff necked self righteous indignation that we have and that mixture of self pity when we feel how could they eat supper with us and then go out and laugh behind our backs or betray us. Loved ones, all the resentment that we have ever experienced and all the resentment of any man or woman that has ever lived, rose in Jesus' heart at that moment and strained to make him resent Judas. At that moment, he bent that unbendable self of ours under his own sweet love. So you and I were actually there.

Then you know the way they took him from the garden and took him to the High Priest's house. Then trailed him off, you remember, to Pilate's, and then trailed him to Herod, and then back to Pilate. Then pushed him on to that Via Dolorosa. He had no trouble with his own inner heart. He embraced whatever his Father had for him to bear. Inside his dear heart he bore all of us and all of who have resented people who have hurt us. All the feeling that you or I have ever had that we want to strike back at people who are insulting us or treating us in undignified way. All of that rose inside him, the cry of every little heart that has ever been in a Siberian prison, the cry of every one of us who have ever screamed because someone didn't treat us right. All of that raged in his dear breast.

Loved ones, that's what he carried down the Via Dolorosa. The cross was nothing. It was the burden of all of us that he took while he bent us over into the same attitude of acceptance that he himself had. You know that cry of dereliction, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me." Inside his dear heart, there was acceptance of what his Father had for him but inside him on the cross we raged. We

joined with all the people on the outside and said, "This thing is coming apart. Evil is winning and God is losing. This is not working right. The thing is falling apart. This is an impossible tragedy that you cannot escape from." At that moment on the cross, all of us were yelling that in his ears, all of us who have never been able to hold to faith, because of the outward appearance of tragedy around us. All of that raged in his dear heart. It was all of us who called out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me." At that moment, when all the wrath of God burst upon our old sinful natures and at last wiped them out and sent them into oblivion. At that moment, despite all of us, crying and yelling, "Why have you forsaken me," he bent his head towards his Father and said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He took us with him into the Father's arms.

So loved ones, you cannot say, "I can't keep my temper." You can't. All you can say is, "I won't." You can't say, "I can't," because that is what Jesus destroyed inside himself on Calvary, your temper. You can't say, "I can't control these feelings of resentment," or "I can't control these feelings of pride." You don't need to control them. You just need to want to be rid of them with your whole heart. They have already been controlled in Jesus. They have already been destroyed and remade in him. There's no such thing as can't. Our dear old parents and grandparents were right. There isn't. There's only "I won't," because ever since Jesus died, nobody in this room has had a sinful nature that is really in existence. They have simply had the lie that they have believed from Satan that that nature is still in existence and still exerts its power. In fact it's a lie. That's what the father of lies is about. Let me give you proof of it.

How many of you know somebody who has struggled against some impossible overwhelming habit for years? Then when they became really persuaded that cancer would result or they became really persuaded that this was it. They change in a moment. Don't we all know people like that? Don't we all realize and have a sneaking suspicion they could have changed anytime? At any moment they could have changed and that's the truth. In Jesus all of us were crucified and all of our old sinful natures were destroyed in him. The amazing fact is, loved ones, I can do all things through Christ who strengthened me. You can actually stop this moment. You can and you know the logic of it.

Do you remember the dear guy? Remember, on Perry Mason he was the defender. He smoked and smoked and smoked and finally you remember he stopped smoking. He began to do the commercials on TV against smoking. This is only one example. There are probably dozens of us here in this room who have struggled and struggled against something that we said we could not overcome and in a moment we overcame it. How many of us have said "I could have done this 20 years ago," and so you could. You can actually do it today, because the power that you keep claiming is overwhelming you, was crucified with Christ on Calvary.

You and I were there on Palm Sunday. You and I were there on Good Friday. You have to decide are you going to take advantage of the fact that you were there on Easter Sunday morning? You have to decide that. Are you going to live the lie that all you've experienced with Christ has been up to Good Friday. Or are you going this morning to say, "No I believe that. I believe that I was crucified with Christ. I believe that if I'd been united with him in a death like his, I'm also resurrected in a resurrection like his. I believe it. Today that's the end of that habit. That's the end of that attitude that has crippled me for years in my relationships with others. That's the end, Lord. I believe it was destroyed with you. I'm going to have faith in that." Loved ones, that's what it takes. It takes a definite step of faith. Otherwise anything that the Godhead has done for you will remain up there in heaven until you actually exercise faith and receive it into your own life. Let us pray.

"Lord, God, we would apologize to you for the way we have treated your son, our Savior's death. As a simple admission to get into heaven, as a kind of bribe to persuade you to forgive us our sins. Lord, we see that it is way beyond that. We recognize, Lord Jesus, that you were braver than any man. The agony and pain that you bore was not your own but was ours. You bore it in order to bend us and change us. Lord Jesus, we believe that. We believe it about this particular habit that we have. This particular attitude of our whole mind and our old feelings, we believe that all that was changed in you. We've been dragging about here a body of death that is unreal and is a lie of Satan's. At this very moment we can be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. Lord, we would believe that now. We would see that all that we have been up to this moment, has been crucified with you and is finished and dead and buried and blown into oblivion. Lord, at this moment, we would thank you. We intend to live like people who have been resurrected. People who have even forgotten what they once were. Lord, we intend to lead a new life this day and live above in that realm where you yourself are and where we have always been meant to live. Lord, we put now far from us not only the thing or the attitude that we have, but we put even the memory of it out of our minds. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that as we dwelt with you on the cross on Calvary so you now dwell with us here on earth. Lord, we ask you now to live in us and lead us from this day forward. Lord Jesus, will you speak what you want to speak and we're going to rise above it and live above self and live in your spirit. Amen."