

## Continuous Revival 2

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I'd just like to share briefly loved ones for maybe 10 or 15 minutes on revival. And you remember last Sunday evening I shared that I sensed that we needed to be careful that we didn't find ourselves in the same position as the Jews who were coming back from the Babylonian captivity to their own land and they were amazed at all the material provisions that were set before them and it was then that one of the old prophets- Ezekiel - you know (Ezekiel 36:24-28), prayed that God would revive them in their own hearts. And it's so easy for us to be in that position.

It's so easy for us to see how much we have and become 'settled in Zion' - kind of thing. And oh, that is a deadly peace, you know. It is the peace of death when you settle down and are complacent and satisfied that here we are all together brothers and sisters bound for heaven - saved, and sanctified, and petrified, and ready to be just taken up by Jesus. And ah, it is just death loved ones and we can't, we cannot go down onto campus in that spirit and that's why I shared with you last Sunday some of the things that God had laid in my heart that I felt that some of us were coveting our time and we were beginning to look upon our time as our own, and we were beginning to possess it as our own, and use it as our own, and resent having to give it to Jesus.

And I think some of you sensed that God was speaking to you on that ground. And then you remember, another was that we're coming to services too often to get something, too often to receive and not enough coming expecting God to come down and touch everybody there, even everybody but us. Too little faith and expectancy. And loved ones, I really think that that's part of our problem, you know, and that's part of the weakness.

Now, you might have been in the same position as I have been. I've been in a position at times where there was a deadness inside of my heart. I knew it was there, I just knew it was there, I felt dead inside. I knew those verses that the Holy Spirit was to be 'like a fountain of living waters' coming up from deep down within me, but I didn't feel any living waters rising. I knew that when I came to church I was to be filled with a sense of praise for God but I found myself trying to pump it up from inside as they would sing the songs. And I found that there was no life rising up inside me, and I found that there was a flatness and a deadness inside.

Now this was apart loved ones, from the times when I thought some people were being a bit emotional. I can discern I think, when a person is being a bit emotional and therefore isn't too like me and so it's an utterly unfair comment that I'm making and where other people have real life and I do not have real life and there is not a rising up within me.

Now loved ones, I'll tell you what I've found all the time has been my trouble and what I needed. Some people would say, "Brother, what you need is more power." And another would slap me on the back and say, "What you need is tongues." And another would say, "You better praise God more." And loved ones, I'll tell you what I've always found, the verse that was used in the back of the bulletin or was used as the verse that old Finney comments on, 'Break up your fallow ground! - I found that I've settled down in Zion and some ground deep down in my heart has become fallow ground. It's become hard and stomped on so that it's hard and the Holy Spirit is continually dropping the seeds of God's word in but the seeds don't go down. And if they do go down at all, the rain of his Spirit fails utterly to percolate through the ground and make the seeds bear fruit.

And I've found that what I needed to do was just get down to the down to earthy business of 'breaking up my fallow ground'. And loved ones, I've just got down to it as old Finney says in that book 'Revival Lectures'. I don't think the color is like this now but it's 'Finney On Revival'- I think and he just says, "I get down to looking at my own life, and looking at the sins that have grown up in my own life."

Now, I know some of you loved ones, just hate that, and I know you say to me, "Oh no, no I get all depressed." Well, I've found what I need is a good dose of depression if that's depression. If there's fallow ground in my heart, if the Spirit of Jesus is not bubbling up from inside me, if I don't sense a praise to God, it's because somehow or other I'm grieving the Holy Spirit. Because loved ones, the truth is if you're a Christian, if you're a child of God, the Holy Spirit of God is inside you and that Holy Spirit is like mad trying to get up to God in praise, and love, and joy. And if he isn't able to get up it's because of that fallow ground, it's because you're grieving him in some way and what you need to do is get down to the business of getting an ax, or a spade of some kind and breaking up that fallow ground.

And that's what I've often done with my own life. I've just taken these things and I've said, "Okay Lord, where is there sin in my life? Where have I begun to grieve you so much that I'm even blind to the fact that I'm grieving you?" And loved ones, when you begin to do that, you find the Holy Spirit begins to bubble a little inside, and just bubble a little, and then begins to rise inside you, and before long there's a fountain of living water pouring from inside.

Loved ones, God will do that. God will supply you with the positive life if you get down to the business of getting rid of the negative sins. Now that's it dear ones, you don't need emotion, you don't need a lot of tongues, you don't need a lot of happy songs, you just need to be honest with God about the things that he has shown you are wrong in your life and as you deal with those, the Holy Spirit will begin to rise within you. Now that's it, and you know, I would tell you brothers and sisters, never have I found that it was something other than that in my life. Honestly.

Now, if you say to me, "Brother, even when you weren't baptized with the Holy Spirit did you find that?" That's right, whether I was baptized with the Holy Spirit or not, the problem I always found when there was lukewarmness in my heart, or there was a sense of deadness in my spirit was due to sins in my life that I had got used to accepting and allowing to grow there. And I would encourage you, you know, to get down to it. And if you say, "Brother, it just depresses me to bits," look it only depresses you if you want to hold onto the sins. It doesn't depress you if you look at the sins and say, "Lord, I'm cleaning that stuff out. I'm finished with that."

Bible studies in the mornings, it will depress you if you want not to get up in the morning and you want to forget that you're not doing Bible study. Then of course, it will depress you to think of your neglect of God's word. But loved ones, it won't depress you if you ask yourself, "Lord, how am I doing in regard to your word?" Well, I'd ask you, you know, are you hoping for a spirit of spontaneous praise and joy in your life and yet you never read his word? Or, if you do read his word, you do a quick five minutes. Finney has a good word, he says, "Some of you read his word in such a manner that you can't remember the next day what you've read. Indeed, in order to remind you where you were reading the previous day you have to put a strike in your Bible." And he says, "How interested were you in it if you have that amount of trouble remembering where you read the previous day?"

But loved ones, I would just ask you about your Bible study, your daily Bible study. Why go through

all kinds of complex deep spiritual explanations if the explanation can simply be found in your neglect of God's word day-by-day. I would put it to you, you know, when do you do your Bible study and do you do it every day, or do you make a point of remember the days that you happen to do it so that when this question is put to you, you can say, "Wednesday, that's when I did it." Do you neglect God's word?

I've found it's been a blessing to me to see that I wasn't facing all kinds of subtle deceptions, I wasn't facing all kinds of moves of antichrist, I wasn't possessed by a demon, I wasn't obsessed by a demon, I was just a downright sinner when I began to examine my prayer life. And I'd just look at it and say, "Lord, did I make the resolution to be with you at six o'clock and I cannot remember when I last met you at six o'clock? Did I make a resolution Lord, to spend half an hour or an hour with you and I cannot remember when I last spent half an hour or an hour with you?" Would you just examine your own life in regard to your prayers, in regard to whether you're keeping your appointment with God?

Here's the truth, the Father can send dynamite into you. Loved ones, that's it, the Father can send dynamite into you if you will be serious with him. But do you see how it appears to him if you make an appointment with him in the morning and then the alarm goes off and you, without even looking at him, you simply decide, "I will stay in bed." Loved ones, do you see how that would come home to any friend of yours, if you made an appointment with that friend and then fail to meet the friend, not even calling the friend to explain, not even feeling deeply sorrow at not meeting them? But do you see how that comes home to the Father?

Now that's why you and I have trouble maybe at a praise service sensing a spirit of praise. It's because you're not keeping the appointments that you make with the Father. Oh, you know, how much do you care about your relatives who don't know Jesus? How much do you care about your friends who do know Jesus? How much time do you spend concerned about what state they are in spiritually? I'd ask those of you who are elders too, you know, how much time do we spend on our knees grieving, and toiling, and laboring in prayer for the spiritual health of our brothers and sisters? And then you know, don't let's say 'it's the elder's job', it's our job - us too.

Really loved ones, just how much time do you spend being concerned about the spiritual state of those sitting around you here tonight? Now the thing is don't allow this to beat you over the head and then feel punished suitably for it. Decide tonight, "Lord, that's right I am sinning through my neglect of care for either the heathen, or my brothers and sisters in Jesus. I am living a selfish life preoccupied with my own spiritual state and interested very little in anybody else's." And loved ones, I'd just ask you, you know, because it's easy to smooth over that one, how much time say each day do you spend praying for others of us in the body, or for your relatives?

Now, God sees that as a sin because he put in your heart when you first met him a love for your relatives, a love for your friends, a love for those who do not know Jesus and now you've stepped back from that. And I think that's what we do. I don't think any of us mean to, but I think subtly, and gently, and blindly we step back from some of the stands we took when we first knew Jesus.

Oh, Finney is just good you know, because he's very real about things. He says, "Examine yourself about the normal attitudes that you ought to have in your life about gratitude to God. Examine yourself on ingratitude. Have you ever thanked God for all the many events that he has brought into your life that has made you aware of him? Have you ever thanked him for the home he gave you, for

the school he gave you? Have you ever thanked him for the present situation you're in at work? Have you ever thanked God for all the things he's done for you?" And he points out that ingratitude to God has the same effect upon God as ingratitude would have among us human beings.

And loved ones, that's what I've found has been a blessing in my life, getting down to it, breaking up the fallow ground. It's so easy to get lost in all the spiritualism you know. It's so easy to get lost up there, "Am I sitting with God in the heavenlies? Am I waging spiritual warfare? Am I exercising faith against the power of the enemy?" Loved ones, the Holy Spirit will do all those things through you if you will just deal with the things that are wrong in your life, get rid of them, the Holy Spirit will come through you like dynamite and will begin to beget in you an overwhelming love of Jesus.

Now I would remind you again, that I can't escape it too much because if I come out here on a Sunday and it is not bubbling up inside me, I could not do the act. I couldn't pretend. I couldn't do that stuff. And I think you know I couldn't. But you kind of get away with it because you kind of keep quiet and you just say, "Well, well Lord, thank goodness I don't have to teach a class today, or I don't have to witness to anybody. I'll just sit this one out." But loved ones, every time you put up with less than the overwhelming bubbling enthusiastic love of Jesus coming through you in praise and joy, you get used to death. You normalize a situation of deadness and sin and really loved ones, you've to tackle every day as I've to tackle it and as others of us have to tackle it who are in ministry every day.

You're either a minister of Christ or you're an enemy of Christ. Do you see that? Do you see that it's not enough to go into the office each day and avoid swearing, or even as Sis said, avoid slandering somebody? If you do not go into the office or the school bubbling over with a sense of Jesus' presence and with a sense of his joy and his love in your heart, you are not a witness to him. And those in that sense, who are not with him, are against him and you know it yourself. I mean, I've often entered a faculty room like that and unless you're sitting in that faculty room with a sense of the presence of God inside you, and a sense of joy bubbling up inside, you're part of the deadness in that faculty room. You are.

You may not be slandering somebody else in the office when they're all criticizing each other, but loved ones if you're just dead and neutral you're part of the enemy of Jesus in that office. And so there's only one safe way to be you know, and I used to look at those crazy Pentecostals and think, "Oh, they're mad," or, "You wild Baptist who are always enthusiastic," and sometimes I felt, "Oh boy, that would wear me out to be like that all the time. I'm glad I'm a quieter type, just more peaceful." But oh loved ones, it doesn't matter whether you're quiet and peaceful or whether you're a noisy extravert. God intends you to have a joy and a love bubbling up inside all the time. And oh you know, I'd just point you to that, maybe you'd look at it, it's Revelation 3 and it is one of those hard pieces that we read and we like to think, "Well, we have nothing to do with that."

But it's Revelation 3:14, and those of you know it recognize it as the Laodicea church, you know. Revelation 3:14, "And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: 'The words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of God's creation.' I know your works; you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth." And it's so easy in a body like this to ride along on the wave, you know. And really in your own heart not to be contributing to it at all but to be actually lukewarm in yourself.

And then you know the attitude you have at that time, "For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Therefore I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, that you may be rich, an white garments to clothe you and to keep the shame of your nakedness from being seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent." And the Holy Spirit speaks, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me."

So if you feel a deadness inside it's because the Holy Spirit is not flowing freely through your life and what you need to do is just get down in a very practical way and deal with the things that you know are not right in your life. And loved ones, I think for many of us it is things as obvious, you know, as a real want of love to God. Just a want of love and we've never repented of him to that. We've never repented of that. Or, a want of self-denial in our own lives. We come to the place where we just aren't prepared to inconvenience ourselves for Jesus at all. We work out a life that enables us to walk the Calvary road in comfort and that I where we begin to grieve the Holy Spirit.

And ah, you know, I'd encourage you to bring yourself up to it. I thank God that I haven't needed somebody to preach to me, I've just dealt with my own heart according to the words of scripture and according to the kind of thing that old Finney talks about, you know. I've just brought myself up to it. I've sensed, "Alright God, if I wait for the Holy Spirit to fall upon me I may wait till doomsday. Lord, if I wait for somebody to waken me up here I may die before I'm wakened up. So Lord, I'm going to get down to the business myself and break up my fallow ground and I'll make it soft enough for you to begin to plant your seeds, and plant your crops."

And loved ones, I know it will work with you, you know. I know it will. So, I just sympathize with those of you who are kind of feeling a deadness, you know, and a coldness. Well I'd ask you deal first with the personal Lordship of Jesus over your own private life. Deal with that and before long, as you bring yourself up to that, the Holy Spirit will begin to work in you.

Now, I wanted to preach for about 30 minutes, but I think you've got the message. I'll show you some of the things that old carnal man- just those you know, just bring yourself to it on sins of omission and sins of commission. Our job - loved one, we can't bring the Holy Spirit down - God must send the Holy Spirit to us, but we can get out our lives the things that the Holy Spirit has shown us are grieving him and we can deal with those. And I've just found that every time I was honest with God about those things, the Holy Spirit came down and filled me with himself.

And again, they will depress you if you want to hold onto them. They'll depress. You if you want to hold onto them and have the Holy Spirit as well, they'll depress you because it is an absolute contradiction. It's a spiritual and ethical impossibility. You can't have the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and cherish, and treasure, and endure those things as well. But if you'll deal with those and just bring yourself before God, you know, in a down-to-earth practical way, then the Holy Spirit will begin to come into you and will begin to fill you with that enthusiasm, and that love for Himself. So I'd encourage you to do it, you know, and it's not hard.

[Question from congregation: If we are aware of others people's faults in different circumstances, and draw attention to it - is that evidence of something like that in our life? ]

Well I think since censoriousness is just what in fact, Sis was talking about in the faculty room,

just a spirit of criticism. You know, a spirit of criticism towards others and I think many of us allow it to creep up on us so gently and so gradually that we don't sense it and we make little quick comments about somebody and at the beginning it's a kind of joke and then it gets just a little heavier and a little heavier. And we have a spirit of criticism that is such a negative thing it fills our whole hearts and before we know it every time we get together with certain people then we're into slander - which is just the expression of that in words, you know, and we begin to talk about people.

But I noticed it in my own life, that if you allowed anything negative to come into you about another person before long there was no joy of the Holy Spirit in there at all. You know, he had just gone. Loved ones, the Holy Spirit is a gentleman. He is a gentleman and he will not brook being in the company of those who criticize people that he loves. He will not. It's a very straight deal - loved ones - spirituality is no mystery. Enjoying the presence of God is no mystery - it's a straight deal. The Holy Spirit will not stay in the same room as someone who is criticizing or hating people whom he loves and the Holy Spirit loves all whom Jesus loves and that's everybody.

And ah, I just think in a body like this I know some of you have already had difficulty with it. You know, you just get into that experience of being critical of others and at the beginning it seems kind of superior and you feel kind of, "Well, I can see something that they can't see." And at the beginning it seems, "Well, I'm just putting them right. Well, it's important for me to judge, you know, and to discern spirits." Before you know it - it's just refuse and garbage and it's become the ruling spirit in your life when you meet people. Yeah.

Do you see loved ones, it is no chance that one person can meet another and love can pour out to that person and another person can meet that person and there's a deadness. See the truth, if you've slandered that person behind their back, or you've had a critical spirit to them privately, then when you come before them the Holy Spirit will have nothing to do with hypocrisy so he does not come out in love to them. That's why you can't love them.

And of course, it's a real failure to see your own miserable state. It's a real failure to see that you are the worse of sinners. That if they could see the things in your heart that you know are there they would have far more cause to tear you apart than you have them. Yeah. Ah, yeah, it's just satanic, you know - the criticism.

Shouldn't you add to the list fear and depression? Because I think a lot of us live with fear and think, "Well, that's my cross and I've got to bear it." And we do not see that perfect love casts out all fear and that if we really trust the Father we would have no fear.

Instead of repenting it seems to me, of not trusting the Father, we almost console ourselves that we are fearful people. And it's the same loved ones, with depression. It seems to me that depression is a direct declaration, "Lord, we do not believe that we have been raised and made to sit with you in the heavenly places far above all rule, and authority, and dominion, and power. Lord, we do not believe that you are in charge of the universe. We do not. In fact, we sense that Satan may be in charge of this situation and may be overwhelming us in it."

Now loved ones, we tend to have cossetted ourselves about depression and said, "Oh well, that's my cross." But loved ones, it's downright sin, you know. It's a reluctance to trust God. And sometimes, I say it lovingly to you, but sometimes - loved ones - I think you're comforting

yourselves in your sin. You know, I think you are. I think instead of dealing with the thing and seeing, "Lord, I am not trusting you," and repenting of your lack of trust, you're comforting yourselves in it. And then of course, the next step is into self-pity and before you know it, you're all bound up with the terrible situation you're in. And loved ones, it's just no trusting the Father you know. It's not trusting that he is working out all things according to the council of his will.

[Question: What are some sins of omission, or commission? ]

Sure, sure. The loved ones in London, you know, and Amsterdam, and Mike and Sue in India will be listening in. Sins of omission, ingratitude, want of love to God, neglect of the Bible, neglect of prayer, want of love for souls of our fellow men, neglect of self-denial. And then sins of commission, materialism, that's just an oh, increasingly concern with our possessions, you know.

Loved ones, those possessions stick to your fingers. Murray McShane said, "We should sit loosely by our possessions." You know, they creep in upon you. It's upon you before you know it and somebody damages a stereo, or somebody asks you for the loan of something and then suddenly you realize how dear your possessions have become. And pride, and envy, and censoriousness, and slander, and levity, and lying, and hypocrisy, and bad temper.

Oh, Tom was talking - we were talking before the service and he had the same difficulty as I had, I wanted everybody to think well of me. So, I thought that lying was just telling a lie and I never really saw that it was giving a better impression of myself than was true. It was trying to persuade somebody that I was better than I was, or trying to draw attention to myself in some way so that they'd notice my good points but they wouldn't see the bad points in my life. And loved ones, any of that, do you see that sin it is defending yourself instead of believing that God will defend you. That's what it is.

It's defending yourself instead of believing, "Lord, here I am what I am let them despise me, or look down on me. Lord, my future is in your hands not mine." And then suddenly you're free to be what you are, you know. That's what was good about Dennis' song, he shared it at Fish on Tuesday morning, that one of the problems he had was the old inferiority complex. Just who was he to pray out loud, who was he to speak? He was nobody. He wasn't as good as all these people and all the rest of the people. And loved ones, do you see the sin of that is that you're comparing yourself with other people instead of seeing that you are the Father's child?

Your Father is proud of you. He made you with great care. He made every wrinkle in your face. He made every shape in your body. He made everything that you have and your Father looks down on you and is proud of you, as proud as any dad is of his baby and you insult him, you throw that back in his face when you start saying, "Yeah, but I'm not like so-and-so." He wants you to look at him and be glad and thank him for the person you are. And so it's really a lot of the things that we think are personality weaknesses, loved ones, they're downright sin. They're just ingratitude to the Father you know, not trusting the Father. And oh, when you get it in that clear light and see it is sin and get rid of it, you know, put the unclean thing far from you, then the Holy Spirit begins to be able to deal with you.

But while you're cossetting these things to yourself and saying, "Oh poor me, poor me, I'll have to work myself gradually out of that." The Holy Spirit says, "You never work yourself gradually out of sin, you have done with sin. Then I'm able to fill you with the beauty of Jesus." But loved ones,

when you do that then the body becomes beautiful. Then all of you are ministers of Christ. Then you come here on a Sunday with the Spirit of Jesus bubbling up and flowing inside you.

I think I shared with you, you know, it was so good when I found one day I was driving the car and I was smiling like mad and just enjoying Jesus. I'd never done that before, and you know, I thought that was a bit dumb ever to do that, after all you smiled when you were with people so that they would see the joy. But it was so good, you know, to experience that bubbling up inside. And loved ones, that is a spiritual movement of the Holy Spirit within you in response to your obedient life. That's it.

God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey. It is not emotion. And I'd encourage those of us who have been on the journey a long way, loved ones, it never ends and if it does ever end us elders, those of us who think you know, "Oh we're old hands at this," if it ever ends in us there's something wrong. There's something wrong if there's not that newness of spirit, if there's not that bubbling up of the joy of Jesus then it's because we've sidestepped God in some area of our lives, you know.

Okay, let us pray. Dear Father, you have promised if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land. And Father, we believe that that is a promise that you will revive us again, and you will fill us with that spirit of enthusiastic love, and joy, and peace that we had when we first met you.

Father, we thank you that you are calling for an army of people who are filled with Jesus to go back onto the campus. Lord, you do not want a group of lukewarm, half dead, half alive Christians. Father, there is no such thing. Father, the only people that are really yours are those who are zealous and enthusiastic for you. And Father, we see why that is, because you're the King of the universe, you're the Lord of lords, you're the Creator of the whole universe and Father, we see that if we're enthusiastic about anything it must surely be about you.

Know Lord, I would pray for my beloved brothers and sisters here tonight and Holy Spirit, I would ask you to give to each of us a clear view of any sins in our lives, anything that we've got used to. Lord, if some of us have allowed prayer and Bible study to disappear from our lives, will you show us that we can't have you and that kind of disobedience? Father, that we can't have the fullness of the Holy Spirit and continue to live that kind of heartless indifferent life.

Father, will you deal with us through the Holy Spirit about the things that we need to see? Lord, I pray for myself that I will see the things that you want me to walk into. And then Lord, I pray that you will give us all a great sense of confidence to put these things from us and to see that they're nothing, and they're not worth holding onto, and we've lost nothing when we've lost them and yet we've gained the whole world. Father, I trust you to bring that home to each one of us, that our body here may move in a Spirit of revival for your glory.

Now the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and throughout this coming week forever more. Amen.

