

## World Liberation

Romans 8:21

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Did your mum and dad ever say, "Okay, you can't go out after school for the next week." Or, "For the next month you come home from school and you stay home." Now, why did they ground you? Was it to satisfy some sadistic desire to spoil the lives of their miserable little children? You know if you reflect upon it the reason they grounded you was because whatever you had done -- told a lie, or didn't get in on time at night, or didn't do your homework, or didn't do your chores -- whatever it was you had done they knew would not only hurt you in your own life but would spoil the lives of others if you kept on doing it. And, they wanted you to know that the thing you had done was very wrong and was not just a little inconvenience or a little inexpedient but it was something that was wrong and would destroy your life if you kept on doing it.

And so they really hoped as you sat in there looking out the window at all the other kids playing you would begin to turn over in your mind, "That thing must be really wrong because, I mean this has ruined my whole schedule. Here I am sitting here inside when I should be out playing, or I should be about skiing, or I should be out tobogganing, and here I am sitting inside and all my friends are out." And it would get home to you, "Now, that must have been really wrong, what I did, if it destroys my ordinary situation as much as this has done."

Now loved ones, that's the reason we found out last week for earthquakes, tornados, for tidal waves, for arteriosclerosis, for headaches, for all those things that remind us that life is not perfect, the reason for all those things is that God is trying to ground us human beings. He's trying to bring us down to earth and point out, "Look, the thing isn't right. Now the reason it is not right is because you yourself are not right with me. I didn't make it like this at the beginning." And so really, what God is trying to do with the disorders in the natural world and the disorders that occur in our own physical and mental lives is to bring us to our senses and say, "Listen, it's because of the independent exercise of your free wills against me instead of for me that has caused this kind of thing to happen in your world." And God is really hoping that we will sit back and say, "Listen, this thing isn't right. Now, why is it not right?"

Of course the incredible thing about us is we're so wretchedly arrogant that we don't even question ourselves, we immediately question God. And so it's incredible that half the problem with the situation in the Bible camp, Dale, that you talked about, is we've all got used to blaming God. We blame God for everything. And, the amazing thing is, we'll question him before we'll question ourselves. And yet loved ones, really the reason we saw last week for natural disasters and for sickness and disease is that God is trying to show us that we are not right with him and therefore the world itself has fallen in to the same chaos as we ourselves have.

And you remember that was in Romans 8:20. You might want to start there dear ones. "For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope." In other words, God allowed the flood to come and to destroy the whole structure of the rock strata of our world so that earthquakes and volcanic activity and faults can develop. He allowed that to take place. He allowed the creation to be subjected to futility in hope that we would see that the real cause of this was our own rebellion against him.

Now, that's one of the meanings of that word "hope". The hope that we would come to our senses and see that we had caused it. The other meaning is this: when your parents found that you were willing to see that what you had done was wrong they did let you out and the proof of it is you're here this morning. They obviously did let you out. In other words, when you stop rebelling the grounding ceased. Now, it's so with the Father. The reason the world fell into chaos was that it was put under our control you remember. God said to us, "Have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the earth, over every living creature. I give you the world, man, to develop. It is under your authority."

And you remember, Adam had the power to develop it. He had the power to give the animals names. He had the power to exercise authority over the natural universe. And then you remember, we rebelled against God, we decided to go our own way. We didn't want to rule the world, we just wanted to rule ourselves. We didn't want to be ruled by God. We wanted to rule everybody else. And we rebelled against him. And we withdrew ourselves from God's power and control. And immediately that happened, you remember what we said last Sunday, the world itself was withdrawn from God's control. The power that he was going to exercise through us upon the forces of wind, and wave, and water, that power could no longer be exercised. And you remember, he allowed the flood to come, a tremendous catastrophic occurrence that not only destroyed the atmosphere above us and changed it radically but changed tremendously the structure of the rock and the earth's surface so that all kinds of earthquakes, and tornados, and volcanic activity began to take place.

Now loved ones the truth is this: when the caretaker of the world fell out of God's control the world fell out of God's control to a great extent. When the caretaker of the world rebelled against God, the world over which he was to take care came into rebellion against God also. When the caretaker fell out of fellowship with God, the world of which he was taking care fell out of God's fellowship. The opposite is true, if the caretaker reestablishes his fellowship with God the world of which he takes care will reestablish its fellowship and relationship with God. If the caretaker will come again into the order that God has for his life, then the world of which he is the caretaker will come into order also. It's just a basic truth loved ones, that this world will be redeemed and will be brought into order.

Now, that's what this verse says that we're studying this morning. It's Romans 8:21 and this is the second meaning of the word "hope". The first meaning is God hoped that through the volcanic activity, and the earthquakes, and the disease we would see that we were not right with him. The second meaning is in Verse 21, "Because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Loved ones, this world with all its frustrations and its futility will be set free and released and will enjoy the same liberty as we children of God enjoy simply because what we experience of God will be passed on to this world. The liberty that we enter into with him will be passed on to his world. Now, how will that take place? Well in two ways; one is future, the other is present. The future one concerns Jesus' second coming. You remember that repeatedly Jesus would explain that he was going to return to the earth and he would return to it in triumph.

Now, maybe we should look at some of those verses. Matthew 24 loved ones, Matthew 24:6-8, and Jesus says, "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet." Now, I think that's important for all of us who go wild on prophecy and talk as if it's all happening tomorrow simply because we have wars. Do you see that Jesus implied that there would be a little time involved in this? He says the time is not yet even

when there are wars and rumors of wars. “For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places.” And then he says, “All this is but the beginning of suffering.” So there will be a great deal more of what we’ve seen so far in our world.

Then, when you go to Verse 21, “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.” Then Verse 29, “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken; then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory; and he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Loved ones, that will be the beginning of Jesus recapitulating all the loss that we men and women have brought to our world. That will be the beginning of Jesus bringing the world of chaos into order. You get that teaching clearly in 1 Corinthians 15, where Las Vegas will cease to be the greed ridden place that it is and it will become what God intended it to be. Where Pigalle in Paris will cease to be the festering running sore of prostitution that it is and it will become a beautiful place that God originally meant it to be.

1 Corinthians 15:22, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ‘For God has put all things in subjection under his feet.’ But when it says, ‘All things are put in subjection under him,’ it is plain that he is excepted who put all things under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things under him, that God may be everything to every one.”

So when Jesus comes, everything that was meant to be subject to us as obedient children of God will be subjected to Jesus and he will bring an end to the earthquakes and the volcanic eruption. He will bring an end to the tidal waves. He will bring an end to the chaos that exists in our moral relationships. He will bring the whole natural world and the whole physical world into order.

Now loved ones, that is further explained if you look at Revelation 21 because there is described the beautiful order that God originally intended for our world and this is what God will bring back to it through Jesus. All the signs of futility will be removed. All the futility unto which God has allowed the world to come -- the stormy seas, the frustration, the limitations of death and disease -- all those will be removed. Revelation 21:1-4, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”

So there will be no more crying; no more crying and frustration. No more crying and disappointment. No more crying and loneliness. All those things will be removed and death shall be no more. And there shall be no sickness, and no cancer, and no pain, and no sadness. “Neither shall there be

mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed way." Everything that has limited us in the natural universe will be transformed.

That is the point that is made there in that last line of Verse one, oh the most fearful thing for people in those days in the little Mediterranean was the sea, the stormy sea that they could not manage. That's why old John says, "And the sea was no more." There'll be no more frustrating baffling natural disasters. And then it's elaborated just a little bit more over the page in Revelation 22:1-4 where the Holy Spirit will obviously come into the world and not only integrate all the natural world but will integrate people. "Then he showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."

That's the tree of life you know, the Holy Spirit will bring about peace among all peoples and will bring peace personally to our hearts. "There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall worship him; they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads." Then night, you know, I'm sure you've sat through a night with someone who's sick. I've certainly sat through a night with someone who's dying and you know the night is the worst time, isn't it? Night is the lowest time, loneliness and darkness. "And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever."

Loved ones, what's interesting is you see is it's a new heaven and a new earth. And the word is "kainos" in Greek not "neos". Now, those of you who know Greek know that "neos" is the word for new that means "newly created never having existed before". But, that isn't the word that is used. When John says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." He says, a "kainos" earth, that is "an earth that has already existed for some time but is now completely renovated and transformed". Loved ones, that's why we say that when Jesus comes he will not destroy the earth.

Even the fire mentioned in 2 Peter is not a destroying fire in the sense of ending the existence of this earth but a destroying fire in the sense of destroying everything that is evil in the earth. It is a purifying fire. And so when Jesus comes the tornados and the tidal waves will be used to cleanse the whole world without destroying the world. The volcanic eruption and the geothermal energy will be used to provide the conditions on earth that God wants to exist -- not for destruction.

In other words, Jesus will take everything that we have in this present life that hurts, and spoils, and destroys life and he will redeem it all and he will bring the world back to that perfection that existed in the Garden of Eden. And all those things will be done by Jesus. Now loved ones, the whole animal kingdom will be changed which is why I made that comment about the whole "Jaws" [movie] thing. The animal kingdom was not meant to be "red in tooth and claw" the way it is today. The animal kingdom was not meant to live in fear of man. It was meant to live in harmony with man. And so part of what Jesus will do is bring back that animal kingdom to its perfection. That description is there in Isaiah 11 if you look at it.

Those of us who argue on the basis of the old rabbits in Australia you remember, the myxomatosis -- that it's necessary to have predators for the harmony and balance of nature -- it's madness you know, obviously that was not God's plan. His plan was that there would not be predators in the animal kingdom, but that the animal kingdom would govern itself, and govern its own numbers, and the

harmony of nature would be maintained in peace. It's Isaiah 11:6, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."

We have to do it wisely in these days because the animals are not bred in that way. But, it was God's plan that the children would not be scared of things. That they would know that the whole world was a friendly place for them to live. "The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

Now loved ones, that's part of what God means when he says that the creation itself will be set free from its futility and will obtain the liberty of the children of God. That's part of what it means. That all will take place and be completed when Jesus comes, but it will be absolutely blinding and bewilderingly incomprehensible unless men and women have seen something of that before Jesus comes.

Now loved ones, do you hear that? If nothing of that occurs before Jesus comes then the transformation will be so blindingly different from what we've experienced, and so bewilderingly incomprehensible to all around that it will not have the glorifying effect that God intends. In other words, the principle that is outlined in the Bible of the lesser always preceding the greater applies here also. You remember, in order that Jesus would be understood there were 2,000 years of preparation. In order that people would understand Jesus, John the Baptist came first. In order that people would understand what a spiritual kingdom like the church could be, God chose his own physical people of the Israelites first.

In other words, right through history God has always prepared the way for the greater by sending the lesser. He has always given us a little taste of it before the full thing actually happens. Now loved ones, that teaching is plainly there in Hebrews 2 if you look at it. Hebrews 2:6-9, "It has been testified somewhere, 'What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou carest for him? Thou didst make him for a little while lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet.' Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control." He's still talking about man, you see.

"In putting everything in subjection to 'man', he left nothing outside his control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor." And loved ones, you see the clause, "As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him." In other words, God's plan is that as we children of God come into liberty ourselves we should be beginning to bring the world itself into the same liberty.

Loved ones, as we begin to experience more of liberty from profit, power, and success, so God intends us to bring the natural world into some of that liberty also. So really, we here are meant, as children of God, to exercise subjection over the world. We have exercised subjection over it as fallen children. We have contributed to it the chaos of our greed, and our anger, and our irritability. Now God expects us to contribute to it the peace that we have in him, the absolute confidence that we have that he will supply all our needs.

And so God intends that we should begin now to deliver the world from some of this futility so that

when Jesus comes and does it completely, that will be understood by people. They'll look back and they say, "Ah, yeah, we saw that change being wrought by his friends. We saw that change being wrought by those who called themselves Christians before. Yeah, we see what this is. It makes sense. It's the completion of the thing that we've hungered for as we've been watching these partial signs of it down through the centuries."

An easy instance, oh in 1958, London for 20 years had been getting grimmer, and dirtier, and blacker. In London in '58 it was hard to see any flowers inside the city limits at all in England. The birds, even the pigeons in Trafalgar Square were beginning to clear off and any birds that remained were covered with a layer of grime and black soot that came from all the coal burning fires and the coke burning factories that were allowed to belch out the unclean air throughout the city. So in 1958 London had four days of the worst smog that they ever had. Hundreds of old elderly people died in that smog. And in 1958 the city authorities determined, "We are going to do something about this."

And nobody of course wanted to do anything about it because everybody was after the profits. If you had to change – I remember we burned coal in London when we were there and if you had to change from coal to electricity you know how it increased the price and that increased the price for businesses and decreased the profits. Nobody wanted to get rid of the coal and coke. Nobody wanted to face the lessening and diminishing of their own income that would come about. The city authorities made it legislation and they eliminated the coal and coke burning fires and they began to govern the activity of the factories.

In other words, the business owners were forced to start cleaning up the air. For the past five years in London there have been birds appearing in the city that the Londoners have never seen for 50 or 60 years. There are flowers, and plants, and trees growing the way they used to grow 50 or 60 years ago. Even the buildings in London are beautiful. There are buildings there that I thought were black. I thought that was the natural color of them. When I was there they used to be black. And now, you can see the buildings in all their beauty, and the parks are beautiful and there's something of life in the City.

I know that wasn't done by children of God but do you see that we children of God are released from the desire from money, money, money, money. We are liberated from this desperate need to provide our own security and the sense of food, shelter, and clothing. We know that God has counted the hairs of our heads. We know that he will supply all the clothes that we need. He has promised he will dress us like the lilies of the field. He will dress us in more glory than Solomon and so we know that we are free to concentrate on developing his world for his glory and in his way, whatever it means for our own profits.

Loved ones, God expects us children of God to begin to redeem the world in that way. He expects us to be in the forefront of it. He expects us to be the people who carry out the strip mining and then despite the loss and profit that it costs us we take care to replace the top soil and to grow again the plants and the crops that once grew there. God expects us to be the first people to invent an efficient electric car that will do something more than 55 miles per hour, I think it is, and more than a 40 mile range. God expects us to be the first people to develop electric cars. He expects us to be the first people to clean up the unclean air in the cities.

The Father expects us to begin to take a downtown corner at Central Avenue and 4th St. (Minneapolis) and change it from a desolate, lonely, miserable spot to a garden with freshness and life in it.

Loved ones, that's what we're called to do. The commission has never been taken back by God. His commission is still to subdue the world and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air. And loved ones, the Father who expects us who are free from the greed for profit, who are free from the desire to make our name in the world, the Father expects us to be the first to begin to bring his natural world into some kind of release.

That's why, you know, I speak to all of you who have scientific ability and engineering ability, and can work with wood, or can do anything practical to see that you're to be full-time in God's service. Not necessarily that you're all to join missionary organizations, not necessarily that you're all to come in to the center here and spend every day here but that you're to begin to allow the spirit of Jesus to redeem the world through you. If you're in a loan company you're expected to run the loan company to teach people how to be prudent even if it means you will lose their business rather than to run the loan company in order to gouge from them as much as their own foolishness will produce for you in interest.

Whatever you do in your job loved ones there's some way in which God wants to use you to bring this creation back from the futility that it experiences, and back into something of the liberty that you enjoy as his children. Because, you see, if you look at the chaos that exists in energy, and you know it's chaotic. We don't know where we're going with the nuclear power now. There have been so many faults developed that we're all afraid of it. The Congress and dear old Ford [US President Gerald Ford] are fighting one another over what they're going to do.

It needs a breakthrough and the wind and the sun are here in abundance but it requires some men and women who will commit themselves to the development of those things whatever it costs them financially with the same enthusiasm with which we commit ourselves to bringing other people to know Jesus as their Savior. Because the truth is, loved ones, it's all the same ball of wax. It's all the redemption that God has sent Jesus to bring about and it's all preparation for his coming when he will complete the whole job.

So will you begin to think a wee bit about that? That the creation itself is to be set free by you and me and to begin to obtain the liberty of the children of God. And would you stop sitting there and saying, "Ah, I can't do anything. I'm not an engineer and I'm not a scientist." But if you begin to think, if you just begin to think. And you ladies, do you know who invent more things than anybody else? Housewives. Do you know why? Because housewives just go straight to the heart of the problem. They say, "I need something to do this." They don't get all complicated about the technological difficulties they just say, "I need something to do this job."

Loved ones, do you see the Holy Spirit expects us to begin to take part in this. And I know it hits you hard at first, you think, "Oh this is madness. This isn't for us, this is for the scientists." Loved ones, the dear souls aren't doing it. Part of the reason they aren't doing it is big business doesn't want anything to do with anything that would change our present status quo because our whole profit system is built up on the kind of energy that we have at this present time.

God is calling us to begin so I would ask you, would you think about it? Think about being Jesus in the world in more ways than simply talking to someone about the gospel. Really, when people begin to see a man, a lame man healed at the Gate Beautiful (Acts 3:1-10) of the temple then they'll come to you and say, "By what power did you do this?" And when we begin to bring our world into some kind of order then people will begin to say to us, "By what power have you done that?" So that's some of the calling that Jesus has given us. I do ask you to pray about it and think about it and

don't just toss it out of your mind, you know. Really it's part of our calling.

Let us pray. Father we thank you that you've called us to action. Lord Jesus we thank you that you expect us to prepare the way for your second coming and to prepare the way for you to come and renew the whole world. Lord we thank you that in the meantime you expect us not to stand looking up at the heaven, looking up at where you've disappeared but Lord Jesus you expect us to commit ourselves with heart, and soul, and mind, and strength to take part in the renewal of your world. So dear Holy Spirit, we would ask you now to move in each one of us and make this Romans 8:21 verse dear to us and whether we're at home in the kitchen most of the day or whether we're at an office typing, Lord Jesus will you begin to endear your world to us. And while we hate the world order of greed and selfishness let us love the dear world that you made and let us begin to bring it in to subjection to you for your glory. Amen.