

PLEADING WITH GOD IN PRAYER

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

So God wants us to take His nature seriously. Too many of us are doing it as a compliment to God. We're asking because you're supposed to pray. It's a childish game. Do you see loved ones we're not being fair to the Father? It's a childish little game. Okay, we say our prayers; "Our Father who art in heaven" or "Gentle Jesus meek and mild." And then I said, "God bless my dad, God bless my mom." And so we say our prayers.

We say our prayers to God. It's like the prayer wheel turning, we turn our prayer wheel and then we go to sleep and we say, "Now Lord, you should answer us." Whereas God is saying, "Get to grips with me. I have said I am such and such. Do you believe me to be such and such? If I am not proving such and such to you, you have a right to charge me with that. Come, let us interact with each other. Let us put our arms around each other. You deal with me as a living, real live God who is your Father and stop playing games with me." See, that's what He wants.

So what to us seems impertinence is something that God desires us to do, to come to Him in terms of His own nature. And Abraham says, you see in Genesis 18:23:

"Then Abraham drew near, and said, 'Wilt thou indeed destroy the righteous with the wicked? Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou then destroy the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? Far be it from thee to do such a thing, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from thee! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?'"

Abraham is saying: "Lord, this is your nature. Will you not abide by your nature?"

"And the LORD said, 'If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake.' Abraham answered, 'Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking? Wilt thou destroy the whole city for lack of five?' And he said, 'I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there.' Again he spoke to him, and said, 'Suppose forty are found there.' He answered, 'For the sake of forty I will not do it.'

I think Abraham was working down to Lot's family, that's what he was after, trying to get down to that number. "Then he said, 'Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there.' He answered, 'I will not do it, if I find thirty there.' He said, 'Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there.' He answered, 'For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it.' Then he said, 'Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there.' He answered, 'For the sake of ten I will not destroy it.' And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place."

That's it, loved ones. That's praying. God wants us to plead with Him importunately, repeatedly, continuously for these impossible problems that we face.

Now if you say to me, "Why on earth and why in heaven does God do that? Why does He not answer us

immediately? Why does He require us to keep on asking?" Well there are all kinds of reasons. Usually it's because there's something in your attitude that God is trying to remove before He is able to change that other person's life. Usually it's that. Usually it's something in our attitude. Sometimes it's for other reasons. It's to bring us more into His own nature.

For instance, the host did everything he could. He thought, "Now the stores are closed, I can't get any food from there. There's no other way I can do this. The only way is to go to this neighbor of mine." In other words, he tried everything else and there was nothing else he could do but go to his neighbor.

Often God is trying to bring us to that place. Often we are praying, "Lord will you heal this person? Father will you make their marriage better? Lord, will you smooth over this bad relationship?" And what God is trying to do is to get us away from all those other alternatives and get us to pray that this person will be confronted by God firmly and strongly and will see that the only thing is to give their whole life to God. And so the Father often holds back an answer because we're praying the wrong prayer and He is trying to get us to the place where we will leave off all the other solutions. And we will pray that this person will come into contact with God Himself. This host had tried everything else and then came to God.

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