

Overcoming Anxiety

John 20:24-30

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

This is a special Sunday because you could start everything anew today in your own life. That's why it's important. Do you remember that the reason we all know you're different from us, you personally, is not just because your name is different, (because actually there are probably several Johns here or Jeans or Peters or Margarets), but because none of the rest of us in this room are the same as you, none of us. You are absolutely different from everybody else in this room and the more amazing fact is that you're absolutely different from everybody else in America. There's nobody else like you. There are some people that look like you but there's nobody else exactly like you. Then, the absolutely astounding fact is that there is no one in the rest of the world like you. You're different from everybody.

When you die there will cease to exist a person that can never and will never be reproduced again. So, you are special, and I am not saying that to make you feel good. I am saying that loved ones because it is a fact that your Creator has made you different from the rest of us. He has put you here to do something and to be something that none of the rest of us can be or will be. And if you are not that, then it will never be lived. If you don't express what of the Creator you're here to express, then that part of the Creator will never be expressed in that way. That's a fact.

Now, the truth is, most of us either have listened to that with our heads and said, "Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, I heard that from the psychologist", or we have never heard it. But whatever is the case, we have never lived that way. Most of us have scrambled to keep alive. I mean most of us whether intentionally or unintentionally have just got caught up on the rat race with everybody else. We've been scrambling to get what we needed to keep alive and of course we have in common there, all kinds of bondages.

The Bible talks about elemental spirits of the universe; well that's what it is when we come into worry and anxiety. When that happens, you have the feeling that something has got a grip on you that you can't overcome. Whether it's the young woman who is anxious to get married and knows it's wrong to be anxious or the guy that is determined to find the right girl or the mortgage money or the bills that can't get paid or the job that we're about to lose. You get anxious about the thing, don't you, and you feel "this thing has control of me." Well, brothers and sisters, that's because there are elemental spirits of the universe, that's what the bible talks about.

There are spirits that govern this world as it tries to live outside God's plan for it and there's a whole way of life that has been setup by these elemental spirits of the universe. A whole way of life that tries to get security- like having enough money, when actually the security depends on half a dozen other things besides money. But the elemental spirits of the universe get going on us and they say, "If you just get married, that'll be it. You'll have arrived. And then we get married and we find we haven't arrived.

So, many of us because we've lived our lives as best we could, like the rest of them, we've got under all kinds of bondages. Now, loved ones, here's the incredible truth and this is why Paul kept saying, "I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified". The truth is

that God our Creator foresaw that. He foresaw that you and I would be like this and He made us twice. I can explain that.

I know that people like Einstein were able to prove scientifically that time is non-existent. It's one great eternal moment that we're involved in here and this time space world is a concession that God has made to us. So there's in some sense in which the Creator was able to foresee everything that would happen to each one of us here. He could foresee the tendency and the trends of our characters and He put us all into His Son Jesus and he remade us and that's the message of those verses that we read.

Christ has died for all, you as well as me. Even if you haven't known it before, the fact is, Christ has died for all. Then there's that great clause that follows, "If Christ died for all, all died". That means you, with all your bondages were crucified with Christ, and if you believe that, and live that way, the force of reality is manifested in your life and you're free. That's the way it works.

If you say to me, "You mean brother, I don't have to get down and start trying to change these things by my own will power?" No, you don't. You have to believe that God has changed it all in His Son and you've to then live under the direction of His Holy Spirit. You've to turn to him and say, "Lord, I know You have put me here for a purpose. I want to find that purpose out. Lord God, will You begin to help me to know what that purpose is and to live it out in the power of your own spirit?" That's it loved ones, that's it.

If you say to me, "Aren't there all kinds of other details?" Sure there are. God will show you how you've been living for yourself and for your own satisfaction and for your own importance. He will show you those things but as you will bow to Him each time on those, you will find a new power of the spirit of God coming into you. So, that's why this is special.

It's not because this is a ticket that I hand to God to get into heaven and say "Lord, Jesus died for me. Here's my ticket. Let me in even though I didn't die." No, we can say "Lord Jesus, all that I have been up to this moment that has destroyed my life and prevented God's will in my life was crucified in You. Lord Jesus thank You when You bore that pain on Calvary, part of it was pain that I caused, part of it was the pain that You felt when Your Father's wrath was burning out my anxiety to get married". That's it.

It is overwhelming loved ones, but that dear Jesus, knows every bit of you. He knows every little fear, and every little bondage that you have. He knew it long before you even were conscious of it. And He allowed His father to burn that out at Calvary. That's the only reason he cried, "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?" It was all of us inside Him crying out and Him saying, "No, no, no he hasn't forsaken us", into His hands we commit our spirit, come with Me, come in with Me, come. And that's what happened on Calvary.

So this is a great Sunday. But it is really only great for you if you really believe that and you leave all those things behind you here at this altar. You can then move out of this room, realizing that you are God's unique child with nobody like you. You can move out of this room asking Him to begin to unfold what His plan for you is and then your life begins to lift. It is no longer you in your little corner trying to hack it out. But it's you with the Creator of the universe directing your life through a spirit. That's it loved ones. That's why I talked about the 6000 acres.

God has great things for every one of us in this room to do. They may not be great in the world's

eyes, but in His eyes they are great things, all kinds of different things. But, "so many of us are pinned down in a land war in Southeast Asia". That's how a famous international political phrase went. We knew it wasn't the thing to do, but we got pinned down.

So many of us are pinned down in our own land wars, fighting our own little battles. But, God has a vast universe that He wants us to begin to develop and do His will over. So, old things have passed away here and all things have become new and you're new. Now you're going to live like you're new or you're going to live in your old life. You have to choose. You have that right and that responsibility.

So loved ones, will you deal with God about the things that He's now making real in your heart and deal with Him honestly? If you want to know about the details, you don't need to be a member of this church. We don't have membership to take communion. If you say, "Do I need to be a Christian?" No, all you need to do is believe what I have shared. Believe it, believe it. When you receive this bread and this wine, thank Jesus for the body that He allowed to be broken for you knowing that that's only a little of the pain He suffered. As you take the wine, thank Him for his blood shed for you, knowing that that's only a little of what He suffered for you and then give yourself to Him and say, "Lord I will have done with these sins that You bore on Calvary. I no longer practice them in my own life and I give my life to You and Your Father to fulfill Your will for me, as You originally planned".

But you do need to be real about that so that you don't as the bible says, "Drink damnation unto your own soul". So it's important that you don't try to take the body and blood of Jesus while you're still shedding the blood of Jesus. Don't attempt to take it if you're practicing known sin in your life, that's stupid. That will send you right to hell if you keep on with that kind of hypocrisy. No, determine to stop whatever you know is wrong in your life. Stop it this day and give yourself to God to do what He wants to do in your life.

So loved ones, if you are real in your hearts about that then 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's be seated as we pray.

Dear Lord, we would first examine our own hearts, lest we drink damnation unto our own souls. Lord as we look in, will You enable us to see what is not according to Your will in our present way of life? Lord we would confess these things to You as wrong and opposed to Your will. We would no longer rationalize them or pretend that it may be alright. We would call them sin and see that these are the things and this is the attitude that caused You pain as You dwelt in Your Son on Calvary. Lord, we would confess our sins to You at this time.

Lord Jesus, we see that if these things caused You pain then they still cause You pain. So, we would not only confess them, but we would turn from them this day, we would stop them. We would turn away from the evil. We would repent. We would stop stabbing You again. Dear Lord Jesus, if You can see that things are clear in our hearts, that we have accepted with all our hearts what You have done

for us on Calvary then, Lord Jesus, would You come into our lives and would You live again in us so that You can do in this world what You and Your father planned to do with us? Lord Jesus, will You come in and will You take over our lives? Lord we will commit ourselves to obeying You and to changing whatever You say we should change: our jobs, our way of life, the place where we live, the way we talk to other people, the way we act towards them, the thoughts that we think, and the way we spend our time each day. Lord Jesus if You will come in, we will obey You.

Dear Holy Spirit of Jesus, You said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come into him and will sup with him and he with Me". Dear Lord Jesus we want to change our lives. We want to be different. We want to live in this realm of peace and of victory and joy and of obedience. Lord will You come in and make all things new inside us? We ask You.

We do not presume to come to this thy table, O 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 are the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy: Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so by faith to receive thy Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, that the bread which 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, and 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 cup you proclaim the Lord's death till He come.