

MAN'S EXTREMITY IS GOD'S OPPORTUNITY

Video clip transcript is extracted from the talk: Persisting in Prayer
by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Many of us here have friends or relatives who have long needed some change in their lives. Either they need to have their health turned around, or they need some change in the way they're operating, or in the way they're living. And probably you're like many of us over the years who have done a lot of talking and a lot of listening and yet years later they're just the same.

If you have experienced that, you know the way you feel. You feel frustrated about it because it seems that you've talked and they've at times listened and now they seem to have stopped listening. Or you keep on finding new remedies or new pieces of advice to give them but now you've run out of remedies and advice. You still love them and you want them to be changed and you want the thing to be better for them but you don't see where to go. It just seems you've run out of ideas and they've run out of any ability to follow your advice. You do feel frustrated, don't you? You feel there's something not right that we should both, they and we, travel on towards certain death and yet not have this thing changed or not have it remedied. It's hard really in that situation to know what to do.

Loved ones, the answer is just as solid as anything for us this morning. I don't know if you know the saying. "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." The problems that you and I can solve by our advice or by yet another human remedy that we pass on to our loved one or our friend, those aren't the real problems. They aren't. I mean we comfort ourselves by solving some of them and we think, "Oh we've really achieved something." But really those aren't the important problems.

The important problems are these that we've just been talking about: the frozen relationships, the hostility, the deteriorating physical state, the attitudes that will not change, the old habits that continue year after year to spoil a person's life. It's the way that we have of dealing with each other that just prevent a family or a marriage moving into any higher level. Those are the important problems. Those are the real problems. They are there in a fallen world like ours to do one thing and that is to drive us to God. That's why they are there.

I don't know if you have thought the same as I have at times. I've thought, "Why? Why are there problems like that? Shouldn't this world be happy? Shouldn't it be happy and shouldn't we be able to live and tackle things the way all the power of positive thinking people tell us to tackle them? We should just have this life by the tail. We should have it ordered and all our families and all our relatives and our friends, they should be happy."

Well, loved ones it was never meant to be that way after man had rebelled against God. Ever from that time, this has been a fallen world and God has allowed problems such as we're talking about to develop in order to drive us to God. So maybe the first, most important thing is, what Churchill said, "Whatever the difficulties, however great the enemies, however often you fail, however many disappointments you have, never, never, never give up. Never give up."

Just as you sit there today, first of all settle that, you're not going to put up with this thing; you're not going to give up. So step right back from all that cynicism towards your dad or your mom or towards your relative or your friend, step right back from that and just give it a hardy kick in the right place and say, "I am not going to give up. I am going to do something about this thing."

Loved ones, that insuperable problem is there to drive you to God, not to drive you to defeat. It's there to drive you to God.

Full Sermon: Persisting in Prayer by Rev. Ernest O'Neill