

The Purpose for Living

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Dear Father, in the name of Jesus, we plead the overpowering influence of thy Holy Spirit tonight. Lord Jesus, we know you are able to overcome the physical discomfort, we know you are able to so preoccupy us with yourself that we will be unaware of any discomfort and we trust you therefore to so pour your Spirit out among us that we will be so bent on seeing you that we will have time for nothing else, least of all ourselves. We ask this in your precious name, amen.

Perhaps dear ones, it seems to some of us that there has never been so much bewilderment about the purpose of life. You know, with King's death, and Kennedy's death, and with the riots, I think more and more people are saying, "What is it all in aid of anyway? What's the meaning of life now? There doesn't seem any." And yet people in all generations have felt this way. It was about 50 years ago a professor of Latin at Cambridge University wrote a poem expressing this kind of bewilderment. He said, "Yonder see the morning blink, the sun is up and up must I to wash, and dress, and eat, and drink, and look at things, and talk, and think, and work, and God knows why." And the tragedy is dear ones that many times Christians are as bewildered about the purpose of life as those who are not in Jesus.

What would you say is the purpose of life? I think a lot of us tend to talk about it in the same way as this professor did when he wrote the last stanza of the poem. He said, "Oh often have I washed and dressed and what's to show for all my pain? Let me lie abed and rest 10,000 times I've done my best and alls to do again." And so often when you ask people today what the purpose of life is, they talk about it in terms of 10,000 times I've done my best. They talk about it in terms of oh well to be the best that you can be, to live the best life that you're able, and to live the good life. To leave the world a better place than you found it. And so often dear ones, Christians talk in the same terms of the good life as opposed to the bad life.

Now, do you see tonight that when we talk about good and bad like that, we're eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil of which we were forbidden to eat? But so often we talk about it in terms of living the good life in Christ even, and the moment we mention good and bad we're immediately taking part in the very act that the devil tempted us to at the very beginning. Or, perhaps some Christians say, "Well, the purpose of life is to save souls." But dear ones, you see that means that God must have made us just so that he could save us? Now surely God did not cast us into a sea that was stormy and wild just in order to have the privilege of lifting us out of it. And yet so often you and I tend to talk in terms of saving souls as the purpose of life.

The controversy that the devil has with God is not between good and bad. Do you know that? The controversy that the devil has with God is not between good and bad, it's between life and death. The devil is not too concerned if you think you are good, and the devil is not too concerned if you try to be good as long as it's death, as long as it's the life of death. But he is concerned if we ever enter into the life that God prepared for us.

Now would you turn those thoughts over in your mind as we go back to the original question, what is the purpose of life? First of all dear ones, it wasn't because God needed our company. You see that? It wasn't because God needed our company that he made us because, you remember, in John 1:1 it says, "In the beginning was the word," that's Jesus, "And the word was with God." So God and Jesus had their own company. And you remember, I think it's in Genesis 1:2 we read that the Spirit

brooded upon the face of the waters and so obviously, God the Father, and God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit had each other's company so they did not need to make us for the sake of our company. You remember too, I think it's in Genesis 1:26 the Bible says, "Let us make man in our own image." Not, "Let me make man in my own image." So again obviously, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were speaking.

You know it was a little like a husband and a wife, when they love each other and share a great love between them, they feel a need to create other dear ones who will share that love. And God created us to share the love that his trinity family already enjoyed. That's why he made us at the very beginning so that we would share the love that he and the Son, and the Holy Spirit already rejoiced in among them. And so it was out of the sheer generosity of his love that he made us at all. And oh dear ones, it's so bad when some of us say, "You know, I didn't ask to be born." God wanted us born so that we could share the joy and the love that he had with the Son and with the Holy Spirit. He didn't make us then just to save us, but to share his love.

I think it's necessary to see then that God wanted dear ones who were like himself. That's why you see, the Bible says, "He made us in his own image." He made us a trinity. He made us, you remember, all the words occur in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, he made us with a spirit. He made us with a spirit that could rule, and he made us with a soul that could express that rule through our mind, and emotions, and our wills, and he made us with a body that could reveal this spirit to other dear ones of the same type. Just as he himself was a trinity, he made us body, soul, and spirit in the same kind of trinity. He made us too, you remember, in the very image of Jesus.

You remember way at the beginning it says, I think it's Romans 8:29 says, God predestined us at the very beginning before there was ever a fall, before the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was ever there, God predestined us to be conformed to the image of his Son Jesus. And this was so that we would fit well into the family of the trinity.

Another way in which he made us in his image was to give us a free will like his own. He didn't want robots who belonged to the family because they could not refuse, but he wanted dear ones who would opt into the family. He wanted dear ones who would willingly choose to become part of the family. This was his purpose in creating us at the very beginning. You may say, "Well, what was the choice?" Well, the choice at the very beginning was twofold. You remember, it says in the Bible that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul.

God made our bodies of the dust of the earth and he breathed into our nostrils the breath of life and we became living souls. That was created life. See, the Bible says, "Let us make man in our own image." Not, "Let us beget him," but, "Let us make him in our own image." And so God gave us created life and then it was his desire that his Son Jesus, whom you remember from John 3:16, you remember the words, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only manufactured son." No, "That he gave his only created son?" No, "That he gave his only begotten son," and it was his will that Jesus should come and walk among us, and live among us, and that we with our created life, would receive from him his begotten life and would therefore be able to be adopted into the family of the trinity.

I think there was another choice in that too. You remember there was a choice there. Jesus is signified by the tree of life and I think you remember, in Genesis 2, obviously a choice is implied in Verse 9, and Verse 16-17. Verse 9 if you'd like to look at it, "And out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also

in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” so that there would be an option required to opt into the family. And then in Verse 16-17, “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, ‘You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.’”

In other words, there was a choice otherwise God wouldn't have told us that. And the choice was to begin to receive the begotten life of God from his Son Jesus as he walked among us. There was another part of the choice too it was his desire that when this spirit of God's begotten life would come into our life it would begin to pervade our souls, and our bodies. You see your soul and your body started off neutral. They started off neutral. Your mind is a neutral thing, really. Your emotions are neutral. Your will is neutral and it was God's will that we would receive this begotten life into ourselves and then allow it to pervade our souls, and eventually our bodies and this was his plan so that we ourselves would become a trinity in which the spirit was present everywhere.

One of the early fathers said, “Wherever one person of the trinity is present the other two persons are present as well,” and that was God's will for us. That wherever a soul was there would be the fullness of God's begotten life in his spirit. Wherever a body was there would be the fullness of his begotten life in the body. You see that when Jesus was transfigured on the mount, when you saw the spirit life breaking out through his physical life. It was God's will that the body, and the soul, and the spirit would all be pervaded with the begotten life of God.

This then dear ones, was his will for us and really as long as we abided by God's decisions, and God's judgment about life, we were able to receive through our spirits, all that we needed from the tree of life. So, you had – we're not feeling very energetic. You receive from the tree of life you receive from the begotten Jesus energy. Your mind was blunt and wearied you received from the begotten tree of life the acuteness and the sharpness of Jesus. Even had we cut our hands we would go and we would take of the leaves of the tree of life and the hands would be healed by the begotten life of Jesus that flowed through the tree of life to us. And as long as we abided by God's judgments, and as long as we took his word on what we should do in life, that tree of life was continually available to us and that tree of life would pour the spirit into us, and our souls would receive our approval from God, and we would walk with a sense of approval on our conscience knowing that we were approved by God. And that was the way we were meant to walk, not needing approval from any man, but receiving the approval from God in our own conscience and our bodies then were meant to express the life of God throughout the world.

You can see this when you think of that verse you remember, Genesis 1:28, where God explains the process by which our spirits, souls, and bodies would become one together in his begotten life. He gave each of those parts of our personality a function. He said, “Be fruitful and multiple.” It was his desire that our bodies would pass on his created life and would beget others in his own image, and that we would multiply. It was his desire that our souls, our minds, and our wills and emotions would express in deductive detail, in deductive detail all the life that the Spirit gave to us so that we would fill the whole earth with the glory of God. It was his desire that our spirits would be ruled by God's Spirit and that Jesus' begotten life would flow through us so that he through us was able to subdue the whole world.

You remember Genesis 1:28 says, “Your job is to subdue the world.” Well, it was meant to be Jesus subduing the world through us in his begotten life so that glory, and pleasure, and satisfaction came to God. That was the plan dear ones. That was God's glorious plan for us and we were to find

our full fulfillment in the exercise of that begotten life that we receive from Jesus.

Well what happened? Once God gave us free wills man always had the prerogative that God had given him, to choose to live his own life independent of God. Not accepting God's advice, not accepting God's provisions because you see, he had created life and you remember Satan had already exercised this authority, and this prerogative. He had already rebelled against God and decided to live his life on his own terms independent of God and it was Satan that was allowed by God to tempt us to do the same thing.

You may say, "Terrible, terrible," but you see, God wanted us free. God wanted us members of his family because we wanted to be and so you remember, in Job we read how God allowed Satan to approach Job and tempt him. So, God allowed Satan to come into that world of ours and you remember how Satan set about it. You find it in Genesis 3:1. He said, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any other wild creature that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God say, "You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?"'"

Satan is a deceiver and the father of lies and the first suggestion he made to man was, "Do you really think this is the only way to live? Do you really? Do you think this is the only way to live? Hath God said, 'You can eat of every tree of the garden?' You have the right to eat of any tree of the garden surely now you're in it." And then you remember the second thing that Satan tried to deceive Eve on in Verse 4, "But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die. You're alive now.'" He didn't tell her that this was only created life. He didn't tell her that she would need operations, and bandages, and that you would need armies of policemen to protect her in this created life. But he said, "You shall not surely die you've got created life."

And dear ones, a great deal of Satan's power over us through the years has been the suggestion that this created life is what God intended us to have. So many dear ones are burdened under that. They think, "Well, this is the life that God planned us to have." It's the second best. And you remember lastly, he deceived Eve about the advantages of this independent life. He said in Verse 5, "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God. Isn't that the very purpose that God sent you here for, to become like him? To be conformed to his own image? Surely, you will be like God knowing the difference between good and evil."

You remember, that whenever man decided to accept Satan's lies and deception, whenever he decided to try and live on his own without trusting God, whenever he once got the idea into his mind, "Lighten up, this is life. This created life is good enough." Once he did that every part of his personality became perverted. The Bible describes the kind of perversion that spread throughout his whole life, and dear ones, some of us tonight will recognize this in ourselves. And I want you to say if you recognize it not, "I'm bad," because then you're eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Not, "I am bad," but, "I need the begotten life of Jesus. I need the begotten life of Jesus tonight." Not, "I need a reformation." Not, "I need more determination," but, "I need the begotten life of Jesus."

Well here are some of the things that happened, that perverted man's whole personality when he began to live this death life. It's all in Genesis 3:6, "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food," and our bodies began to desire enjoyment for its own sake. The death life, the created life was so unsatisfactory that our bodies tried to enjoy things for their own sake and so dear ones, the world is filled with dear people who are trying to enjoy themselves, enjoy themselves as much as they possibly can trying futilely and vainly to make this created life look like the begotten life

of Jesus. And so you get many of us running around really trying to work up excitement to make this life as exciting as the begotten life.

You know there's a great desire for excitement. We buy fast cars, we buy fast motor launches today to go as fast as we can to try and get some life into life and it's all this desire to try to make the created life what the begotten life was really meant to be because there's something inside each one of us dear ones, that yearns for begotten life. Do you know that? Even if you've never been in church for years, there's something in you that wants this begotten life, there's something that is bigger than what we're experiencing at the present time.

So, the body began to enjoy itself for its own sake. And then you see the second part in Verse 6, "And that it was a delight to the eyes," and the soul which was made to give out the life of the spirit to the whole world and to fill it, and to replenish it, the soul turned back in on itself and instead of replenishing it wanted to get, get, get, get and it didn't matter how many charge accounts it had in Dayton's, it couldn't get enough. And dear ones, you know that. You keep trying to transform the created life into the begotten life by allowing this perverted function to take place in your soul, and you try to get, and you try to get, and get, and you can't get enough and you never will get enough because that's not the way the soul was meant to work.

And the spirit is talked of in the last part of Verse 6, "And that the tree was to be desired to make one wise," and our spirits became perverted too. They were meant to be ruled by God. They were meant to receive from him his own life. The spirit instead began to rule over itself and over others. Our spirits dear ones, were meant to be ruled by the Father but our spirits became perverted and began to rule themselves and so we're all concerned over the future because that's our job, we have to take care of that precious future because God no longer can because he doesn't rule us, and so our spirits have great yearnings to make the future what we want it to be.

Our spirits have not the rule of God's Spirit in them and so they want to rule not only our lives but the husband's as well, and not just to discipline the children but to get them to do it exactly as we want them to do it. And when somebody begins to act in a way that we don't agree with we burst out in temper because our spirit wants to rule over them. It's perverted it was made to be ruled by God. It was made so that God's life would flow through it and rule others and the spirit instead of feeding on the Spirit of God and the tree of life, has to start feeding on itself.

So dear ones, really drugs and alcohol are part of the way that we supply the exhilaration that would normally come from the begotten life of Jesus. Do you know that that the begotten life of Jesus provides exhilaration and excitement? This is why Paul said, "Don't be drunk with wine because that's one way of doing it, but be filled with the Spirit and there's no hangover and it's a better way." You see? And it is true dear ones, when the spirit feeds on the tree of life that is in Jesus, when the spirit feeds on the begotten life that is in Christ then the spirit doesn't need that false exhilaration. The body doesn't need the kind of enjoyment that it gets from its own action but it receives the enjoyment of the spirit through it.

The soul doesn't need to be constantly seeking after men's approval. Dear ones, that's why we go for status, do you see it? You know, we want them to know that we're actually doing quite well and so we buy not a Volkswagen, and a radio, and a TV set but we're like the Jones' next door and we buy the big car, and we want status, and we want approval because the soul lacks the approval of God. Lacks the sweet favor of God upon it and so it's constantly trying to gain approval from others.

That's why we're always trying to prove to everybody else that we have really quite good abilities, you know, we're quite good at our job. And that's why when somebody catches us out on the job we're really very anxious to prove to them that well, we can explain this, we can explain it because we want to justify ourselves in their eyes, and justify ourselves in everybody's eyes because we have failed to be justified in the eyes of the only one who counts. And so dear ones, our spirits, and our souls, and our bodies entered into this death life and that's what I'm anxious for you to see.

It's not that you're bad, do you see that? It's not that you don't know how to manage your emotions. It's not that you don't know how to manage your domestic life and you have to try harder. It's not that you're not doing a good job at work. It's dear ones, that you're living the death life, you're believing the lie of the devil who has persuaded you that this created life is the begotten life of God.

Well, what did God do? Dear ones, he is the author of truth and honesty. Where Satan is the author of lies God is the author of truth and honesty and he had to keep his word. In Genesis 3:3 he said, "Listen, if you eat of that tree you will die." And in order to hold the world together in justice God had to exert that death penalty upon us and so you remember, in Genesis 3:24 he withdrew the tree of life from us by driving us out of the Garden of Eden lest we might eat of that tree and live forever. And if we'd live forever with the perversions we had already in our personality we would have created many hells and would have become many Satans and God had to withdraw from us the eternal life that was his plan for us. And he could do nothing else, he had stated so often the righteous live forever and the sinful will die and he had to keep his promise and there was no way out.

Indeed, he could never replace that tree of life until you and I were all utterly persuaded that he detested sin and that it always brought death. And you remember the precious way he did that? The one who was to be the father of the new race, the one who was to walk among us in peace and harmony and bestow upon us his own begotten life in love, he was the one that God allowed to listen to his commandments about the tree of life and about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and to abide by those commandments so that he himself did not incur the penalty of death. And yet that dear one tasted death for all of us.

That dear one who was to come here in peace among us came here to the agony of the death that we deserved to die. Until one man died plainly for all of us to see we would really never have believed that God detested sin. We always have said, you know, "Well he's changed his mind. He's just replaced the tree of life for us because he decided it won't work." And God had to show us that above all he was just and it was because he loved us so much that there was anything like wrath because he didn't want us to endure created life all our lives. And so he allowed this dear one who was originally to come and give us begotten life to come and die that death for us.

When Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" he was experiencing the pangs of hell and outer darkness that the created life will always experience. You see dear ones the created life will not last. The created life only has the appearance of life. It has a temporary appearance for 70 years and then at the end of that there's a second death and outer darkness. And Jesus faced that outer darkness and that second death. He endured even the pangs of hell so that God could replace the tree of life. And how did he replace the tree of life? Well, because Jesus obeyed God perfectly, when the devil tempted Jesus to enjoy himself by eating the bread, Jesus refused continually through his life. When the devil tempted Jesus in his soul to get the kingdoms of this world, Jesus throughout his lifetime obeyed God, when the devil tempted Jesus to rule over

in his spirit the very laws of gravity and the very laws of God, Jesus refused to use his spirit in that way and throughout his life he walked perfectly before God. And so the Bible says, "The righteous deserve to live," and so he deserved to live by his own obedience and he himself possesses begotten life.

He has deserved alone of all of us this begotten life. And dear ones, the message is that he is able to give it to you. That he really is able to give it to you. That this Jesus now has never died. That he's alive tonight and he's able to give you the begotten life of God. Are you living that created life and pretending that it is begotten life? Are you? You know is your body constantly seeking its own enjoyment, whatever the cost is to anyone else? "I must be satisfied and I know what I need and I know what I want." Is your body always anxious for its own enjoyment, and its own comfort, and its own convenience?

Do you see what I'm saying? It's not you're bad. Do you see that? It's not that you're bad it's that you lack the precious begotten life that God is able to give you. And I'm saying to you, turn from that old death life that you think is life. You have no control over your body. You cannot change it, only God can pour into it his begotten life. What about your soul? Is your soul always trying to justify itself? You know, are you always trying to prove your Christian righteousness? Are you always in discussions about the victorious life trying to say, "Well yeah, but man has weaknesses you know and I suppose this is my weakness." Are you always trying to get round the message of the pure life? Are you always trying to persuade others that you're actually better than you really are? Are you always trying to justify yourself or seek other men's approval?

Dear ones, I know tonight that there are men and women here that are burdened under this desire for status. I just know that there are some of you here that are burdened under this desire for status. You laugh at keeping up with the Joneses but you know that that's the reason why you keep buying new carpets, and new furniture, and why you keep getting the other jobs, because it's all this desire for men's approval because you lack the approval that comes upon God with the begotten life of Jesus.

Is your spirit filled with the desire to rule over others? Do you always want your own way? Is your spirit always anxious to have its own way and to make everybody do what it wants? Is there some dissatisfaction still in your own spirit? Is there some feeling in you that surely there's more to it than this? Well dear ones, there is. When the begotten life of Jesus comes into you, the whole life begins to work right. Do you know that? It all begins to work right.

You receive resources through the spirit. You receive resources from God through the Holy Spirit. You receive a sense of restfulness in your spirit and contentment and this begins to pervade your mind, and your will, and your emotions so that they are integrated and they begin to express this life of Jesus through them and you're conscious is at last ready to depend on the blood of Jesus and to say to the Father, "I present the blood of Jesus to you and I know you're pleased with that. I know my life is miserable but I trust you to look at the blood of Jesus," and the conscience rests in the approval that God gives you when you do that. And the body at last becomes the servant of your life and not the master and begins to be used by the Holy Spirit, and by your soul instead of using them.

In other words, your whole life turns the right way up, or the apostles turned it the upside down because at the moment our lives are upside down if we're experiencing only that old created life. Well, how do you receive Jesus' begotten life? Turn from the death life. That's it. You must turn

from the death life. You must acknowledge that what you're living is the death life and dear ones, this applies not only to those of us who aren't Christians tonight but to many of us who are half Christians, if there's such a thing. To many of us who have not gone all the way with God.

Turn from that death life. Say to God tonight, "Father I know that there's some of the death life in me. Some of those qualities that were present in the Garden of Eden are present in me. Some of those characteristics that the Spirit has described tonight, I have them in my life." Now it's the death life dear ones. I can work on that for two or three hours and it'll never get up and walk away because it's inanimate. And you can sit it there and leave it there for a million years and some little animals they walk away with it, but it itself will never walk away.

In other words, you cannot get life out of something that is dead. Now, if you're experiencing the death life with all your eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, with all your attempt to put cosmetics on this dead corpse and make it look as if it's alive, you cannot produce life. You cannot produce life because life is received from the one who has life and that is Jesus. In other words, you need to turn from the death life. You need to admit, "This is the death life that I have," and whatever way it expresses itself in you, you have to resolve tonight to turn from that.

If it's your body, if it wants constant enjoyment and that's all it seeks either in food, or in sexual pleasure, or in satisfaction, or in comfort, or in convenience then you must say, "Tonight Father I'll turn from that. I'll turn from that death life in my body." If your soul is constantly seeking after other people's approval and trying to justify itself then you must turn from that and you must say, "Father, if they look upon me as a complete failure I don't care. I'm turning from that desire to justify myself. I'm turning from that desire to get possessions and to try to prove I'm worth something with the amount of money that I've earned, or by the job that I hold down." You need to turn from that death life.

If it's your spirit and it wants to dominate your home, and you're a dictator in your home and you want everything to go your way, and you cannot abide anybody else having their way, then you need to turn from that tonight and say, "Father, that's the death life in me. I need the begotten life of Jesus tonight to fill me there in that place and make me alive." And then you need to turn to Jesus. He that hath the Son hath life.

If you have Jesus tonight dear ones, you have God's begotten life inside you and you know it. And similarly if you're pretending that the old created life is the begotten life you know that too. Dear ones, Jesus is alive. Jesus is alive tonight and is willing, because this is why he was sent, he is willing to give you this begotten life. Well I pray that if the Spirit has spoken to you, you will come and receive that life. It's important dear ones, to come only if God's Spirit has spoken, you see. But you know if he has spoken. You know if you're pretending that this old death life is begotten life or not and if that's the case will you just come tonight and receive from Jesus what he is able to give you.