

The Truth Frees

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

So I'd like to share this morning the whole fact that the truth does make you free. And if you're not being made free then what you're looking at is not the truth. And it's very important I think, to see the truth as it really is. So let's go to Lake Calhoun and two little guys in a boat, eight year olds, can't swim. And they're messing about in the boat and of course it tips and they're both thrown into the water. And they start yelling and shouting for help and two lifeguards on the shore see the immediately dive right in and are beside them in a moment. And the lifeguards tell them what to do, "Okay, just lay back, lay back, and let me get a hold of you and just rest there. Just relax and I'll take you right back." And one of them does it. He's just used to doing what somebody older than him tells him so he just does it, just lays back and lets the lifeguard drag him right back, doesn't move a limb.

The other wee mate, he hears too and he knows he's in good hands, and he knows the lifeguard looks strong, but he's just so used to helping himself all the time that he decided, "Yeah, but I better kick a little just to help him." And he keeps splashing and thrashing around, and he thrashes the whole way back to shore. Now, both of them get back to shore it's just that one did it effortlessly and the other thrashed, and kicked, and splashed the whole way trying to help himself the best he could. One is a carnal Christian and the other is a spiritual Christian.

I think the first truth that God wants us all to see this morning is they both get back to shore. Now not as easily, but they do both get back to shore. And loved ones, it's important to see that, that Paul never talks about a carnal Christian, that is one who is struggling, and struggling in the defeat of Romans 7, "The good that I would I cannot do and the evil I want to avoid that's the very thing I do," Paul never talks about the carnal Christian that is described there as anything but a Christian.

Now maybe it's good to look at that because I see some of you wondering. So maybe look at 1 Corinthians 3:1 dear ones and just check his actual words there because they're God's words to us about this and I believe a lot of us come under bondage because we don't realize this truth. We get so caught up with realizing we're carnal Christians that we forget, "Yeah, but we are Christians." 1 Corinthians 3:1, "But I, brethren, could not address you as spiritual men, but as men of the flesh," or it's "sarkikos" you remember, as carnal men, "As babes in Christ." So Paul's saying, "I couldn't treat you as spiritual Christians, I had to treat you as carnal Christians, as babes in Christ."

So the two little fellows acted completely differently and one of them was experiencing all the benefits of having a strong lifeguard towing him back to shore and the other wasn't. But, they both were in the hands of a lifeguard. And really it's important to see that whether you're a spiritual Christian or a carnal Christian that is your situation and you are in that sense saved. In a sense, they were saved from the moment they started to shout for help. The moment they realized their predicament they really were saved from that moment on because the lifeguards saw them and got to them.

Now, they responded differently to what the lifeguard told them to do but still the lifeguard was able to save them once they realized their predicament. It's the same with us, once you realize your predicament, once you realize that you cannot get out of it yourself, that you need someone

bigger than yourself to help you and to rescue you, then in that sense you are saved. Once you realize that you, because you're living your own life, for your own glory, by your own power, according to the directions of your own will and have rejected the life of God's Holy Spirit, once you realize that because of that God is committed unavoidably to condemning you to death. And once you realize that instead of killing you on the spot and taking your life from you at this moment, he has put you into Jesus and crucified you there with Christ and therefore has nothing else against you and is now willing to give you the Holy Spirit.

And once you go to him and say, "Lord, I know that's my predicament and I thank you that crucified me in Jesus and have allowed me to stay alive in this life in order to receive the Holy Spirit. I thank you. I accept the Holy Spirit and I give myself into Jesus' hands." Once you do that loved ones, you're saved if you want to use that term, or you're rescued, or you're forgiven, or you're justified. But you are a Christian the moment you receive the life of God's Holy Spirit into you and put yourself into Jesus' hands.

And it's very important to see that because I think a lot of us say, "Oh but pastor, if you knew me. I'm struggling against all of the attitudes of anger, and resentment, and inward sin, and rebellion, and jealousy that you talk about and that Paul talks about in Romans 7." It doesn't matter, as far as God is concerned he regards you as crucified with Christ. As far as the Father is concerned, you're in his Son's arms and he regards you as a child of his and as on your way back to shore.

Now loved ones, you can see how important it is to see that. If you don't see that, then as the Holy Spirit begins to convict you of inward sin, of jealousy and pettiness, and of resentments, and of anger and bad temper, then you'll begin to treat yourself as if you weren't a Christian very easily and say, "I'm not a Christian at all." Loved ones, you're a Christian if you've committed your life into Jesus' hands and have accepted his Spirit into you. Now you may be like that little fellow, you're wiggling, and splashing, and thrashing like mad and saying, "No, no Lord, I can do it myself. I can do it myself." But Jesus still has his arms around you and is still trying to get you to lay back and relax and let him take you the way he wants to, to the shore. Now God's truth about that always makes you free.

So will you look with me just at a few different truths about that experience? The first one is one you know of by heart but let's just look at it anyway, Romans 6:6. Romans 6:6, "We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin." Every time you really see that truth it sets you free. It sets you free from self condemnation. Every time you see a sign of the old self springing up in your life and you remember that truth, you look up to God and say, "Lord, I thank you that you have crucified that old self with Jesus. I thank you Lord, that you have destroyed it with your Son on the cross and that you've removed it far from me. I thank you Father that that has been dealt with." Every time you see a sign of the old self life and you really believe that truth, that's what you say, you believe God's word that that has been crucified with Christ, it sets you free from condemnation.

It sets you free loved ones from depression and resentment every time anyone speaks to you or writes about death to self. It sets you free from that old depression and resentment that used to hit you. They talk about death to self and they mention anger and you remember you lost your temper last week, "I'm gone again." It sets you free from that kind of resentment against the speaker, or the writer, or depression and self-defeat and enables you to say, "Lord, I thank you that that has been crucified with Jesus. Father, I'm not experiencing all the benefits of that crucifixion yet but I

thank you that your word is sure, that that old self has been crucified with Christ. I thank you for that because that is all that is worth doing with it. And I thank you for that Lord, and I thank you for this dear brother or this dear sister who keeps on telling me that I don't need to keep struggling any longer. And Lord, I ask you to give them strength to keep telling me that until I eventually lay still in your arms."

But loved ones, it changes your attitude to it you see. But if you don't believe that your old self was crucified, if you believe it you have to do an old Martin Luther on it and back yourself up against the wall and beat yourself with chains, then it will irk you like anything and it will bring condemnation to you every time you hear the gospel of crucifixion with Christ preached. But loved ones, if you really believe that our old self was crucified with Christ then you'll say, "Thank you Father, I know that. I know in your eyes it's dead. In your eyes Father, you don't attack that old self that produces all this anger, and bad temper, and unclean thoughts to me. Thank you Lord. Thank you that it's dead and thank you that you're trying to get me to enter into the freedom that that brings."

Loved ones, it just makes a tremendous difference. The truth really makes you free. It sets you free from trying to justify yourself by the works of your own experience. If you really believe that our old self was crucified with Christ, then you're saved from checking yourself up on last week's performance. "Well, I didn't get so angry with her last week. It wasn't just as wild as it used to be. And, I haven't had an unclean thought for two weeks, and yeah – but, but I still have some selfishness. Yeah, I'm still not crucified. Okay, back to it." And you get back and you start beating yourself again.

Loved ones, it's not the way. Do you see it, it's not the way? It's the little mate saying, "I'm not in the arms of the lifeguard. I'm not in the arm of the lifeguard." Well, he can kick as he wants but he knows there are arms around him and he has to accept them. And he's trying to save himself but he knows whether he saves himself or not he's going to be saved anyway because of the lifeguard. Loved ones, do you see there's a complete difference in the approach? If you really believe the truth that our old self was crucified with Christ because of God's word instead of giving attention to the remaining works of the flesh that are making themselves known in your life because you're still believing the lie of Satan that everything is not crucified.

So loved ones, you don't look at your experience to see that you're right with God. You look at the fact that your old self has been crucified with Christ as far as God is concerned. And if he believes that then you better believe it or you have a bigger controversy on your hands than you thought you would have if you're going to disagree with the maker of the whole universe.

So the first truth that really I think it's important to really grasp is that our old self was crucified with Christ. And accept it, and don't fall into a defeated resentment – don't fall into Satan's successful brainwashing technique, "No, no it isn't. No it isn't." You replay, "Yeah it is. God's word says it. I believe it. I don't believe you and I don't believe in my own miserable experience. I'll believe God's word. I won't argue with God."

Loved ones, it really saves you from just a lot of grief, you know. And unless you do that – see, unless you believe God's word the Holy Spirit can't do anything in your life. Do you see that the Holy Spirit only applies to you the benefits of Jesus' resurrection and his death and his ascension if you believe God's word? The Holy Spirit can only work in your life on the basis of your acceptance of God's word. But if you'll never accept God's word, if you keep doing a double take

and say, "No, no, my experience says, 'No, I'm not crucified.' No, I don't believe your word Lord." Then the Holy Spirit has nothing to work on at all.

So really, the truth makes you free if you see it. Loved ones, if you're not free you're not seeing the truth you're seeing some heresy that Satan has put over on you and you should turn from it and see the truth. Would you look at another truth because I think it is important? It's John 16:18, in relationship to the actualization of this victory of Jesus' death and resurrection in our own personal lives. John 16:18, "And when he comes," that's the Holy Spirit, "And when he comes, he will convince the world concerning sin."

That truth really frees you from introspection if you see it completely and accept it. It frees you from all those sickening times of self-pity and introspection in prayer. It saves you from going to prayer and instead of looking up to God and seeing him, instead of looking up to Jesus and seeing him in all his beauty, looking into yourself and saying, "Okay, let me open it all up and get it all out. Let me see what I did wrong last week." And your eyes immediately go on yourself and your own experience and worst of all they go on sin. And so you become more and more fascinated by sin and as you become more mesmerized by it you become more and more defeated by it.

But loved ones, if you really believe that the Holy Spirit will convict you of sin and that that is his job, then you're freed from all that self-pitying introspection and you're able to say, "Holy Spirit, I trust you to convict me of sin. And not to convict me of all the little bits of things that I look at, my anger and my jealousy, but to convict me of inner sin, of self deified that I cannot see clearly. Convict me of sin of my independence of God, of my rebellion against him, convict me of sin. What I find when I look in with introspection is just the symptoms of sin and I get all downhearted about those. But Holy Spirit, I trust you to convict me of sin and I'm going to stop this introspection. I'm going to stop this thrashing around to see if I can find what is preventing me experiencing resurrection with Jesus."

Loved ones, if you really believe that truth it sets you free from all that. Sets you free from self application of truth. Sets you free from coming to church on a Sunday, or from reading Andrew Murray or Watchman Nee and applying the truth to yourself. I think a lot of us do that. I think a lot of us come and we hear someone speaking under God's anointing and they mention some things that are present in certain people's lives. We take over the whole operation. We forget that the Holy Spirit is there to apply God's word to each of us as he wants. We grab the truth. We say, "He talked about jealous this morning, jealousy must be my problem. Okay, I'll look over my jealousy." And we get the whole list.

Loved ones, do you see that the only reason you're all prepared to gather here and listen to me is because we really do believe that it is God that is able to speak through me, not as me. There are some things that I say that aren't for you at all. But we believe that the Holy Spirit is able to say some things through the preacher, that he is able to make real to you. Maybe it's only one thing, maybe it's something that he doesn't say at all. But loved ones, do you see that when you really accept the truth that the Holy Spirit's job is to show you in what way you're not experiencing the full benefits of your crucifixion with Christ and your resurrection with him, then you're freed from all that miserable self application of truth which is really masochism, isn't it?

I mean, it's really going to church, collecting all of the works of the flesh that were mentioned that Sunday and then beating yourself with those. Now loved ones, the Holy Spirit will convict you of sin, you don't need to do that, you can rest in his arms. It frees you also from that hesitant,

self-conscience, paranoid kind of prayer and speaking in the body of Christ lest your slip show. You know the way you say, “Well, I want them to think I’m crucified with Christ. I know really I’m not, but I certainly want them to think that. Now, if I pray – if I pray too often without due preparation they’ll see that huge self just sticking out like a sore thumb - so no. Alright, alright I won’t pray. I won’t pray. That’s it. And if I speak, if I go up there and speak pastor will know immediately that I’m soulish, or I’m carnal, so okay, okay I’m not going to let anyone see that.”

Loved ones, when you really believe that the Holy Spirit will convict you of sin, then you’re free to walk boldly and confidently towards Jesus saying, “Lord, I haven’t experienced all the benefits of your crucifixion but I want to experience them and I want to do what you tell me to do. And I may speak, and my slip may show, and everybody may see just what a mess I am but Lord, but I’m going to do it because I’m more anxious to see what’s wrong in me so I can get that on the cross than I am to make everybody else think I’m right.”

Loved ones, it just changes that whole paranoia. It gives you freedom to walk confidently towards Jesus trusting the Holy Spirit to convict you. I think you see, some of us feel, “Well, pastor do you think he will? I mean, do you think he will? Does he not convict me if I get involved in introspection and start examining myself, and psychoanalyzing myself?” Loved ones, introspection for a Christian is sin. That’s it. Introspection is sin because it’s the Christian trying to save himself again. Trying to deliver himself from the old self on his own by his own insights. So it’s always wrong to introspect. It’s always right to believe the truth that God tells us, that the Holy Spirit will convict you of sin.

Loved ones, really don’t be uncertain about it. The Holy Spirit is more anxious to get you completely into resurrection than you are to get completely into resurrection and he hasn’t forgotten about you, and he’ll bash you now and again, and he’ll give you a faithful wound of a friend if you will trust him. But if you’re trying to do it yourself, you only really work yourself more and more into a neurotic state. The truth frees you from all that, the truth of the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Just one more truth loved ones, I’d like to share because I think it will help, it’s John 16:14. John 16:14, “He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.” Those of you who can read Greek will be able to check that the word declare actually means impart, communicate to you. In other words, the Holy Spirit will take what is Jesus, what belongs to Jesus, all that Jesus experienced the Holy Spirit will take and he will impart it to us, he will make it real to us. That truth sets you free.

It sets you free from all the mental contortion acts and thought juggling acts you go through to try to make your crucifixion with Christ real. “I’m dead, I’m dead, I’m dead. I’m dead, I’m dead. No, I’m dead. I’m dead. No, I’m dead I have died. No, I’m thinking of it wrongly I’ll go back and listen to pastor and I’ll get it right. Okay. No, if I could get the right phrase, if I could read the right phrase in a book I’d get it right, I know I would. No, if I could sing the right song I’d get it. No, if I could really surrender I’d get it. No.” I mean, you’re a mess. Worse than you were before you started.

Loved ones, you don’t need it. The Holy Spirit will make real to you your death and resurrection with Jesus if you will trust him and listen to him. Give up all the mental juggling act, all the contortion acts and trust the Holy Spirit. Say, “Holy Spirit, I know you alone can impart to me and

make real to me all that I've experienced in Jesus on the cross. Holy Spirit, I trust you to do that." And loved ones, suddenly instead of trying to brainwash yourself into something you become more interested in obeying the Holy Spirit in the little gentle impressions that he gives you through the week knowing that in relationship to your obedience to the little things he is showing you he is going to be faithful and through sheer grace make your crucifixion and real in a moment, in an instant by a cosmic miracle from God.

And loved ones, that's the way it takes place. Not by trying to persuade yourself, not by trying to get the phrases right or trying to think about it in the right way, but by really believing what God's word says that the Holy Spirit will take of the things of Jesus and will make them real in you. It frees you from trying to suppress your bad temper and your anger to persuade yourself that you're actually crucified with Christ, in order to try to autosuggest yourself into that experience. It saves you from all of that and enables you to be yourself and yet say, "Holy Spirit, show me. Show me what way you want me to lay in the lifeguard's arms. Show me in what way you want me to relax. Holy Spirit, I'll listen to you just show me and then it's up to you to make it real to me and I'll receive it when you want to give it to me."

It frees you loved ones, from that schizophrenic experience of trying to walk with your eyes on Jesus and your eyes on self at the same time. Trying to walk free from justification by works and yet walking in the midst of a preoccupation with the works in your own experience. It saves you from that. It frees you from that trying to keep your eyes on Jesus and eyes on self, eyes on Jesus, eyes on self, eyes away from the bad things I'm doing yet eyes on the bad things I'm doing. It enables you to look to the Holy Spirit and look to Jesus and praise God in your prayer times, and walk obediently as the Holy Spirit is showing you giving the whole burden of the actualization of your death and resurrection with Jesus into the Holy Spirit's hands. The truth sets you free.

So if you say to me, "Well, do you not have some hard times?" Yeah, yeah, I think you'll wriggle under it at times, and you'll resist the Holy Spirit and some of the things that he's asking you to do. But that's not the normal experience as you walk into this deliverance. The normal experience is you walk into the deliverance, his eyes on Jesus thanking the Father that you've been crucified with Christ, he's responding to the Holy Spirit as he shows you things. If you say to me, "Oh, no pastor as you were walking into it were you not miserable?" No, I wasn't. No. And if I was I kept my misery to myself, but no I wasn't. I had some hard times when I disagreed with the Holy Spirit over what he wanted me to do career wise or what he wanted me to be prepared to face reputation wise. But no, the normal walk was one of joy.

Loved ones, if you're not walking normally with your eyes on Jesus, accepting that you've been crucified with Christ and responding to the Holy Spirit as he shows you other things in your life and just giving them over to him, then you're not walking in the truth you're walking in some lie, some heresy that Satan has really sold you. Any questions loved ones? Anybody still have questions about that? At the end of the day, you know, man cannot explain it. Okay, I hope you walk free. Let's pray.