

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Imagine this that you see that your roommate while you were out has been in and has been looking for some things of their own and they have just mowed through all your stuff and it's chaotic. And so, the old anger gets up and you move and you say, "Who do you think you are? You think you can just throw everybody's stuff all over the place whenever you want to?" And then the old cold war settles in and you hold it like that for a day, or if you're two girls for two days. That's just the Irish girls, I'm sure. And then you begin to make it up and eventually you ask forgiveness and the thing comes out alright.

Now in that situation, even those of us with very hardened consciences, are very conscious that there are two factors involved. One, we do have a real sense of guilt because we've lost our temper. You know, our consciences are programmed by the same spirit that prompted Jesus to say, "If you're angry with your brother, you're guilty of the judgment." And so our consciences, because they're programmed by that spirit, our consciences witness guilt and we feel somehow, "Yeah, yeah, I know it was wrong." We might feel it's wrong for different reasons according to how much light we've had about God, but we do feel, "Yeah, there's some guilt. We shouldn't have done it." And yet we're conscious of another attitude inside us and that's the attitude that feels, "Well yeah, but I had a right to do it. I mean, he or she shouldn't have treated my stuff that way. I have a right to defend my own possessions."

Now do you see dear ones, that those two factors are present every time we disobey the Father in some way in our lives? There's that wee bit of feeling of guilt and there's also that feeling that seems deeper than the guilt that says, "Yeah, but I mean I had a right to do it." And there's that bit of us that wants to justify what we did. Now, how does the ordinary man in the street deal with that? Well, usually he looks at the guilt and he rationalizes it, and he attributes it to some Victorian inhibition that has been passed on by his parents. And he just rejects the whole idea of death following upon anger. He rejects the authority of Jesus, he says, "No, it doesn't matter if you're angry, you're not guilty of the judgment." He just rationalizes away the whole idea of guilt. And how does he deal with the inside feeling, the sense of self-assertion? Well, usually he looks at it and he says, "Well, I'm a human being. Every human being has a right to defend his own possessions. No, I'm right to feel that way. I ought to stand up for myself and look out for myself, and if I don't who will?" And that's normally the way the man in the street deals with an active disobedience.

Now, how does a person who comes to believe in Jesus deal with that act? Well, he sees that Jesus is God's son. He sees that what Jesus says about the anger is true and that if you're angry with your brother you're guilty of the judgment. And he sees, "Yes, that is anger. That's a sin. I am guilty of the judgment. I deserve to be condemned for that sin of anger." And then he looks at Jesus and he sees what it says there in Romans 5:8 that God commended his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. And he sees that Jesus died for that sin of anger, and he sees that there's no reason under heaven why God cannot forgive him for that. And so he repents and turns from his anger and says, "By your grace Lord, I'll never get angry again. I'll never lose my temper again. Now Jesus, I'll receive your spirit into my life to rule it."

Now how does he deal with the second feeling inside him, the attitude inside that makes him feel that he had a right to get angry, and a right to defend himself and assert himself? He looks again

to Jesus on the cross and he sees that that man did not defend himself, and he sees that that person did not call down millions of angels to wreak havoc among the Roman army. He sees that that man Jesus had the power to assert all his rights, and defend all his rights, and to get his own way in a flash of a second and he sees that this man Jesus died to his rights. He did not assert himself. He did not defend himself. He went into a tomb and lost consciousness and was willing for God to bring him back to life when he chose and the Christian sees that he was baptized into that death and that he has no right to those precious possessions, and he has not right to keep them all in order, and he has no right to keep them away from other people interfering. That he has no rights and that he was crucified with Christ on Calvary and that the Holy Spirit alone has the right to defend his possessions, or his clothes, or preserve his future. And he sees that Romans 6:6 is true, that our old self was crucified with Christ.

Now dear ones, those are the two vital factors in the crisis experience that brings us into this new life in God. First of all, a realization that Jesus has died for our sins so that God can forgive us; and secondly, a realization that we have died with Christ so that the Holy Spirit could free us from that power of sin. Now do you see it's those two parts of the Christian experience that lead us into a life that can be described by 1 John 3:9, "Anybody born of God does not commit sin."

Now if you've entered into only one part of what Christ has done for you on the cross, then you're going to have constant trouble with that old statement, "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin." Because you're going to find this rising up within you, this attitude within you, this old nature that is still there. You remember that verse states, "Anybody born of God does not commit sin. Indeed, he cannot sin because God's nature abides in him."

Now many of us have entered into an experience of the forgiveness of our sins but that old nature of children of wrath is still what operates in our life. In other words, we walk asking God to forgive us our sins for the sake of Jesus' death but inside we have a nature and an attitude that wants to have its own way, that wants to be independent of God, that wants to rebel against God.

Now brothers and sisters, unless you come into a total Christian experience you're going to have constant trouble with this whole business of just ordinary sin, and losing your temper, and getting irritable, and getting selfish. Now do you see what I'm saying? It's not an extra experience you need. It's a full experience of all that God has done for us in Christ on the cross.

Now is this written into scripture? Yes, these two parts of the work that God needs to do in us is written into scripture again, and again, and again. First of all, it's written into the promises so maybe you'd like to look at one of the promises that plainly show it. It's 1 John 1:9. 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins." That's the first part. God forgives us our sins because we believe that Jesus died for them. The second part, "And cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

In other words, God will not only forgive us but he will cleanse out the rebellion. He will not only get rid of the guilt but he'll get rid of the rebellion inside us. But God will do it. You see the problem with most of us, we allow him to do the first part but we decide we'll grit our teeth and we'll do the second part by the power of positive thinking. And we come into just a defeated Christian life.

Now do you see that God has done it all? Somebody this week said to me, and that person will excuse me using it because I think it's helpful and is true of most of our experiences, "I find inside

myself at times a resistance to God's will. I want to do it. You know, there's a part of me that wants to do what he wants me to do but there's a bit inside me that I cannot change." Now that's the bit that God dealt with on the cross in Christ. And the secret is you believe that on to the cross. You don't destroy it by will power or by the power of positive thinking; you believe it on to the cross. And the reason you're not experiencing complete victory is that you haven't entered into all that God has done for you on that cross.

Now you get the promise again you see, not only the promises, but you get the statement in relationship to Christ's death if you'd like to look there, because, Christ's death is really the only event that enables us to enter into this at all. If God has not done this on the cross dear ones, then the Holy Spirit cannot do it in us you see. If God has not borne our sins in Jesus on the cross, then the Holy Spirit cannot give us a forgiveness of sins. If God has not borne that old rebellious will on the cross in Jesus and destroyed it there, then the Holy Spirit cannot give us victory over it. So it depends on what God has done in Christ.

But you find that he has done this in Christ 2 Corinthians 5:14. 2 Corinthians 5:14, and it's again this truth that God has not only dealt with our sins in forgiving them but he has dealt with our sin in rendering it inoperative in our lives. 2 Corinthians 5:14, "For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all." Jesus has died for our sins to enable God to forgive us. "Therefore all have died." But we have died with Christ and do you see it's the second part that we with our tendency to sell a soft gospel have missed? Because everybody wants forgiveness but it's a different story, do you want to be delivered from that old self will that keeps asserting itself? And you can see that the only way to enter into a total Christian experience is to come into that realization that we've died with Christ.

In other words, that God will deal not only with the outward disobedience but with that inward attitude of disobedience. That God will not only forgive us for our acts, and thoughts, and words, but by the power of the Holy Spirit and Jesus' death he is able to deal with that inward motive, and reaction, and attitude, and intention.

Dear ones, what gives you the trouble? It's not because you murder people every day. No, you get angry with people every day. With most of us it's not that we're doing many acts, and thoughts, and words that are wrong but we have feelings inside us that are tearing us apart. We call them our hang ups and they're really the things that prevent us walking inside as we walk outside. They're those things that make us feel we're hypocrites. We walk outwardly as a Christian but inwardly we're not a Christian.

We come into one of those famous tea groups and we're supposed to love the person. Everybody is saying, "Well love everybody else," so we all say we love each other but really inside no, there isn't that flow of love. And it's that inside thing that with many of us needs to be dealt with. Now the promise is in the Holy Spirit too because the cross you see is what makes it possible, the Holy Spirit is what makes it real in us. Many of you are saying, "Well alright pastor, but how? How does this come about?"

Well you remember, Mary asked this, you remember God gave her a promise, "You are going to conceive and you will bear a son." She said, "How will this be?" The answer to every how in the Bible is the Holy Spirit, "The Holy Spirit will conceive and will bear a son in your womb." It's the same with this, how do you enter into what God has done for you in Christ in the cross, the Holy Spirit brings you into it and his double work is found there John 3:6. The work first of all of the new

birth. John 3:6 and you remember when Jesus is talking to Nicodemus and again it is concern with the forgiveness of sins.

John 3:6, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And the Holy Spirit first of all regenerates us. When we come to God and ask him to forgive us our sins he regenerates us and then the other work that he does is Acts 15:9. Acts 15:9, and it's you remember, what Peter said about the day of Pentecost as he looked back to that day when they were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Acts 15:9, and here he points to one of the works of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Acts 15:9, "And he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith." In other words, you see, written right through scripture into the message of the cross, into the truth of the Holy Spirit are these two works that need to be done in our hearts.

Now, could we deal with some of Satan's objections? The first one is this 1 John 3:9, "Anyone born of God does not commit sin." Sin is knowing disobedience to God's law. Now, I've entered into an experience of forgiveness of sins but I haven't entered into a crucifixion with Christ so I get angry. I know it's wrong. I know it's wrong to be angry, I've made resolutions again and again not to be angry, I still get angry. Now surely I'm doing something that I know to be wrong, surely that means I'm not a child of God.

Now do you see the spirit of 1 John 3:9 is this, sin is alien to the Christian life. It is unnatural to the Christian life. If you ever do sin, we have an advocate with the Father but it is an emergency. But it's alien to the Christian life. But the promise of God is if we walk in the light as he is in the light, the blood of Jesus continues to cleanse you from all sin. In other words brothers and sisters, if you're walking in every desire to walk free of anger, if every time anger comes you treat it as an emergency situation and you get before the Father with a penitent heart and you say, "Lord, I know I shouldn't be angry, I know it's a sin. I ask you to receive me again to yourself and to give me the Spirit of Jesus." Then, if you're walking in that light the blood of Jesus will continue to cleanse you from all sin.

In other words, that's the way you walk when you're walking between two worlds, between the world of forgiveness of sins and the world of victory over sin. You don't come to this place where you say, you see, "Oh, well I'm not really a Christian. If I'm not filled with the Spirit I'm not really a Christian." Loved ones, you're born of the Spirit. You have a desire to love Jesus. You have a desire to obey God. That is walking in the light.

It's when you cease to walk in the light that you begin to come into the danger of hardening your heart you see. It's when you begin to treat anger as a normal part of your life. It's when you begin to believe the psychologist that anger is a healthy expression of any normal individual. It's when you begin to rationalize sin that you begin to sink back into a hardened heart. But do you see the Father is gracious to us? Loved ones, the Father is not up there ready to whack us down every time we fall. The Father will forgive us until 70 times seven as long as we have penitent and soft hearts.

Now that's the way to answer Satan's objection you see, because I know some of you are concerned about that. "Well pastor, what happens before we enter into victory? What happens while we're walking in some defeat?" The Father is gracious to us. He says, "If you walk in the light, if you're walking after me with all of your heart, if you're doing your best to follow me and obey me, then the blood of my Son will be available to cleanse you from all sin. But, I want you to hunger

after the full victory that I have provided for you on the cross.”

In other words dear ones, we don't want to be a body of people who walk in fear you see. We want to be a body of people walking out after Jesus in full joy and in as much obedience as we are able and yearning after that full victory that is possible, and that's full deliverance and hungering after righteousness and goodness. Now that's the way to, I think, to deal with that.

I'd love to ask you if you've any questions but will you ask me afterwards if you have any questions in how to walk between two worlds? The Father judges us by our response to the light not at all by our perfect walk. At the end of the day we're justified not by our perfect walk but by the blood of Jesus. But nevertheless we need to see that we want to enter into all.

Now the other objection is this, “I received it all when I was born of the spirit. I entered into both works when I was converted.” Then praise God. Great, that's great. There's no argument. If you've entered into a victory over anger, and selfishness, and envy when you are born of the spirit, that's great. That was probably very close to what the New Testament experience was. Probably if you read the story on the day of Pentecost they believed in Jesus and were born of the Spirit on that day they were preached to and then the next day they were baptized in the water and Peter said to them, “Do you know if you're baptized into Christ Jesus you're baptized into his death.” And so they went under that water in full consecration, in full death to self and they came up and were filled and baptized with the Holy Spirit. Probably that was the New Testament experience. Nevertheless, even in the New Testament you can find that some were born of the Spirit and not filled with the Spirit. Some knew forgiveness of sins and did not know victory over sin.

Some other dear ones say, “I received it when I was baptized. I had an experience of tongues and I received it all then.” Or, “If don't have victory over anger and envy does it mean I wasn't baptized with the Spirit?” Well dear ones, do you see that some of us enter into a baptism with the Holy Spirit in relationship to the gifts: tongues; healing; miracles; and discernment of spirits.” But do you see that many of us at that time did not have light on the victory that God had worked for us in the cross? And you see that the Holy Spirit can only lead you into what you have faith for. Be it unto you according to your faith.

So unless you believe for that, the Holy Spirit is not able to bring you into it. Now say you have experienced the baptism with the Spirit and some experience of tongues or of gifts of the Spirit, and yet you get angry at home, you get envious, you get jealous, and you lose your temper. Then you ought to say to the Holy Spirit, “Holy Spirit I'm not casting away my confidence. I thank you that you baptized me with yourself but I thank you that you can reveal to me the victory that I have on the cross of Christ and I trust you to lead me into that. I trust you not only to anoint me with power, but to cleanse my heart from these things.”

And dear ones, this I believe is the way we should walk in relation to the objections that Satan levels at this. I think another thing Satan tries to do is he tries to get us introspect. And it isn't long before you have a group of people who are saying, “Yeah, I'm looking in, I'm looking in to see where I'm not crucified with Christ.” And they have long sessions of self-analysis where they go in introspection deep, deep down, they think, and they go as deep as doesn't matter, because that's the only depth you can go with your mind. But they use introspection and they're introspecting day, after day.

Now loved ones that is not the Father's promise. Jesus promised us, “Listen, the Holy Spirit when

he comes will lead you into all truth.” Now it’s his job to lead you into all truth. Now what you do as a child of God is you walk in knowing forgiveness of sins saying, “Holy Spirit lead me into all truth about myself. If you see anything in me that is not in that place on the cross, then Holy Spirit will you reveal it to me?” But brothers and sisters do not introspect. It’s a sin to introspect because introspection is an independent activity of our own mighty minds. And our own mighty minds can see only as deep as our own minds, they cannot see into our spirits. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal these things so don’t let’s all become introspective. Let’s walk in the forgiveness of our sins saying, “Holy Spirit, will you lead me into all that Christ has done for me on the cross and show me if there’s some way in which I need to come more into that death.” So don’t introspect.

I think a lot of us go into suppression. A lot of us go into suppression, we say, “Yeah, I was crucified with Christ. I was crucified with Christ. I was crucified with Christ, now I’m going to hold this self down inside me.” And we walk in suppression and repression. Now dear ones, the answer is you believe that you were crucified with Christ and you obey the Holy Spirit and he makes real in you the victory. You don’t make real the victory. You believe that you were crucified with Christ and you obey and submit to the Holy Spirit and he makes real the victory in you. And that’s the way you walk in this.

Some of you may say, “Well how do I enter in?” Well first of all never question that you were crucified with Christ. A lot of us say, “Pastor if you saw me this morning trying to get into these new shoes, and I lost my patience and I got utterly irritable and threw them into the corner, you would know I wasn’t crucified with Christ.” Then I would say to you brother you are disobeying and contradicting God’s word. His word says you were crucified with Christ. And you better believe his word rather than believe your feelings.

Now brothers and sisters you start with faith that the fact has already taken place, that all of us have been crucified with Christ, that all our futures ended 1900 years ago in Jesus. You accept that, you start by setting your faith on that and you never question that. You believe God’s word that our old self was crucified with Christ. You believe that all who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions. You believe that. You start at that level, never go below that level.

Satan would love you to go below it and say, “Yeah, you ought to crucify yourself.” No, you can’t crucify yourself. Old Luther tried it, you know, beating his body. You can’t do it. It’s been done already. You were crucified with Jesus. All that is evil in you was destroyed in Jesus on Calvary. Then look to the Holy Spirit and trust him to make that real in your life. Just say, “Holy Spirit, I trust you to lead me into all of this victory.” But dear ones, that is the way, faith in your death with Christ on the cross and present faith in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit will then lead us beautifully into this.

But loved ones, if you try to do it yourselves soon we’ll all have to go and do basket work in the psyche wards, really. Because it’ll drive you crazy, you’ll just go wild trying to introspect, and suppress, and repress. And don’t start looking at each other and saying, “Oh, am I walking in victory?” No, that’s the Holy Spirit’s job to bring you into victory. And at the end of the day we’re justified before the Father not because of our victory but because of the blood of Jesus.

At the end of the day all the glorious saints will go before him and say, “Father, I ask you to accept me because of the blood of Jesus not because I’ve lived this kind of victorious life, or this

kind of defeated life but because of the blood of Jesus.” Well dear ones, do you see that the whole experience is there for us and it’s something that we should begin to move into as the Holy Spirit guides us.

On Sunday evenings we try to deal a little more with this subject so if you find that God’s Spirit is making you yearn for more victory in your life then you should probably consider coming to those. And the bookshop has lots of books on this very subject and so you should go there and God can lead you into it yourself. But really it is for you. It is true that not only did Jesus die for us, but we died with Jesus. All our miserable selves were crucified there and we don’t need to try to suppress them or destroy them ourselves it’s been done already. Let us pray.

Holy Spirit, we would commit ourselves into your control. We cannot bring this about ourselves but we believe you are able to bring it about. So Holy Spirit, we as a body of brothers and sisters will never again question God’s word that our old selves were crucified with Christ. That when Jesus died we died. And we trust you Holy Spirit to work out all the implications of that in our lives by revelation and make it real in our lives by experience. We trust you to bring us into this place so that we can live as we preach and so that the world may begin to see Jesus walking again in our bodies, and our minds, and our emotions, and our spirits. For his glory, amen.