

## The Real Christian

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Do you realize that you don't need to be able to make yourself holy but you need to be able, and be prepared to set yourself apart from the outward acts and words in your life that are disobedient to God's will. Then God regenerates you by his Spirit and fills your life with acts and words that are pleasing to him. He does that miraculously, lifts you in the rocket of His own Holy Spirit.

Similarly when you are a Christian, you don't need to then go in and start cleansing the motives and the attitudes that you have within, but you need to be ready, as God gives you light to set yourself apart from jealousy, apart from pride, apart from anything when God reveals these things in your heart. And then he, by his Holy Spirit, will cleanse you and fill you with the fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace. But we emphasized, you remember, that there were two sides of saintliness, the human side where we were ready to set ourselves apart from these things and the divine side where God was able to fill us miraculously with the beauty of Jesus.

We added I think last Sunday to the third part mentioned in that the God of peace himself sanctify you holy and keep you blameless in body, soul, and spirit. We had dealt with the body, the outward actions and words. We had dealt with the spirit, the inward attitudes and motives. And we have now come to the soul or the mind and we said, you remember, that it is vital for a saint to have his mind renewed. This is the area of our personality that deals with our service to God and it's essential dear ones, for us to be renewed in our minds.

Our minds were the first part of our personality to be perverted by Satan and they are usually the last to be renewed by the Spirit of God. Now you can find that in Genesis 3:4 for instance, when Satan persuaded the woman to think something other than God had said to her. In other words, he perverted her mind in Genesis 3:4, "But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die.'" And then goes on in Verse 5 to blind a man with his own lies, "For God knows that when you eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

So it is essential dear ones, is that the image of God is to be reformed in each one of us that our minds should be renewed. It's essential for our minds to be renewed if we're ever to perform the service for which God created us. We remember he created us and he said, "Be fruitful, and multiple, and subdue the earth." And if we're to subdue the earth in the way God wants to and not the way we're doing in Vietnam, if we're to subdue the earth in the way God plans us to subdue it then we need to have our minds renewed. We need to be renewed in our minds and begin to see the way God works.

You see, so often many of us allow our outward lives to be cleansed, we become Christians. And we go a step further and we see that there are attitudes within us that never show themselves on the surface and we allow the Holy Spirit to come and cleanse those attitudes too. But our mind keeps on going in the same old rut. It keeps thinking the same way as it always did. It keeps appreciating the same set of values as it always did. And so instead of going on with God, and being used by God, we become crippled Christians who try to do God's work in the way that we used to do the work of the devil. Now the mind has to be renewed as well as the heart, and the life. And I think you have to realize if we're going to be any use to God that has to happen.

I think too many of us, you see, have been renewed in our hearts, and renewed in our lives and we want to do God's work but we start trying to do it with the old methods that we used before to do our own work, or to do the devil's work. Now, I think some of you realize that many churches do teach that you should have your mind renewed. Indeed, most churches today are concerned with the renewing of people's minds. But they talk about the renewing of the mind in two ways that are unbiblical.

First of all, they talk about the renewing of the mind without ever mentioning the renewal of the life or the renewal of the heart. So you know most churches today produce ethical homilies, don't they? I mean, most of us here in these robes are preaching, "Be good. Be good love your neighbor. Be good in your home. Be good in your job," and we're just moralizing continually. So many churches today are concerned with the renewal of the mind but then teach as if the heart does not need to be renewed. They teach it as if we're all Christians already and there's nothing to do but just show people beauty and they go for it.

Well dear ones, you know your own hearts, our own hearts do not love the truth when we see it and so though many churches are concerned with the renewal of the mind in these days, it's unbiblical because they do not talk about the need for the renewal of fellowship with God first and then the renewal of the heart. In other words, it's what Goldwater said, and I'm sure he said many foolish things, but he did say some wise things, and you remember he said, is that sufficiently Irish and straddling both side so the fence, you remember Goldwater said, "You cannot legislate heart." And that's right, you can pass legislation for civil rights but you can't legislate people's hearts.

Now you can see dear ones, there's no point in talking about the renewal of the mind unless the heart has been changed by God's Spirit. This is another reason why I try to avoid all these topical event series, what I think of Vietnam, and what I think of the civil rights movements. That's not what you want to know. We need our hearts changed so that we can obey what we already know is right. So it's wise I think to see that there is a difference between talking about the renewal of the mind without the renewal of the heart and life, and talking about the renewal of the mind as a consequence step after the life and the heart has been renewed.

I think similarly on the other side many Christians fail to go onto a renewal of the mind at all. I think some Christians renew the mind in the way some of the churches do. We'll renew our minds in the best thoughts that our philosophers have given to us. We'll renew our mind by thinking over again the power of positive thinking. We'll renew our minds in the kind of auto suggestion and psychological persuasion that we should act this way.

Now the renewal of the mind that is talked about in the Bible is different from than that. The renewal of the mind that the Bible talks about does not advise you to attend the discussion groups, to read more books, to seek more knowledge, to find better methods. The Bible says, "You renew your mind by having that mind in you which was in Christ Jesus." So you see you don't renew the mind in the Biblical sense by receiving more knowledge, or studying the problem of crimes in our streets. You renew the mind in the biblical sense by allowing the Holy Spirit to show you the ways in which your mind is not like the mind of Jesus. To show you things that you treasure that the mind of Jesus does not treasure. And then by filling you with the very scale and set of values that Jesus himself had.

It's another miraculous implanting of the mind of Jesus in you. You see, we are renewed in our life by having Jesus' life given to us. We are renewed in our heart by having Jesus' heart displace our

hearts. We are renewed in our mind by having Jesus' mind displace our minds. But unless we go into this renewal of the mind we'll fall back into being conformed to the image of this world instead of being transformed by the renewing of our minds.

Can I give just one more instance to try to clench it? Many of us become Christians, and then we graduate with our good professions. We do not have the mind renewed as far as what we ought to do as far as our own comfort so we automatically accept the values of the world as far as the number of cars we have, the kind of carpet we have, the kind of TV set we have, the lake cottage that we have.

And before we know it because we haven't allowed our minds to be renewed in the image of Jesus, we've fallen out of the spiritual life that we once experienced. That's why it's essential to go on to the renewal of the mind.

Now dear ones, would you just look with me at the mind of Jesus and will you turn then to Philippians 2:5-11. Philippians 2:5-11, this was the mind of Jesus and let's look there at just verse 8 first of all, this is the mind of Jesus, "And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." And then the very last verse, verse 11 there, "And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Now the mind of Jesus was one that was anxious to humble him and have him wiped out if necessary for the glory of God. That was the mind of Jesus. Would you look at Verse 9, "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name." In other words, the exaltation of Jesus was done by God not by Jesus himself. Jesus did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. He did not count equality with God a thing to be held onto. Now we are the opposite. From the very first moment when Adam ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil we have been trying to show that we are equal with God.

We've been trying to grasp enough knowledge to ourselves so that we could be equal with God. And we've constantly been overdeveloped in our minds. You know that dear ones, your mind is full of half a dozen different things. It's full of knowledge. You have more knowledge in your mind and I have more knowledge in my mind than people 50 years ago. Then people 100 years ago even dreamed there was. We have plenty of knowledge, but all our knowledge only makes us more and more scheming and contriving to succeed without God.

We're constantly trying to hold on to all that we've got and to contrive in such a way that we will eventually be exalted. Now, dear ones, the mind of Jesus is the very opposite. He has more knowledge in one corner of his mind than all of us have. He has more knowledge in his mind than the whole universe of philosophers will ever have. And yet he was prepared not to clench that equality with God a thing to be grasped but was ready to empty himself of all that so that he might be exalted by God.

In other words, to have our minds renewed in the image of Jesus, is to stop grasping all these things for ourselves. To stop contriving and scheming how we are going to help the world and help ourselves at the same time. To stop trying to manage our own careers for our own benefit and for God's glory. To stop that kind of attitude and to really allow the mind of Jesus to be implanted in us where we're willing to give up all that we have if necessary that he might be exalted. Where we're willing to empty ourselves of all the stuff that we think gives us power and we're ready to be humble and to become nothing for His sake.

Now dear ones, I think the best way to tell it to you is by repeating part of the story anyway of

one man who did this. And I'd pray that even in these last five minutes God will make it real to your heart. At the turn of the century there was a man called C.T Studd. He was one of the privileged among the English nobility at that time. His father was very wealthy; he himself and his brothers went to Cambridge. This is book dear ones and I don't think there are many left at the bookstall but if you do want it and put your name back there we'll order it for you.

Here are some of the comments, C.T.Studd returned to captain Cambridge in his last year 1883. His Cambridge career has been described as one long blade of cricketing glory. In his last year he topped both batting and bowling averages. Indeed, through the previous past century of university cricket, only four bat men had had a better batting average and only four a better bowling. A truly amazing record of all around brilliancy and one which ranks him as one of the greatest all-around players that the game has produced.

He also won the Cambridge single racket match and represented Cambridge against Oxford. He was beaten by Sir Henry Slessor. He took his degree and came down from Cambridge in 1884. Then an event took place in his life that made him stop and think. But as he rose to prominence in the cricket world, and especially while touring with test team in Australia there were two old ladies that set themselves to pray that you would be brought back to God.

The answer came suddenly his brother to who he was especially attached was thought to be dying. C.T. Studd was constantly at his bedside and while sitting there watching as he hovered between life and death these thoughts came welling up in his mind. Now what is all the popularity of the world worth to George? What is all the fame and flattery worth? What is it worth to possess all the riches in the world when a man comes face-to-face with eternity? And a voice seemed to answer vanity of vanity, all is vanity. All those things he said have become as nothing to my brother. He only cared about the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ and God taught me the same message.

In his love and goodness he restored my brother to health and as soon as I could get away I went to hear Moody. Moody was in England at that time. There the Lord met me again and restored to me the joy of salvation. Then later on he began to realize, as many of us have, that our life was not fully given to God. And by three days afterwards a great friend of mine came back to town and asked me to go to a Bible meeting with him. I went and after we had read the bible for some time and spoken about it among ourselves he said, "I you heard of the extraordinary blessing Mrs. So & So has received?"

No. Well you know she had been an earnest Christian worker nearly her whole life and she has had a good deal of sorrow and trouble which naturally influenced and weighed upon her. But lately somehow God has given her such a blessing that it does not affect her at all. Nothing in fact seems to trouble her. She lives a life of perfect peace. Her life is like one of heaven on earth. We began at once he says looking into the Bible to see if God had promised such a blessing as this and it was not long before we found that God had promised it to believers, a peace which passes all understanding and a joy that is unspeakable.

We then began to examine ourselves earnestly and we found that we had not got there but we wanted the best thing that God could give us so we knelt down and asked him to give us this blessing. Then we separated. I was very much in earnest about it so when I went up to my old room I again asked God to give me this peace and joy. That very day I met with the book The Christian Secret of a Happy Life, that green one at the back of the bookstore and you can read it there and some other books on this subject dear ones.

In it was stated that this blessing is exactly what God gives to everyone who is ready and willing to receive it. And I found the reason I had not received it was just this, that I had not made room for it. And I found as I sat there alone thinking that I had been keeping back from God what belonged to him and I found that I had been bought with the price of the precious Lord Jesus and that I had kept back myself from him and had not fully yielded. As soon as I found this out I went down on my knees and gave myself up to God.

I found the next step was to have simple childlike faith to believe that what I had committed to God he was willing to take and keep. It was not very long before God led me to go to China. I never thought of going out of the country before. I had felt that England was big enough for me but now my mind seemed constantly to run in the direction of the Lord's work abroad. Well, the people gathered around him and said you're mad. He and another group of men had toured the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and told about what God had done in their hearts and lives and the students of the universities in Britain were rising up and coming to God.

And all his friends gathered around him and said, "No, you'll waste yourself in China. You're mad. You can be used here." Many said that he was making a huge mistake to go and bury himself in the interior of China. They pointed out that the influence which he would have the young men of England. The devil must have used a very similar argument to Moses but C.T. Studd prayed and said that he would go to China. What happened?

Well he began to humble himself as a servant. May the 26th he wrote this letter to his brother who was at Eton which is one of public schools in England. We were overrun with rats, during the night they would take away our socks, nibbling off our legging tapes, taking away our blotting paper and putting them at the bottom of the boat in their nest. They caused us a good deal of annoyance so we thought of setting traps for them but we decided not to do so but simply to ask the Lord to rid us of the grievance. Since that time we've had no further trouble with them.

I do not say don't play games, or cricket, and so forth but I'm saying enjoy them giving thanks to Jesus for them. Only take care that games or your career do not become an idol to you as they did to me. What good would it do to anybody in the next world to be even the best player that ever has been and then think of the difference between that and winning souls for Jesus. Or if you have never tasted the joy of winning one soul for Jesus, go and ask our Father to enable you to do so. And then you'll know what real true joy is.

He inherited his fortune from his father, \$300,000. One day when I was reading the harmony of the gospel I came to where Christ talked with the rich young man, then God seemed to bring back to me all the vows I had made. Three days later the post, which only came every half month, brought letters from the solicitor and the banker to tell me what I had inherited. Then God made me just ordinarily honest and told me what to do. Then I learned why I had been sent to Chunking and it was to draw up papers granting the power of attorney and for that I had to have the signature of one of the majesty's officers.

I went to the council but when he saw the paper he said, "I won't sign it." Finally he said he would give me two weeks to think it over and then if I still wished to do it he would sign it. At the end of the two weeks I took it back and he signed and off the stuff went. God has promised to give hundredfold for everything we give to him. A hundredfold is a wonderful percentage, it's 10,000% so as far as he could judge his inheritance was 30,000 pounds. That's about \$100,000. What

happened?

When he died 850 missionaries were on the field. There were missionaries in the Belgium Congo, in Senegal, in Portuguese Guinea, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Canary Islands, and Latin America, and India, and Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam, and 20 other countries. Now dear ones, when you are ready to stop pleasing all your talents and all your abilities and are ready to see that the mind of Jesus is a mind that is ready to give up all that you think you have so that God can exalt you by his own power, you'll find that coming true in your own life. You know, you're going to work what are you going to get? Okay, some of us here make it. Do we ever make \$20,000 a year? Well at the most some of us will. We'll make \$30,000 maybe at the most. Some of us will struggle and strangle ourselves in business and make \$50,000 a year and die of a heart attack at 55.

But dear ones, what's the point of it? What is the point of it? Can you tell me? So that you can have three little images of yourself who can go through the same regiment? Do you see it's meaningless dear ones? If you really begin to sit back you see that the success that we think we have is not success at all. You see, the truth is this, God cannot use your abilities to extend his own kingdom because you would take the glory for yourself.

Now would you stop working out how to split up the five loaves and two fishes so that you can give a little of each to 5,000. Would you stop doing that? Would you stop looking at the walls that surround the crime city of Jericho, that is in all our streets in America, would you stop looking at those walls and plan how you're going to get dynamite and explosive charges into those walls.

In other words, would you stop trying to find out how you're going to use your own meager abilities to affect the life of this nation? Would you stop doing that? Would you stop trying to work out how you're going to sell the precious ointments of your talents and abilities and how much money you're going to be able to give to God to help the poor. And instead of that, would you come with your five loaves and your two fishes and would you give them to Jesus. And say "Lord, I don't know what you're going to do with me but here do it." And if you can feed 5,000 will you feed them and would you come to the walls of Jericho and do whatever God tells you?

If he tells you to leave college, leave college. If he tells you to walk around the walls seven times, do it. And God himself will bring the bible to this nation and the world, but he'll do it through your obedience not through all our clever gifts and abilities. Would you come with that precious ointment and would you waste it on Jesus? Would you waste it on Jesus? Would you lay it at his feet, really? Not, "Lord use me," but, "Lord, here it is you can take it all and keep it all if you want." And if you do that he'll provide money to dress the poor. But do you see dear ones there are 2,000 million souls who do not know Jesus. There are 2,000 million souls. One has died since I said that and another one has gone now into eternal darkness, and another has now died since I said that last sentence. Another one has now died not know that God was ready to forgive them. And another has died without any knowledge of the life of freedom that Jesus is able to give. And another has now died, and another and a thousand more will have passed into the eternal darkness by the time you get home today.

Dear ones, you can do nothing with your loaves and fishes. Do you see that? You can't get them distributed fast enough. What God wants us to do is have the mind of Jesus. See that we of ourselves can do nothing and lay all these things at the feet of Jesus and say, "Lord, will you do with me whatever you want?"

Maybe it will mean like Studd, going and putting on Chinese clothes and giving away all your money. Maybe it will mean giving up all your plans for lovely houses. But whatever it means, God will be able to do something with your life. That's what it means to have your mind renewed in the image of Jesus and you see that's where the rock is because we all want salvation, and we all want admission into heaven, but it's hard to change the life to that extent.

Well, I ask you dear ones, will you begin to allow the mind of Jesus to renew your mind and see that truth then is to be known by God and true riches is to receive the grace of God in your life. And that what the world calls poverty is riches in God's eyes. Someone has put it this way, "Will you give away what you cannot keep so that you can receive what you cannot lose?" Would you do that? Let us pray.

Oh mighty God, will you interpret this to each one of us individually and wherever we need to lay some of our talents at your feet and admit that they are not talents at all, where we need to lay at your feet some of these great abilities we think we have, will you point that out to us? That we may not be confirmed to the image of this world, that we may be transformed by the renewing of our lives. We ask this in Jesus name amen.