

Spiritual Life # 8

Boasting of the Flesh

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Carnality is not normal Christianity. Carnality, you remember, is hypocrisy. It's acting on the outside like a Christian but being on the inside like an ordinary man. And that, you remember, is how Paul describes it in 1 Corinthians, he says, "I couldn't talk to you as spiritual people, but I had to talk to you as carnal people, men of the flesh because you were behaving like ordinary men." And that's what a carnal Christian is. A carnal Christian is one who has received the spirit of Jesus into their lives but they do not live by that spirit. They are able to have victory in their acts and their words most of the time, but in their attitudes, and their motives, and their reactions, and their desires they are unchristian, they are hypocrites.

Now loved ones, I'd like to share again that what we're saying is, you can be instantaneously delivered from carnality. You can be instantaneously delivered by faith in your death with Jesus from carnal attitudes. So don't sit there and think, "Well, brother you want us to begin to work on these things." Loved ones, if you tackle it that way you'll still be working on those things when you die, you will. It's only if you see that you're delivered by faith in your death with Jesus that you will ever be delivered from carnality.

Now those of you who aren't clear whether you're carnal or whether you're spiritual, I'll lay it on you. And if you say, "Oh, it's that old tract" -- then I hope you're saying, "It's that old tract filled with the things that I used to have in my life." But if you're saying, "It's that old tract and I'm still the same" -- then you should be concerned. And this is it, "The Traits of the Self-Life" [by E.E. Shelhamer]. If you have these or any of them, you're a carnal Christian and you're subnormal and God cannot use you really, in his ministry until you've come through to deliverance. So I'd ask you just to listen and let the Holy Spirit speak.

"Are you ever conscious of a secret spirit of pride, an exalted feeling in view of your success or position, because of your good training or appearance, because of your natural gifts and abilities? Are you ever conscious of an important independent spirit?" And if you are, you see, declare that that is carnality now. Declare plainly to yourself and to the Father in heaven, "Lord, there is a sense in which I'm obviously not crucified with my Savior and yet you have crucified with me. You've crucified me with him so there is some sense in which I am not entering into that. Lord, I want to, tonight, tonight." But loved ones don't say, "Yes, I have some of those and I will work on them." You will never get rid of them by that gradual process, you won't. My life was changed in 1964 because I at last saw that you're delivered from carnality by faith and whatever is done by faith can be done in an instant if you're willing. And that is God's promise and he can make it real to you tonight.

"Are you ever conscious of a love of human praise, a secret fondness to be noticed, a love of supremacy, a drawing attention to self in conversation, a swelling out of self when you have had a free time in speaking or praying." Now that is not a clean heart, it's not a clean heart. Just don't be foolish and say that's a clean heart. That's not a clean heart. And Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart." And old Peter said, "God gave the Holy Spirit as he did to us and cleansed their hearts by faith." Your heart is cleansed by faith, not by discipline not by a continual

forever battle. Your heart is cleansed by faith in a moment, by the power of the Holy Spirit, that's how you're delivered from carnality. If you have those things, that's not a clean heart.

And loved ones, do you see what I'm saying? That you're living under a burden, you're living in defeat and trying to witness a victory and it's not possible. I don't blame you having an unfulfilled witnessing life, so had I when that was my heart. But a clean heart is one that can be projected on to that screen so that everybody can see everything in mind, and your head, and your heart and you're not ashamed at all. And that's right, that's right. Don't sit there and say, "Oh, you're exaggerating." No, that's what a clean heart is, that's what a transparent life is, that they can see anything in your heart and you're not ashamed. That's God's will for us and that's what he can do through the power of the Holy Spirit.

"Are you ever conscious of the stirrings of anger or impatience?" Just the stirrings, you see, not a bad temper, but just the stirrings? What you find in a carnal Christian is they have a fair degree of victory outwardly, but they have inward sin. They have the stirrings of these things within, that's what a carnal Christian is, is a person that has inward sin alive inside them boiling and bubbling so that their victory outwardly is only one of strong will power, it's not a flowing spontaneous freedom. "Are you ever conscious of the stirrings of anger or impatience, which worst of all, you call nervousness or holy indignation? Are you ever conscious of a touchy sensitive spirit; a disposition to resent and retaliate when disapproved of or contradicted? A desire to throw sharp, heated flings at another?" If you are, you're not fully crucified with Christ and you can be, that's the joy of it, you can be. These things are not put in this tract to condemn you, but to drive you into the deliverance in Jesus.

"Are you ever conscious of self-will, a stubborn unteachable spirit, an arguing talkative spirit; harsh, sarcastic expressions?" And all of us who have had trouble with sarcasm -- and me too -- let us look at that and say, "Am I ever conscious of harsh, sarcastic expressions?" The Holy Spirit is a gentleman, he's a gentle person and he brings life and lightness wherever he comes. And where he is there is no sarcasm, there is no harshness. "Are you ever conscious of an unyielding, headstrong disposition? A driving, commanding spirit; a disposition to criticize and pick flaws when set aside and unnoticed?" I testify so was I. That's what I was like, but I'm different now. And I testify loved ones to that, that I know so well the feeling of criticizing another person to try to bring them down to your level or to try to make yourself appear in your own eyes or in somebody else's eyes better. I know that. But you can be delivered from that, you can be delivered from it so that you haven't a disposition to criticize, so that criticism is as alien to you as love used to be. It can be that way, loved ones, it can be like that.

Criticism can become alien to you so that it doesn't come naturally from your lips, so that when somebody else criticizes, you have to kind of force yourself if you want to criticize too. That's what it's like, you see. Whereas I think that some of you here say, "Oh, you mean I get victory, I get power to stamp down the criticism?" No, the criticism does not arise. Your heart is filled with love. You have no "disposition to criticize and pick flaws when set aside and left unnoticed, a peevish, fretful spirit, a disposition that loves to be coaxed and humored. Are you ever conscious of carnal fear, a man fearing spirit, a shrinking from reproach and duty?" You know, that's a clear indication that you love self.

You know the situations that we get into where it's not quite a comfortable thing we're being asked to do. It means upsetting our plans and we draw back a little from the duty. If you ever see any drawing back, know that Jesus never drew back. He set his face steadfastly towards Jerusalem and he

walked straight. And when you're filled with Jesus that's the way you'll be. And if there's any drawing back, it's self and if self is doing something in you it means there's a bit of self hanging off that dear cross and it's hanging there because you want it to hang off that cross. And to get it back on you simply have to deal with that area and say, "Lord, I care nothing. I thank you that I'm crucified with you and I ought to have and deserve no more comfort than you had and you did not even have a stone to lay your head upon as a pillow." So "a shrinking back from reproach and duty, reasoning around your cross." You see that it's all self-protection, it's, "I want to serve Jesus, but I want to protect myself from too much discomfort."

Wherever you get that spirit you're getting a spirit that is not Jesus. Jesus hung on the cross with the nails through his hands with contentment for you and me, with no wishing, "I wish I wasn't on this cross." Or, "I wish I didn't have to bear this." Or, "I wish I could take this hand away so that I only have pain in the one hand." No holding back at all, but an absolute indifference to what happened to himself. Now when you're in him on the cross that's the way you are. And if you're not that way, then you're not in him on the cross, there's some way in which you're saying to him, "I don't want to bear all that you bore and I want to die with you but not with all those consequences in my life." And therefore, loved ones, you will not rise with him, you will not. You will not rise with him unless you die with him.

"Are you ever conscious of shrinking from doing your whole duty by those of wealth or position? A fearfulness that someone will offend and drive some prominent person away, a compromising spirit?" Whenever you find yourself treating somebody a little more respectfully than somebody else you ought to ask yourself, "Why am I doing that? Why do I put on a certain air when I deal with the professor or the head of the department? Why?" And make sure that it isn't self.

"Are you ever conscious of a jealous disposition, a secret spirit of envy shut up in your heart, an unpleasant sensation in view of the great prosperity and success of another?" I was shot through with it, shot through with it, I was -- of selfish ambition. And loved ones, I have to say it at risk of you accusing me of being a sinless perfectionist, it isn't in my heart now, it isn't in my heart. Your heart can be changed, it can be cleaned out.

"Are you ever conscious of a disposition to speak of the faults and failings rather than the gifts and virtues of those more talented and appreciated than yourself? Are you ever conscious of a dishonest, deceitful disposition, the evading and covering of the truth, the covering up of your real faults, leaving a better impression of yourself than is strictly true?" Because you want them to think well of you, because you're still concerned what people think of you, because you feel they have control over what happens to you, because you have not really died to the worst that men can do to you. And that's what dying with Jesus means, dying to the worst that the most powerful person in the world can do to you.

"Are you ever conscious of a dishonest deceitful disposition, leaving a better impression of yourself than is strictly true? Are you ever conscious of false humility, exaggeration, straining the truth?" So some straining of the truth is harmless and is almost a habit that you've got into, but there is a straining of the truth to give the other people a better impression of you yourself than is true and that's what steals from your rest. You remember in Hebrews, God talks about the rest that is reserved for the people of God. There's a rest and a peace that you can have. But if you're always conscious of what people think of you, there's that strain, where you're always straining a little. Describing the water skiing experience a little more vividly than was actually true, describing a little more cleverly your dialogue with somebody else than was actually true,

always staining a little to get them to think better of you. That's because you care about what they think of you. That's because you haven't joined your Savior on the cross in death to what anybody thinks of you, in death to whether they think you're the worst in the world, that's what crucifixion with Christ delivers you from.

"Are you ever conscious of unbelief, a spirit of discouragement in times of pressure and of opposition?" Just a spirit of discouragement in times of pressure and opposition? Not actually getting discouraged, but kind of a tendency when the trials come and the opposition comes, a tendency to get down. Do you see that Jesus' spirit rises, gloriously greets it as pure joy when he enters into various trials? And if you're filled with that Spirit that's what you'll find yourself doing too. In fact, you'll look forward to the trials and look forward to the battle more even than to the peaceful times. "Are you ever conscious of lack of quietness and confidence in God?" See, can you be thrown off balance by the bank account going wrongly, or by the examination not coming out right, or the job opportunity not coming through? "A lack of quietness and confidence in God." Can you actually be stampeded?

"Are you ever conscious of a lack of faith and trust in God, a disposition to worry and complain in the midst of pain", which Jesus did not do. "In the midst of poverty or the dispensations of Divine Providence, are you ever conscious of an overanxious feeling whether everything will come out all right?" Interesting, isn't it? Just an overanxious feeling whether everything will come out all right. Jesus' spirit is always gloriously confident and if there's something in you that isn't, it can only be self. "Are you ever conscious of formality and deadness; a lack of concern for lost souls, a dryness and indifference, a lack of power with God? Are you ever conscious of selfishness, a love of ease, a love of money? These are some of the traits, which generally indicate a carnal heart. By prayer, hold your heart open to the search light of God until you see the groundwork thereof."

"Search me oh God and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me. (Psalm 139:23,24).

The Holy Spirit will enable you, by confession and faith, to bring your self-life to the death. Do not patch over, but go to the bottom. It alone will pay."

'Oh, to be safe from myself, dear Lord,
Oh to be lost in thee.
Oh, that it might be no more I, but Christ that lives in me.

'Create in me a clean heart O God and renew a right spirit within me.' (Psalm 51:10)

Let's seek the Holy Spirit, who can do that.

Let's pray. Blessed Holy Spirit, we would honor you tonight on this first study night of the year 1978 and we would ask your Holy Spirit to bring us to our death with Jesus. We see that these things are an offense to you and they're a rejection of what has been done to us in Jesus so Holy Spirit, we would honor you now this evening and we would love you and listen to you. We know that you alone can resurrect Jesus in us individually and as a body. We would ask you now to search our hearts and deliver us from procrastination and prevarication. Deliver us from trying to grow out of these over a number of years. Enable us to see that our old self was crucified with Christ in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and that it can be done in us in the same moment, in the same

instance. We thank you Lord that anything that is received by faith can be received as it was originally done in a moment. Oh, Holy Spirit, we ask you to show us where we're not willing to die with our Lord.