

Continuous Revival 1

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

And, it's very easy to say it because we've been talking about the kind of spirit that a Christian has who is filled with the Holy Spirit. Now I just want to say that it is a Holy Spirit. Your spirit, if it's filled with the Holy Spirit, is a holy spirit. There was a girl seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Florida, and the person who had preached that evening came down to her and asked her, "Have you laid your heart before God and have you let him cleanse your heart of everything that is evil in it?" And she said, "You mean I have to have a pure heart to be baptized with the Holy Spirit?" And he said, "Yes, of course you have. God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey him." And then he quoted Acts 15:9, where you remember, Peter said, "God gave them the Holy Spirit as he did to us, and cleansed their hearts by faith." And she got up and went home, because she wanted the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and she wanted the power of the Holy Spirit but she didn't want a holy spirit, and she didn't want to have to give up some of the unholy thoughts that were in her heart.

A number of us, I think, are aware, it's no secret that this thing (Campus Church and Christian Corps) is looking miserably like a success and that the nearer you get to success, the nearer you get to danger. And the more of what Tom talked about, I prayed Tom, and God answered you know, that somebody would share something like that tonight, that the nearer we get to success the more we become involved in what Tom shared, the thing (the organization) itself becomes big in our minds.

Loved ones, even an evening service like this becomes enjoyable to come to. Now it is, if I were a guy looking for a girl this is where I'd come. This is a nice place. I think it's a nice place to be on a Sunday evening. It's just, we're quite a pleasant bunch of creatures. And then when you take the soda fountain and the restaurant and all the other things it's quite nice. And you hear Myron and see his slides this morning and it's kind of exciting to think of it all. And loved ones, I believe that a number of us have sensed that we need continuous revival to keep us from sinking into institutionalism. Now loved ones, I just believe that.

Loved ones, I think we would be better to close this whole thing down, then that the thing would ever become a dead letter. Remember Nee saying, "The tragedy is not that some great work of God ceases to exist, but the tragedy is that that work of God will continue to exist - no longer fulfilling the purpose for which it was created. No longer transmitting the life that was once passing through it." And loved ones, I think that's the danger. I think it is so easy for us to be concerned with Campus Church. It's strange to me still to think of Campus Church as anything but us here, a few brothers and sisters who love Jesus. But I know that the thing becomes massive, even especially when some of you come into the office and say, "Ah this person comes to Campus," and I think, "Oh yeah, that's a nickname for Campus Church," and that used to be the little group of us that met at Valley Pizza for coffee and prayed surreptitiously by saying a long grace. And I think it's very easy for Campus Church to become something that in our minds is real in itself.

Loved ones, do you see it isn't real? Do you see that Campus Church will cease to exist or will become the opposite of what it is in 70 or 80 years' time? That it itself is nothing. This building will become a department store or will be mowed down in 70 or 80 years' time. Fish (Christian Corps Businesses) is nothing, it'll be a multimillion dollar monster in which nobody thinks of God at all. Eventually loved ones, God has to take every work that becomes a tower of Babel and destroy it. So, forget those things the only real thing is Jesus. The only real person

is Jesus. That's why what Tom said is right. The only real thing is what is your attitude to Jesus and do you care for him only? And that's what a holy spirit is about, a spirit that cares only for Jesus.

Now, why I share this is - I do think some of us see the need for a revival among us. I think that many of us have begun to let unholy thoughts and feelings come into our hearts. I think we've got easy going about how holy a heart has to be, that is filled with the Holy Spirit. And loved ones, it has to be holy. That is if you have envy in your heart, you haven't a holy heart, your heart is not filled with the Holy Spirit. If you're peevish, peevish because you don't get your way, irritated because somebody isn't letting you have what you want, that's an unholy heart. It's a work of the flesh that is operating in you. If you come here and are preoccupied with yourself, and preoccupied with meeting the people you want to meet, and preoccupied with what you're going to do after the service, that's an unholy heart. A heart that is not set apart from things that are not God, and set apart to God. Now that's what holiness is.

The old priest you remember, had holiness, 'Holy to the Lord' on their foreheads. And it meant they were set apart from the ordinary uses of the world, and set apart to God for his uses only. Here are two places where I've seen unholiness slipping into our hearts. I think some of us have begun to covet our time. Now God knows who - I know he told me to say this tonight, so he knows who here needs to hear this, but I think some of us are coveting our time as if it we're our own. I think in the old days' in the middle particularly of the Jesus movement, it was our chief delight if we could give somebody a ride and if we could get into a talk with him about Jesus. Now I think some of us are reluctant to go out of our way for somebody who wants to hear about Jesus.

I think some of us are coveting our Friday evenings. May as well hit it right straight to you, Friday evening is nine to midnight is the time when we know this whole operation depends on those who are faithful. Really, as soon as the Father sees us avoiding prayer he will judge us, he will just tear the thing apart. And Friday evening nine until midnight is that time. I think a lot of us are getting used to thinking, "Well Friday evening is our own time. It's up to us to do what we want. That's not too much to ask. Why should we set that time apart to God?" I think loved ones, some of us are coveting our sleep on Sunday mornings, instead of getting up and being with the Father in prayer at eight o'clock. This is especially significant if you realize that we're about to move into the greatest opportunity that we could think of God giving us, that (new property - Colony Inn complex and Colony House residence on the University of Minnesota campus) situation.

And in a month's time or so we'll move on to a campus that is a pretty dead cold place at eight o'clock on Sunday morning. I've been on that campus eight years, and it is a pretty miserable, depressing, lonely, passive spot at eight o'clock on Sunday morning, and what it needs more than anything else is to see that people actually are about some kind of business on a Sunday. There are no lectures and yet here is a whole group of people that are about something that is important enough to get them out on Sunday morning. Isn't it significant that just when God is showing the army a way to move in against the enemy that we are having our own troubles with coveting our time? And loved ones those of you, you know, who maybe don't feel terribly involved in this, Jesus can be speaking to you as well.

Loved ones, I think we're beginning to be unholy about our time. And time of course is like your emotions it's only a little symptom of a lot more besides. I think it could be that some of us are beginning to covet our own lives, and the way we live them, and the way we want to live them. I think some of us are losing the joy of abandoning ourselves to Jesus, and saying, "Lord, whatever

you want me to do today, that's good."

Loved ones, I think we may have scheduled God right out of the picture, really. And I'd ask those of you who schedule your evenings, you know, if he has much of a look in, or if you have this whole baby organized so that it just goes like that, and if the Holy Spirit disappeared from the earth it would keep going like that. And that's what we often said about the churches you remember, that most churches would not miss the Holy Spirit if he left the earth, because they have such a program set up that they can keep on bouncing there whether he's there or not. And I think it's possible that some of us may be beginning to covet our time and pull back, just subtly pull back.

Have you ever thought that a holy heart is one that feels love the whole way down right to the inside? A holy heart is not one that says, "Yeah, yeah, prayer, yeah I'll be there. Yes brother I'll be there." But a holy heart is one that rises to prayer and wants to go, and says, "Yeah, yeah, I want to seek the Father. That's the thing I want to do." A holy heart is one that feels it from inside. And loved ones, I think it's easy for us to slip back from the message that God has given us. And the message that God has given us - what turned off all of us from 'church life' - was that it was all on the outside where they were surrendered, but on the inside they were a mess. And that's what put us all off church life. It was so double, it was so hypocritical. And it's very easy for us here to begin to learn the responses that people like to get from us on the outside, but inside we can have that old heart that really says, "Ah, no I wish it wasn't Friday night. I wish it wasn't Sunday morning at eight o'clock."

Loved ones, a holy heart is one that is fired with the vital life of the Holy Spirit. And you don't need to womp that up, all you need to do is be obedient to what he's showing you. So you may be sitting there tonight and say, "Well brother, part of what you say I realize is in my own life, but what do I do about it?" Loved ones, ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you're beginning to pull back. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you're beginning to turn like old Lot's wife and look back to those old days when you could run life reasonably comfortably. When you're beginning to look back, ask the Holy Spirit where you're beginning to do that, and he'll show you, you know. Doesn't matter if I've hit the things, it doesn't matter actually what a speaker speaks, the Holy Spirit will show you if you ask with all your heart.

And loved ones, I know those times when you need revival in your own personal life and I've known those times myself, and I know the way to get it. I can tell you, look for the disobedience in your life, that's it. You don't need more tongues, you don't need more powers, you don't need more songs, you don't need more preaching, ask the Holy Spirit to show you where there's disobedience in your life, where you're beginning to ease back from the joy of the cross. And loved ones, there's no way to do any job but to go into it and just grab it and do that. If there's anything that is slightly unpleasant to your natural man, the way to get over it is just to grasp the thing. You grasp the nettle [English stinging vine] and it doesn't sting you. You go in and you lift that cross on your shoulder and you walk down Calvary road. But if you start fiddling around feeling the cross and then get some sand paper and try to smooth it down so that it won't be so heavy or so rough on your shoulders, boy you'll never get to lifting that cross. Indeed you've lost the battle, haven't you?

You've lost the battle even then because the heart doesn't really want to carry the cross and the only way loved ones, is to turn your back on all that self-concern, all that self-concern. You know the disciples - they were dears, but they slept, they fell asleep, you know. They couldn't stay awake because they were so conscious of their own tiredness and they had to fall asleep. And it was

that same self-concern that made old Peter say to Jesus, "Lord, be it far from you. This should never happen to you - that you'll have to be crucified and you'll have to die." And Jesus said, "Get behind me Satan."

Loved ones, I think some of us are coveting our own time and are beginning to think of ourselves a little. I don't know about all of you, but I know my neck is on the chopping block on a Sunday, if there's any thought of me, what I Ernest O'Neil would like to do. I just have no chance. I couldn't get up here, it would just feel so hypocritical, I just could not preach. But loved ones, do you see you're in the same boat it just isn't so noticeable when you step back from it? Except that it's as noticeable to the Father in heaven, because he had planned for his Holy Spirit of love to reflect Jesus in all his enthusiasms through you, this day and you have just stepped back from it and eased back. And, instead of positive life coming from you there comes just old dead, passive you. You're there you know, but it's like just another body there. You're filling a seat, or you're filling a space in the air, but there's no beauty of Jesus coming forth. And loved ones, I'd just press you once more on it, the beauty of Jesus is not something you have to create, it's something the Holy Spirit will pour through you, if you obey God. If you obey him about the things he's telling you.

The second place I saw we were stepping back was in faith. In faith! I saw that many of us are not coming on Sundays exercising faith that the Father will come down and meet us, and touch us. But that many of us have got used to it and we know the songs, and we know the preaching, and we know the people will meet, and yeah we look forward to going there, it's going to - you always feel better after being there. But it's 'there' [the meeting place / event] that is so precious to us. It's not the Father. We're not going - exercising faith - expecting the Father to come down and touch us. And loved ones, the moment you begin to do that, you begin to be part of the solution, and not part of the problem.

If I could just share one thing - not as the preacher (that isn't important) - as your brother. This is what I do. Now some of you usher, some of you take care of the office, some of you sell during the week. This is part of what I do so I'm just sharing it as a brother, not as a preacher, not as the minister of the place, I don't think that's our set up. I'd think you'd agree with it. I don't think that's our kind of church. There's no clergy and laity, that's what we feel. We feel we are all ministers in Christ. But let me share with you, the fellow that stands up here - finds that you are either conductors or insulators. You either conduct electricity or you insulate others from the electricity.

In other words what we find often and I'm going back to old pastorate days, what we would have found as pastors in the Methodist church, the Presbyterian Church, I presume in the Lutheran church, we'd have found that some people began to know Jesus and they became the nucleus of the congregation. And then it came to the cross bit - where they started to have to put themselves last, and put Jesus first, and they began to step back from the cross. And they heard all this preaching of the cross and they shouted Amen for a while, and then even that 'Amen' sounded hypocritical to them because they weren't for it. And so they kind of listened to it, and they began to feel, "Well we've heard all this before," because they weren't moving into it, or obeying it. And so they'd sit in the congregation and it was like working through a great blanket, before you got to the people who knew they were sinners and were willing to receive Jesus.

Now loved ones, I'd share that with you for the fellow here, doesn't matter if it's me or whether it's Myron Kliever, or Leighton Carlson, or John Larson - it doesn't matter who it is, but you and I

sitting out there, we become either conductors or insulators. We become either part of the solution or part of the problem. We can become a huge damp blanket that is just not filled with life ourselves and so the fellow sends out the word, but by the time it gets through all of us and we've toned it down by our lives to the point where anybody could take it without being offended, by the time it reaches the poor soul that needs it, it's harmless anyway.

And loved ones, I can see that there's a real need for us all to come Sunday morning and evening expecting God to do a mighty work among us. Expecting him to heal dear ones, expecting him to convict, expecting him to fill with his Spirit. And so I've sensed you know, that we've tended to draw back from faith. And, oh one brother shared this past weekend, I don't think this is true with all of us, but I think he's right maybe with some of us, that it's very easy to sit there and to watch the fellas and the girls out here, and the ones that sing, and the ones that pray, and the ones speak, and it's very easy to be satisfied with their spirituality kind of regarding it as a surrogate for our own.

It's very easy to look up here and say, "Ah yeah, I'm with the way Colleen sang that song, boy it really sets forth Jesus. And I'm with the way Myron spoke this morning it really shows Jesus." And it's very easy to sit there and be satisfied with all of that. And always feel by proxy that, "Yeah, it's me doing it." And in a way it is 'us', you know, we're a body and part of our love is what enables them to do it up here, but it's very easy to back off ourselves.

And so loved ones, I'd just share with you, you know, a burden that I've really felt this past week, that it's very important that we see it before it happens. And I would share with the elders, and you elders - we know it already, we sense that God is speaking to us, are you drawing back at all? Are you pulling back? Or, are you going ahead as indifferent to self as you were when you first started? And was saying - I was joking with some of the brothers on Tuesday, you know, 'Here look at the beautiful carpet on this old stage, you know, we never had carpet like that in the Mormon sanctuary, or in the dance theater. We never had seats like that in the Mormon sanctuary. We never had carpet in our houses, our Christian houses. We couldn't even afford cars, you remember, the old junkers we all drove until they were just death traps. And a lot of things we didn't have and now, it's interesting, we do have a lot of things, and we do have a lot of things that would make us happy in some sense in themselves.

And loved ones, I think it's doubly important that we see that the truth is, can you possess your possessions and yet live as if you have nothing? That's the issue. I think a lot of us got caught out in the middle of the hippie movement and the Jesus movement, you remember, when the children of God were so wild on this 'abandon all' - I think a lot of us got caught out, and we were kind of prepared to love Jesus when we had nothing of our own at all. And then when we began to get some things, we didn't know how to have those things and yet live as if we didn't have them and as if we had Jesus only.

And so loved ones, I would just encourage you, you know, to ask the Holy Spirit, "Lord, are you as real in me as you were when you first came in, or do I need revival? And if I do need revival, Holy Spirit, show me where there's disobedience in my heart?" And you know, if I'm reading you all right, you're the same as me, you want life, and you want any life whatever way you can get it, "And it doesn't matter Lord, what I have to do - I'm going to get that life. And so you give me half a hint Father, of where I'm stepping back in my life and I'll blast right forward." But loved ones, I'd share with you - that it means you give everything.

Certainly God gives you everything, but you have to surrender everything to him. It takes everything a man has. You can give very little to God, but it takes everything a man or a woman has. You have to give it all to him, and no holding back. I'd pray that you would rather burn out than rust out, I would pray you know that I would do that and that I would continue to be to you the kind of example that Jesus is to me. But I would ask you to be the same in your office, and in your home. You can't go any less than that, loved ones.

And you dear ones in the houses [Colony Inn and Colony House complex] "Oh, well I might have to pay a \$110 (monthly rent), all of us at Ontario House pay \$45 (per month), and we can own our car and condominium in Florida." We joke about that because Ontario pays very little rent and now they are going to have to pay \$110. Be careful, be careful. If you see any tendency to hold back, to hold back, would you remember Lot's wife. Remember Lot's wife, that you can't even afford to look back to the old way we used to think and the old way we used treat one another and treat others. The spirit that the Holy Spirit brings within us is a holy spirit, clear of sarcasm, clear of criticism, clear of gossip, clear of envy, clear of jealousy. You live well above the law, you don't fiddle along on the edges, you're right in the middle of the freeway, you're well above it. But loved ones, that's where Jesus wants us to live, that's the highway of holiness, you know. Let us pray.

Dear Father, we would pray now and ask you to deal with us, each one, and Lord, if you see any holding back in any of us, that is making us part of the problem instead of the solution that you have brought to the world Lord, will you convict us right here, tonight. Just show us right here what we're doing, Lord. If any of us are playing around with sin Lord, will you show us? Put the unclean thing far from you, have done with it. Lord, if any of us are playing around with our own time thinking, "This is my time, I can do what I want with it." Lord, help us to see that we cannot expect the Creator of the universe to come down and touch us, and spread revival throughout the world, unless we're prepared to give everything we have, whatever little that may be.

Lord, help us to see this night, that eternity is so much compared with the mere 70 or 80 years we have here, and so much compared with a couple of hours an evening. Lord Jesus, help us to see you walking down the Calvary road with that cross on your shoulders, and help us to see you hanging there bleeding, and looking down the centuries to us, and saying to your Father, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." And then Lord Jesus, enable us to see that no sacrifice is too great or inappropriate for us to make to you. Lord Jesus, enable us to deal with you tonight, and to let everything go, if only we can possess you, dear Lord. Amen.