

Testimony: Ernest O'Neill

Romans 6:6

by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

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It's difficult loved ones for me to go too long without testifying again to what Jesus did in my life. So I'd like to do that simply.

I was a Methodist minister in Ireland and I sensed that God wanted us to go to London to study, so my wife and I went there and I really didn't know what to do next. I was a Christian and knew that God had forgiven my sins. I knew that from when I was 17, when I went to University. That whole business of sex and the impossibility of doing anything about the strong drives that I had in that direction brought home to me the power of sin and the need to at least have it forgiven. So when I went up to University in Ireland at 17, I got down to what was to Protestants a dreadful thing, the Stations of the Cross. I began to spend my prayer time thinking about Jesus dying. I tried to get it through my own thick head that He had actually died and that there was a piece of soil in Palestine where His Cross had actually been thrust into the ground. Gradually, as I thought about that and my mind dwelt upon it, I came to the conclusion He had really done that. There was really a man Jesus who had a beard that you could maybe smell if you were close to it or He had ears like mine and He had clothes on. And He had actually died on a cross in Palestine and He had died looking right down the centuries past the Roman soldiers to Ernest O'Neill and saying, "Father, forgive HIM for he knows not what he does."

So it came home to me when I was 17 that Jesus had actually died for me, and that because He had died for me, God was willing to forgive me my sins. So I was born of God when I was 17. From then on I had a Bible study and a prayer life, not daily but pretty close to daily. Then I sensed God calling me to the ministry and that's why I went into the Methodist Ministry. Now after teaching English literature for a couple of years in Ireland, I went into the Methodist Ministry and then ended up in the position that I've described, where I felt God wanted us to go to London.

We found ourselves in London in the Methodist Church there and then did not know what to do next. My life, even though it was Christian and I was committed to the ministry, was not what it was meant to be. I didn't know what was wrong then, but I knew this is not a wonderful life. My mother would often say to me, "Ernest, Christians are supposed to be happy." I mean, it was just like a sword in my side because I wasn't happy. I was worried and anxious and concerned and troubled most of the time or a lot of the time and very tense, and yet I was a Christian. So I knew that something was wrong but didn't know what.

When so it came to whether I'd go back to Ireland or stay in London I at last just said, "Lord, I don't know." I began to seek God, fairly much day after day in London, where should I go? Through prayer came "America" and that was the last place I wanted to go because America had a lot of money, a lot of commercialism, it wasn't the place where you wanted to go if you were really serious about God, at least as a little Irish minister. And I felt I WAS serious about God.

That was the only answer I got so I went to my neighboring pastor and said did you know anybody in America? He said he knew the Bishop of Minnesota and he'd arrive in London in the next month. So

eventually I had dinner with the Bishop of Minnesota and ended up here in Minneapolis. That was about 20 years ago, the same year that Kennedy was assassinated. Then I got into the Methodist ministry here in America but found the same problem there as I had in Ireland. It was this, and I can tie it down fairly precisely: a lady could come into my study after I'd preached a sermon and could say, "Well, I didn't think this and this and this was good, I thought you could have left that part out." Well I sat there in my chair because in seminary we're given smiling classes and I would smile because you're supposed to smile when they tear you apart. But it really didn't matter if I was smiling because inside in my heart, I was resentful of her. I had rising up within me the feeling, "What right has she to talk about my preaching? What does she know about homiletics?"

That was one of the problems. A rising up of resentment and criticism towards other people which I did not show on the outside but which were inside all the time. And that was inward sin; I didn't know about that. I didn't know the distinction. I knew it was there, but I didn't know what you could do about it. That was one of the problems. I didn't show it on the outside because I had trained myself, I suppose, to discipline my outward expressions to other people so that they wouldn't see what I was really thinking. But I knew what I was thinking. And of course it really makes a break between you and the person you're speaking to because they think you're one thing and you're really another. So you don't feel in communion with them -- they may feel they're in communion with you-- but you know right well they're just in communion with a just a hypocritical appearance that you're putting on. So that was one problem.

Another problem was selfish ambition. I don't know about the brothers here, but we men are taught that we must achieve things. We get the idea that we must make a niche for ourselves in the hall of fame somewhere. I certainly was convinced of that and felt often driven by a selfish ambition to be somebody important. I wanted to be somebody well known, somebody famous, for people to like me, people to respect me and to be successful. I wanted to be able to write back and tell my mother what I'd done in this world or something like that.

So selfish ambition, which often drove you to be very jealous of anybody else who did anything half reasonably. So even if someone sang a song or somebody else did something well, that wasn't doing me any harm at all, yet I was so preoccupied with being center-stage and being the important one that I would feel jealous of them or envious. I did not even want to sing, I just felt I didn't want them to be that well known or well liked or well respected when I wasn't. And so selfish ambition begot in me jealousy and envy and of course a lot of pride. And that was the second plain thing that I knew in my life: pride. It's so ridiculous now when I look at it, but I remember what it was. It was pride in my own insight into Christianity and my ability to explain it to other people. That came to me later one night when the Holy Spirit give me revelation and it came in those very words.

So I had pride and it was a thing that was debilitating because you'd preach a sermon and everybody would say, "Oh, that really brought God's Word home to me" but actually you took that to yourself and said that means it was a good sermon and I did well, and that I had succeeded and I'm very clever -- that I can really see truths about God and am obviously pretty good at communicating it to other people. So actually it stole the whole of joy and delight of being any use to God at all, because I was so concerned with pride in what I could do. And of course that's what brought the resentment when somebody criticized me. I felt, if only they could see all the good things that I do, if they could see all the wonderful things I do, they wouldn't criticize me. There was a great deal of reaction against any criticism because of that pride.

The third thing was just very plain, it was lust. I don't know how you all are and eventually I

suppose as life goes on, we get too old or we wear out or something, but it seems to me most of us men anyway, find we have tremendous problems with unclean thoughts, with fantasy life, not only with dreams at night, but the terrible things that are the conscious dreams that we have during the day and the fantasies we have and the playing around with the unclean pictures and unclean movies in certain situations. It really spoils your relationship with all girls, you know. Well, they actually are often very open and very straight and don't have those same feelings about us. Often they are very appealing in the holiness and the goodness of their feelings towards us, but of course we are always after the main chance and always with an ulterior motive in the back of our minds. So lust was a pretty constant problem and spoils all that you try to do, of course, with the opposite sex at all for Jesus' sake and much that you try to do in your own marriage because those of you who are married and still have trouble with lust know that it really spoils marriage too. And it prevents it being a relaxed and lovely and beautiful experience.

So those were the things that were working inside me as a Methodist minister. I was by that time, I suppose when we came here, about 29 or 30 years old. I'd been in the ministry about eight or nine years by then. I went in when I was 21 and yet it was no better, it was still the same. It was this struggle within and this pretense on the outside. In fact, really there's no question, there's no question what was my favourite verse, but it was the verse in Romans 7:15 that described my almost daily experience. "I do not understand my own actions for I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate."

When I look back on it of course, I really did what I wanted. I mean not actually, it wasn't exactly true -- that verse in fact describes the situation of a Jew living under the law. In fact, if anything it describes an absolute non-Christian. In fact, I did do the things I wanted. I pretended that I wanted more holy things that I read in the Bible and the things that I'm supposed to want, but actually I did what I wanted because I found inside me that there was an irrational streak that wanted things that I, as a Christian, was supposed not to want. This irrational drive within me wanted to jump into bed with some girl. This irrational drive within me wanted everybody to praise me. This irrational drive within me wanted my satisfaction, wanted everybody else wiped out and me elevated. So I found that there was a strong drive inside that actually produced a wanting of its own. So in a deep way I DID do what I wanted. It's just that in fairness, I suppose there seemed to be two "I's", there seemed to be an "I" that wanted those things and there seemed to be a little weak "I" that did want something of Jesus. And of course that was the Spirit of Jesus. When I was born of God, the Spirit of Jesus did graciously come into me.

That's the situation we're in when we're carnal Christians because that's the state I'm describing. I was a carnal Christian. I had in fact received the Spirit of Jesus into me. It was Him that drew me into the Methodist ministry. I mixed it up with a lot of my selfish ambitions and tried to dirty it and spoil it, but He still kept wanting His Father and it was His Spirit that made me want to pray at times and to read the Bible or made me want to preach or to help other people to know Jesus. And it was His Spirit that at times wanted God and it was His Spirit that pointed out to me that these other things were wrong. Then beside me there seemed to be this Old Man, this Old Self that wanted all these sinful things -- and that was my situation. I saw no way out. I had not heard of any way in the Methodist Church, I had not read of any way in the literature. I was brought up as a fairly liberal Methodist theologian. I had not read anywhere that you could do anything about those things. Indeed I felt that this was the result of just being human and that throughout your life your job was to hold those things down. Indeed in my semi-sophisticated way I thought, that is where discipline comes in, that is where maturity comes in, that is what growing in grace is about. I always looked forward to growing in grace to the point where I would have victory over these things.

If you had pressed me, I would have to admit that I wasn't much better now, than I was nine years previously. In fact, I would say that I was worse, because these things became more subtle in their expressions. You became cleverer at holding them down. You became cleverer at avoiding them or evading them in your own conscious mind because they brought such tears to your eyes and such frustration to your heart. So that was the situation, and that's a carnal Christian and that's what I was. I didn't know it then.

I was invited to a little Bible school in north Minneapolis to speak because I was the new Irish minister come to the Methodist Church a few blocks away, and so they invited me to speak at the little chapel hour. I don't know why I spoke about it, but the closest that I could see to any kind of hope was a sermon that they had given us in the 44 standard sermons of John Wesley that we had to read in seminary. Now, they did not give us the good sermons, but they gave us at least this one which was closest. It was the one in First John 3:9, "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin." But Wesley in that one does not go into the details of deliverance from the power of sin or deliverance from carnality. He just states it pretty clearly, that if you're born of God you don't commit sin. And you can't get out of it by saying, "oh well that means I don't on the whole commit it." You just don't commit it because you're free of it and I shared that at the little chapel hour. In other words, really what I did was share my best aspirations, I suppose. I realized this was a Bible school, I was a miserable old liberal theologian that was hardly meant to believe the Bible, so I'd better share the best that I knew, so I did share that. It was from my heart that I said, I believe it's possible some time to come to a place in your life where you can live in this, you can live "whosoever is born of God does not commit sin", you can live like that.

Now I had a theological problem obviously in my own understanding because I was born of God, but I did commit sin and so I couldn't make sense of it. But at least I shared what I thought. There was a man sitting at the back with a bald head and he had no clerical collar on, which is ridiculous to anybody who thinks he's a minister in Britain -- and he came up to me afterwards and introduced himself, and said to me that he was a pastor of this church. I thought, how can you be a pastor if you don't have a collar and tie on? And then the guy started to tell me that he used to be a used car salesman. And I thought, "Here am I sitting with the degrees and all my training and this guy's a used car salesman. Well, the sooner I get off and get on with my work the better." But he of course started to talk with me and I saw an honest light in his eyes, I think that's it. An honest light, you know. He didn't know Greek, didn't know Hebrew, didn't know all that stuff but he seemed to be honest, that came through.

So I talked with him a little in the study. He started to tell me a story. He told me that his church specialized in this very issue that I had touched upon in the chapel hour. Well, I hardly knew what issue I'd touched upon in the chapel hour, I just had spoken the best I knew. Then he went on and started to tell how he had been a missionary in Bolivia for years in that church and had tried to preach this. And yet he had not experienced it at all. Then he began to outline -- I didn't know what he was talking about -- but then he began to outline in detail, he began to describe me. He was actually describing himself. Then he began to describe me, as he described the state of his own inner heart. Because most of us, if you're sitting here and you're carnal, you recognize yourself. It's not me I'm describing, I'm describing you. As he started to describe his own heart and his own experience of defeat in the Christian ministry and the Christian life, so I began to realize somebody else has experienced this. That was the first time that I had heard anyone talk about these things.

I had known them in my own life, but I had never known anybody to talk about them in their lives. I assume that everybody was either playing a game or was not having the troubles that I was having. And he described exactly the carnal state of his own Christian heart, the problem with inward sin that he had over years and years. Then he said, "But then I came to the secret and I found the deliverance that God had prepared for us." And He didn't actually go into much detail. He said, "I found that there was only one way." He said, "I discovered that all the things that I had inside -- my lust, my pride, my selfish ambition, the anger, the jealousy, the envy, all the inward sins that rose up inside me that I could not hold down -- I just kept from expressing them outside to other people -- came from self. They all came from self. And then I saw Romans 6:6."

I knew Romans, but I certainly didn't know what Romans 6:6 contained. Then he said, "Romans 6:6, you know, says" -- or I think he used King James, 'our old man was crucified with Christ.' "Our old man was crucified with Christ so that we might be delivered from the power of sin." I had heard of it, but I had never noticed it before. And he said the Old Man is the Self. I at last realized that my old self had been crucified with Christ and that the moment I was willing to die to that self -- and that's what he said and you might not like it and the psychologists might make mincemeat of it -- that's what he said and it was Gospel to me. He said, "I realized that I had to die to Self. I had to accept what had happened to me in Jesus. The moment that I would do that, that moment I would be delivered from the power of sin."

And so he then described to me how he began to seek God and ask God to show him himself in all the clear reality that God could see it. And to give him Judgment Day honesty with the inward sin that was within so that he would not cover up anything or pretend anything wasn't there, but would be absolutely honest with God. He said he began to do that. Then he said, "The Holy Spirit began to show me things." I knew the Holy Spirit -- that was the Third Person of the Trinity -- and He was a kind of force that came upon the work of God -- but he seemed to talk about the Holy Spirit like a person. I never had heard that before. He said, "The Holy Spirit helped me and He began to show me things within myself that I had never seen myself. He began to reveal to me what I looked like before God. I began to see how rotten I was and how absolutely ugly I was. I saw myself in ways that I'd never seen myself before. And I began to be sick and tired and sore. And I began to give up any hope that I could get rid of such a monster as I appeared beside the pure and Holy Jesus."

Then he said, "I came eventually to the place, after several weeks of seeking, where I said, 'Lord, I'm willing to do anything to be delivered from this.'" He said, "God's Holy Spirit, in that moment came in and cleansed my heart. And I was delivered from that power of Self. And I no longer after that had that agonizing trouble with the lust. I had no longer the rising up of anger inside." I still remember him saying it, he said "there was no rising up from within me." Well I listened to him -- and of course, I don't know if you're like me, but if your heart is hungry you know, I was desperate for anything that would bring deliverance. I don't know that I even had my skepticism alive enough to be cynical about it. I just knew that if that's possible that's what I want.

Then he give me a book, "Possibilities of Grace" written by an old Methodist Bishop years ago in America -- "Possibilities of Grace". I went home and looked up the chapter, I think he calls it, "Holiness" or "Sanctification" and it says, "How to Obtain Holiness". Oh, that's what I wanted. I looked right at that chapter. I started to read how to obtain Holiness. How to be cleansed from sin, how to be sanctified, how to be filled with the Holy Spirit, how to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, how to come into a closer walk and into full consecration, it really doesn't matter you know. The Baptists talk about it as full consecration, full surrender, the Methodists don't talk about it. The old Methodists talked about sanctification, entire sanctification. Pentecostals tend

to talk about Baptism in the Holy Spirit though they don't always mean an inner work as well as an outward work, but that's really what it is. It's the fullness of the Holy Spirit within you. I began to read how you should obtain that.

First of all he said, "See yourself as you really are in God's eyes." So I started to do that. I know, you all say, "you poor soul, you'll drive yourself to distraction through introspection." Well, I didn't know any better and that's what I did. I looked at myself as plainly as I could. I looked as plainly as I could at those things within. I didn't see many of them at the beginning. I didn't see the pride I had about my own insight into Christianity and ability to expound it others. I never suspected that. I just started to look at the bad things inside me and to see what a rat I was and to look at the things and stop evading them. I wanted to see that they were there and that was me, Ernest O'Neill. I did not just speak unclean words, I was a man of unclean lips. I WAS this person, this was me. It wasn't just little things that I was doing. It wasn't little traits or little human tendencies, it was me. This was the real me. I was filled with lust and pride and filled with selfish ambition. I didn't get very far, and I came to a position of frustration I must admit.

It was then that I remembered what this man had said about the Holy Spirit and so for the first time in my life I began to speak to the Holy Spirit. That is, I treated Him as a real person. I remembered in the New Testament, Jesus had said He was a counselor. So I reckoned that's what I needed, I needed a counselor who would show me deeper, because I'm at a blank wall here, because I was going as deep as I had got before with my introspection. I began to speak to the Holy Spirit. I said, "Holy Spirit will you show me myself as God sees me. Show me myself until I'm sick and sore tired of myself and I'm willing for anything so that I can be delivered. Give me a new conviction of sin." Now, loved ones I did that; I can't apologize for it, you know.

I feel for all you souls who get all tangled up with false condemnation, but I have to testify to what God did in my heart and how He worked with me. And I had to ask Him to bring me a new conviction of sin. If you say, "Oh, you poor sick creature" - well, that's what I was then, and I knew that I had to see what was wrong in my life the way God saw it. I had to come to the place where I was willing for whatever deliverance He had for me.

So I asked the Holy Spirit, "Show me Holy Spirit, show me how I look in God's eyes." Well, that's when insights such as I said to you would occur to me. I would waken up in the morning with certain words on my lips, which obviously had come from the Holy Spirit and He would have shown me a whole depth of my life that I'd never seen before. A whole gross monstrosity of Self that no one had ever known and even I had never known was there. That's why loved ones, I think it is a supernatural work. Even in the seeking, even in the conviction of sin, it seems to me it's a supernatural work, right at that early stage. It is a revelation of things that you have not seen that only God can see in you. And I sometimes think that this was maybe even the beginning of my deliverance because it was kind of separating myself from Self and saying, "Lord, I cannot deliver myself from Self, I need You to do it." It was the ceasing to be God in my life -- to be my own god and to control my spiritual experience. It seems it was a going out to God or reaching out to God and saying, "Lord, You'll have to even show me what's wrong in my life." And so the Holy Spirit did that.

Then this book said that you should see that you can do nothing about that. That that Self of yours has a grip on your life that you cannot break, and that carnality within you is so subtle, it loves religion, just loves it. It loves a lot of the things you do in your Christian ministry. It loves a lot of the good things in life, as long as Satan can hold onto your will, and so you will never

track down that old Self. Of course, that's the error that I always made before, you know, you control it, you tame it, you train it by reading the right books, you pray a lot, you have cold showers, you do all kinds of things to try to control that old Self, but this book said, you can do nothing about it, this is part of Satan within you. It's like a spy of Satan's is inside your heart, it's a self that is not under your control, it's part of Satan's kingdom. You have to be delivered from it.

And so I thought about that and prayed about it, and as the Holy Spirit of course continued to bring out more of the hideousness of my selfish will, I saw, "yeah, I cannot." I tried, you know, as we all do, we try to do works worthy of repentance which we always should do, we should always try to obey. And I tried to obey and tried to get rid of these things and of course the more I tried the more distraught I became and the more despairing I became, and the more convinced I became that this is right, I cannot deliver myself from this.

Then of course the third step that this man said was, "See that it has all been done. See that it has all been done." And then he got the same verse, Romans 6:6, "See that your old self was crucified with Christ." And so I began to think about that verse. And really it didn't mean too much to me. I could get it intellectually, and I could look at the Greek word "polios" meaning, "old man", I could see that it had been translated "old man" in King James, I could see that "crucified" was the eros of the Greek verb; it meant it had been done in a moment and was finished with, had occurred at a moment in time. I saw that is what it meant. I didn't understand how my old Self could be crucified in a moment in eternity but I saw that's what the Greek meant. It meant that it had been done, it didn't mean that I had to crucify myself, so I saw the foolishness of old Luther even and the others trying to beat themselves with chains or kill themselves or crucify themselves. I saw, yeah, that isn't it at all, it has been done, I was crucified with Christ.

I saw that and I believed it and it said in Romans 6:11, "Reckon yourself therefore to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ my Lord" so I did that. I even knew the Greek word for "reckon" - it's "legizo" -- "to consider and treat yourself as being really dead with Jesus." Well, I did -- mentally and intellectually I tried to do that. I tried to believe, "I am dead, I was crucified, it's finished" -- and I'd get up the next morning and I still had the anger or the lust or the pride, and there would be no change.

So it went on like that. I had by that time dealt with my outward sin, so I was back in what we've talked about, I was at least back in a justified experience. I was at least back obeying God outwardly anyway, so I was back in salvation which I had at least -- whether you believe you can throw it away or whether you believe like Nee that you can be alive but live as if you're dead. It's kind of rather a game with words. I was not in the full joy of Jesus anyway. And I got back into the joy of salvation but I was not making headway on this deliverance from inward sin and the old Self and so I kept on trying to believe, trying to believe.

And then gradually it dawned upon me what he had hinted at in his book. He said to really reckon yourself dead with Christ you have to be willing to die with Him. You have to be willing to die with Him. I would say that was throughout the whole experience the biggest new fact, although the personality of the Holy Spirit was also fairly new to me. But probably the biggest new fact was that one. The fact that I had to be willing to die with Jesus, because we'd always been taught in seminary that Christ died for you so that you wouldn't have to die. In fact, that's where we got a kind of an almost demonic joy thinking, "Oh good -- He suffered we don't have to!" It was kind of a relief: "Good, I don't have to die for my sins, He died for me so that's great, I'm scott free and

can do what I want." That had always been a pretty important tenet of my creed.

But this was new, the whole thought, "you are to be willing to die with Jesus" and then I began to realize, well of course God has done the thing in Jesus, but He won't force me to enter into that. He will ask me, "Are you willing? I have already done it in my Son. You don't have to make it real in you, I will do that but you do have to be willing." And so that's where the pilgrimage began.

I began to deal with my own heart and will. Am I willing to die with Jesus? I began to think, now what does that mean? I began to ask the Holy Spirit, will you show me what it meant? It might have been different for other people but what was it for Ernest O'Neill? Lord Jesus, what did you bear in your own heart of me on Calvary, that I need to be willing to let go of and die to. Then the Holy Spirit began to dig and dig through the layers and layers -- and you dealt with the things that were most obvious, you know: would you be willing not to lose your temper? And you had to ask the Holy Spirit, "Why, why is that a big deal?" He would show you, well you use your temper to actually hold people off. You use your temper to get control of situations that you've already lost control of. Now would you be willing not to lose your temper, in other words, would you be willing not to have control of those situations? And that of course involves all the different situations, your job, your home, your money, your salary, your future and that means you have to be willing to trust God with those things. So I went through that kind of thing.

It's the same with the lust you know. What was it like for Jesus? Well, He had no woman, He was not able to jump into bed with some woman, He never did have intercourse and would you be willing if necessary never to have intercourse? Would you be willing not to, if that was God's will? He may not make it your will because you're married and it's normal for that to be the relationship, but would you be willing if He wanted? Most of all with us men, would you be willing when He wants or when your wife wants, not just when you want? Would you be willing to die to your right to that?

And that's what it began to come down to more and more. Not attitudes even, but rights. Would you be willing to die to this right? When Jesus died on Calvary He was looked upon as a criminal, they misunderstood Him completely. Would you be willing to die to your right to be understood all the time? Would you be willing to be misunderstood, and be happy and content? Would you be willing to die to your right even to have two coats to your back? Would you be willing to die to your right to a good salary, to die to your right to marriage, to die to your right to a successful future? Would you be willing really to be with Jesus on the Cross? And more and more I asked Him, "Lord Jesus, will You let me see what it feels like close to You on that Cross? Would You help me to see what it means for me, Ernest O'Neill?" And the Holy Spirit would go on and on. It's different with all of us, there's some besetting sin in your life, you know. May not be the obvious one -- only the Holy Spirit can show you -- but it's usually the one that holds all, the key to the thing, and for me it was one Saturday morning in my parsonage in north Minneapolis I was praying -- I spent a lot of time now praying -- and the Holy Spirit said, "Would you be willing to be nothing if it were for Jesus' glory? Would you be willing to be nothing? Would you be willing to be a zero? Would you be willing to be a failure?"

Well, that was the very opposite of all that I'd been taught in my education I should be, the very opposite of the motives that often move those of us who are actors or preachers or public people. It was the opposite of what was the tenor of my life. "Would you be willing to be nothing for Jesus' sake? Would you be willing to be a failure? Would you be willing for your mum back in Ireland to think you'd died, she'd heard so little about you? Would you be willing to be nothing?"

That was it for me, but it's different with all of us. Maybe when we get to Heaven and I'll find that wasn't it, you know it was just Jesus. "Would you be willing to be with Me, my son, on the Cross? Would you be willing to be in Me and to be wiped out as far as this world is concerned and to have a tombstone erected now, with your name on it, indeed not even a tombstone with your name. To have a tombstone with nothing on it, for you to become public property for Me? Would you be willing to be nothing and to be an absolute nobody for Me?" And then that was a miracle, and so then I said, yes.

I spoke in tongues about a year and a half later. I don't know that tongues are a big deal in the thing anyway. I think there are many of us that haven't spoken in tongues -- I don't think that's an issue. Certainly I didn't then, but there was an absolute confidence that the Holy Spirit had come into my life and filled me and cleansed my heart. I felt the cleanness inside. I felt the cleanness. There's a line in a First World War poem that goes -- it's a misinterpretation of course of the First World War - "like swimmers into cleanness leaping." Well, that's what it was. It was like a swimmer into cleanness leaping. For the first time I had not had this refuse and garbage and dirt inside my heart. It was the first time I had not had a fountain of strong desire for lust or envy or pride or anger or jealousy coming up from inside my heart. And so it was just a quietness inside. I didn't testify to my wife but I thought that if this is real, my wife will know it. It was just a quiet sense in the bedroom. In that room a quiet sense that the Holy Spirit had come into my heart and had cleansed me and filled me with Himself.

I had of course had to see immediate proof of it. I've told some of you before about two of the issues, you know, that one of the most difficult situations and many of you have dealt with them is divorce within the church. It can be a most unpleasant thing for everybody involved and certainly for me because I was their minister. Some people are so nasty that you just don't want to tackle them. I was in the middle of one of those when a note was passed to me by my secretary. It said, "Will you call Mrs. So and So? I knew what that was about and normally I would do what I think all of us carnal Christians do, I'd run my own life, that's really what we'd do. We just obey God when it suits us, you know. But we run our own life most of the time and we make things convenient for us and that's why our life gets all piled up, do you know that? I never had enough time for things. I never had time to do everything. My life was always chaotic and panicky because I never had enough time because I was always lining all the things back there, to do them my way, to do the things suitably and conveniently because I could divide them up into pleasant things and the unpleasant things because I was still alive and I was still controlling things. But now it was different. Ernest O'Neill was crucified with Christ. There was no Self rising up inside. The note came, I left for the phone and called the lady and got right into the messy situation.

That was the first time I obeyed with instant obedience. It was a great relief to instantly obey. And you could instantly obey because there was no longer any interest in your Self and in your own convenience. In fact, your life was a schedule for Him to write. It was no longer a schedule that you had filled in all days in and these things I want to do and these things I want to achieve and I'll try to work you in where I can, Lord. It was now all - that is wiped out, it's finished. Now Lord, whatever You want that's what counts.

Then the next morning I got a letter from a friend of mine who'd been at seminary with me. I'd gone to seminary with more degrees than anybody else and was ahead of most people. I was always anxious to get on that old academic success line. Yet God had constantly made me want to find out how does the Gospel work. So I constantly preached in churches to find that out. Meanwhile some of my own colleagues had streaked ahead of me and got their doctorates and one of these of course was in

Garrett Institute I think in the University of Chicago and was now a doctor in psychology and he wrote to me from time to time. Every time he wrote, of course, you can guess what I felt. I felt why didn't I get going, why am I not doing that, how jealous I am of him. So the letter came I opened it and there was no jealousy. It was just a miracle. I knew there was a change in my heart. So that changed my whole life.

Then everything didn't go beautifully. Everything then fell, the roof fell in, all the outside things, as I began to preach that in the Methodist church and they didn't like it. Everything came down around my ears. I left the Methodist Church and was without work for nine months. I ended up teaching at Benilde High School. I remember saying to my wife, "I think I might never preach again," but I wasn't even concerned about it. I was happy, "Lord, whatever You want me to be, I'll be. If You want me to preach I'll preach. If You don't want me, I won't."

So it was a great rest. I would say I entered into the second rest of the people of God. The rest that God entered into on the Sabbath Day when He ceased from His labors. And it seems to me that's what you do when you at last accept your position with Jesus on the Cross: you cease from your labors. You stop laboring to be God's child and Jesus Himself takes control and He does it through the power of the Holy Spirit.

So that changed my life, loved ones, and then from there some of you know some of the progress, but I had to tell you because a little voice warns me "if I preach not the Gospel." I had to tell you this tonight. That's true and it's for you, you know. I'm not doing any commercials and it's just true. It doesn't need selling. It's God will to do the same for you. The Holy Spirit will deliver you from the power of sin. Now, if you say, "You mean you have power to suppress the anger and the envy and the jealousy?" No, no, that was the battle I fought when I was a carnal Christian. No, you're delivered FROM the envy and the jealousy. The envy and the jealousy do not rise up within you. You feel Jesus rising up inside you, and it is a deliverance and it is a victory. And of course it is full Christianity, you know and it's the full Gospel. Now you have to make a choice. You can't just go away, because it is either hell or Heaven. When God began to make this plain to me I began to see the truth, I knew that it was either Heaven or hell. You have to go on. Those of you who are born of God, you have to go on. There is no way back. There is no where to go back there. The bridges are burned. There is no way back.

You remember the old-fashioned evangelical phrase: "You're spoiled for the world." You are. You can't ever go back to the world. You will always feel that you're living in an anticlimax life. You'll always feel you left the best if you ever go back there. No, it's only on, you can only go on. So tonight go on. Go after it with all your heart. Hunger after it with all your heart and God will bring you. I didn't have a whole lot of information, but I had a hunger I wanted deliverance and God's Holy Spirit met me, as He will you too.

Tonight we could have altar call and I'm sure that many of you would come up here. I would say this to you, you have to get to the point where you're determined. After the Benediction everybody gets up and all that kind of thing. You have to get to the point where you determine that you'll stay here and you'll seek God, if you can't seek Him at home. Or if you think, "I don't dare leave here because, Satan will get me before I get home" then you should go to the prayer room, or go back into the corner and seek God. If you want help I think there are enough of us here who are in the fullness of the Holy Spirit; I would ask them to maybe stay around, and they can come over if you just raise your hand up, they'll come over and pray with you.

Really what I would urge you to do is either that or to go home and to get down to business with God and don't give up until you come through because you must be determined. It has to be, "I will not let you go until You bless me." It has to be that kind of attitude. It might take you weeks, might take you months, but if you want that with all your heart and you keep going, God will answer you because that's why Jesus died.

Let us pray.

Dear Father, we thank You for that. We thank you, Lord, that Jesus died to save us from our sins. Not to save us in our sins, but to save us from our sins. We thank You for that, Lord. We thank You that His death was effectual because we were actually in Him when He died. That our old self was crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. Lord, we thank You for that. That each one of us and indeed every soul that has ever lived or will ever live has been crucified with Christ and that has been done --and that it is our great privilege to bow before our Savior and accept from His dear hand the benefits of His mighty death. Lord, we thank You for that. We pray for each other, our Father, pray Holy Spirit for each other that we may get down to business with You, this evening at home or here or wherever we can get hold of that great pearl of great price that is worth selling all the other pearls together. Lord, we thank You.

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 evermore. Amen.