

Spiritual Life #12

How to Continue in Victory

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Shall we pray? Dear Holy Spirit, we ask you to override our minds and to bring the dear mind of Christ among us. Oh Holy Spirit, we would ask you to enable us to see in to Jesus' heart this evening, into our dear Father's heart and to see each one of us personally as he sees us and as he has planned us to be. We thank you that you have a plan there Father for us. We thank you that you have a place for each one of us and you have a ministry for each one of us. We would ask you by your Holy Spirit to enable us to see your vision for us and to be caught up with that and that only, our Father. To turn our eyes from all that others expect from us, turn our eyes from what we expect of ourselves and see what you expect us to be. We know that that is perfect freedom, our Father, that you can give us the power and the life to be what you want us to be. Other men can only demand from us but you can offer us the power and the grace to be what you made us. Lord we thank you.

We pray Holy Spirit that you will move among us and that you will speak to our spirit independent of what a man's voice may say. Holy Spirit we ask you to speak to us and to reveal to us where we are in Jesus. We ask that you would be glorified in us tonight and in our lives in the coming years and all the days of our lives. Amen.

We have talked loved ones for maybe seven or eight weeks about the defeated Christian. And you remember that the defeated Christian is defeated because he is not living off the life that God has in fact provided for him and he is in fact going back to the old life that he lived off before he came to know God at all. I would just point to you the verse that states that clearly in Galatians 5:17. And it sets forth clearly the two principles that govern men in their life before God. And it says, "the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you would."

And God intended us to live off his love and we for years, most of us, have been living off other people's love. Mainly because God's love was not real to us and that was because we had no relationship with him and that was because we had determined to live our own way and he could not give us his Holy Spirit. And then many of us realized that and we stopped living life our own way and we came to him at some point in our lives and we said, "Lord God we know you have a plan for the whole world and you have an individual plan for my life and I want it. So I will stop doing things my own way and I will do them your way."

Many of us then, at that very moment, experienced the spirit of God coming into us and we sensed that God was real. And we began immediately after that to live off God's love. And we lived that way, most of us, for a number of months, sometimes for a number of years. And then we began to slip back into living off other people's love and that's when we began to experience in our lives what is described there in Galatians 5:17, the desires of the flesh are against the spirit and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh.

We would find ourselves often in situations such as Peter was in in the court yard and the little maid said, "Aren't you one of the Galileans?" And the love that he had for Jesus made him want to say, "Yes, I am." But, the love that he received and he had for other people and for their opinion made him deny that he ever knew Jesus. So that is that picture of the carnal Christian and most of

us here have experienced it a thousand times in a thousand ways.

We want to experience the friendship of God but we also want to experience the friendship of a girlfriend or a boyfriend. And when it comes to a choice between those two -- whether we will go out and do something for God in a certain evening or whether we will go out with this girlfriend or this boyfriend because it will forward that relationship a little more and develop that possibility of a source of love independent of God -- we have real trouble. It's not only boyfriend girlfriend, it can be two guys and their relationship with each other in some sport, or it can be a husband and wife. But many of us find that the carnal Christian cannot do what he wants to do and that's what that verse says you remember, "the desires of the flesh are against the spirit and the desires of the spirit are against the flesh for these are opposed to each other to prevent you from doing what you would."

And really, the only way to ever come free from the satisfaction that we get from other people and the world is to destroy the world. That's one alternative. Just blow it up and then you won't be tempted to live off the thrills that you get from speeding across a lake at high speed in a motor launch, or you won't be tempted to get from your peers adulation and admiration that gives you a sense of satisfaction. And so that is one alternative, you could destroy the world. Or, you could destroy your own life and cease to live in the world. And that is of course, what God did to us in Jesus.

He took that whole part of us that depends on the world and people and he destroyed it in his son Jesus. That is what that verse means in Romans 6:6, "our old self was crucified with Christ so that the body of sin might be destroyed and we might no longer be enslaved to sin." And many of us have come into that experience of deliverance from carnality and it involves being ready to die to the world and to have the world crucified to you and that's what it means to be in Jesus. And so the monastics tried to actualize that by building high walls around them and the Trappist Monks by not speaking to one another and others by not seeing the outside world at all.

In actual fact they didn't have to do that. That whole miracle was already wrought in them in Jesus when they died with him. And they can have that victory actualized in them if they submit to the Holy Spirit. He can make that real in them and that is what many of us have found, that it is possible to experience death to self and death to the outside world, and death to what people think of you in Christ. And yet, only the Holy Spirit can bring you to that.

You remember the two attitudes that are necessary to experience that are found in Romans 6:11. Every entrance into a grace of God is "trust and obey, for there's no other way" -- and this is the trust side. Romans 6:11 is the belief side so you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. And, I'm sure I've bored you with the whole truth "logidzo" and it means "consider, treat yourself as really dead." And some of you have shared with me, "But I've tried to do that often and I really haven't found it meaningful at all." And I would say to you loved ones, in my life it was like real death. It was like real death.

It was a matter of coming to the Holy Spirit and saying, "Holy Spirit, in what way am I not treating myself dead in Jesus?" And there were a thousand ways in which I was still wriggling and in which I still reacted when somebody criticized me. Ways in which I still responded to other people's praise and admiration and swelled up when they said something good about me, and ways in which I saw that I was still very much alive to what other people thought. While you are, do you see they're your master and your mistress? They really are. You're at their mercy actually and they'll praise you

and you'll swell up one time in pride and they'll criticize you and you'll just be depressed and down the next.

So while you're dependent on other people they're really your God and they really control you. And so treating yourself as really dead in Jesus is a deep thing and sometimes I think you can be a little superficial in your understanding of it because really loved ones, it's as good as dying. It is really. It's counting up what you're worth to yourself, and then it's handing it all over to Jesus. All your hopes for your own life. It's really treating yourself as if you died this moment. And you need to be thorough about it -- otherwise there will be no real belief.

So it ties up with what we shared this morning you remember that "be leafa" are the two Anglo-Saxon words that give you the word "belief" and it means "to be in accordance with". And so to believe that you've been crucified with Christ is to be in accordance with that in every detail. And then of course the obedience side, or the submission side, is found in Romans 8:13 and you remember it runs, "For if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live."

And I think a lot of us miss the point. We think that obedience is a strong exercise of your will to obey all the laws that you've ever heard of from God and it isn't. You see it says, "If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body." Now the deeds of the body are manifold and are subtle and shrewd and you need somebody like the Holy Spirit to keep track of them and only he can point out to you when you're involved in an action that is of the flesh, or an action that is really depending, you remember, on the outside world for your security, your significance, and your happiness. Only the Holy Spirit can keep track of those movements and you'll be caught out a thousand times if you try and do it yourself.

That's the significance of that verse, "If you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live." And the Holy Spirit can tell you, he can warn you when you're about to involve yourself in the old carnal life of the world. And that's why the only way to remain in this victory is to continue to exercise belief and obedience and that's what we're going to share a little bit about tonight.

How do you remain in victory? How do you continue to be free from carnality? And really, that summarizes it there, loved ones. The way you entered into deliverance from carnality is the way you continue to be delivered. And one of the great weaknesses is that some of us think this disappears. We think that that disappears and it doesn't. For centuries we men and women have depended on the outside world and each other for security, significance, and happiness. For centuries. It is ground into us. The whole world lives this way. Not only Raquel Welch, not only all the dear souls that perform in public again and again, but the whole four billion of us for years have lived off the attention, and the admiration, and the sense of acceptance, and the sense of recognition that everybody gives us.

Many of us I think feel that this somehow disappears and that's I think where we lose our victory. Because we think, being crucified with Christ destroys the flesh forever. It doesn't, loved ones. You're living in a world filled with bodies, filled with visible things that your eyes can see and your hands can touch and all the rest of the world lives like that. So there's a constant tendency -- it's almost like the Second Law of Thermodynamics, it's almost like that law of entropy -- there's a tendency always for the process to go back into dependence on people for a sense of security, and significance, and happiness. And so you'll always feel that drag of the flesh unless

you remain on the cross.

And that's why it's important to see what Romans 6:6 promises, loved ones. Maybe you'd look at it, "We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body," or the body that is used by sin you see, which is the same as the flesh, "Might be destroyed." And the word is "katargeo" in Greek and it means, you remember, "rendered inoperative". And as long as the old self is held on the cross by belief and submission to the Holy Spirit, then the power of the flesh will be rendered inoperative on the cross.

But the moment you cease to believe, or the moment you cease to submit to the Holy Spirit, that is free and slips right off the cross and will bring you to grief again in your own life. So it is a daily walk. And so some of you have said, "Is it a daily walk or is it a crisis?" Well loved ones, it has to come as a crisis at some point in your life. That is, a moment when you at last settle, "I am not going to depend on people and things for love. I'm going to depend on God alone."

So there has to come a time when you cease to depend on others and that normally is a time many of us call our crucifixion with Christ, our being filled with the Spirit, our full surrender, our complete consecration. So there has to be a time when that life starts -- but the only way to continue in it is for that to be repeated daily. So the only way a spiritual child of God can live is every morning to get up and to make sure in prayer that they are in this place with God. That they really do regard themselves as crucified with Christ and they really do moment-by-moment submit to the Holy Spirit.

Now, the only way you can lose victory is if you slip from that cross. I'd like to share just some very practical ways in which some of us do slip from the cross. And maybe you'll allow the Holy Spirit just to deal with you and then share some very practical ways to remedy that. Some of us slip from the cross over the whole business of the eyes. You find an example of it in 2 Samuel 11. "It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking upon the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, 'Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?' So David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. And the women conceived; and she sent and told David, 'I am with child.'"

And then in Verse 15, in the letter you remember, to Joab concerning Bathsheba's husband David wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die." So he arranged for the murder virtually of her husband. And it all started because of what happened there in Verse 2, "It happened late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking upon the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful." And the one look was normal and natural -- but it was just continuing to look.

And one of the places that some of us cease to live by Romans 8:13, where we cease to have a tender, sensitive, dependence on the Holy Spirit is in regard to our eyes. We just get overconfident and we think, oh we've been saved and delivered from all lust, from all envy in the case of the ladies who go on the dates with us, and from all greed and we can look at anything and it won't do us any harm. So some of us slip from the cross because we allow our eyes to look at some things that we shouldn't. So Jesus, if he had looked at the kingdoms of this world a second time after Satan presented them to him, would have had the same difficulty.

In the eyes we cease to move by that momentary obedience to the Holy Spirit. I think what happens is that many of us get ideas of what is evil. We get ideas in our own minds, we start eating at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil again. The Holy Spirit says, "Just look up to the beautiful sky, just look at the trees, just look away." And we say in our own hearts, "No, no, we know what we can take and we know what is good and we know what is evil and there is nothing evil in this." But the Holy Spirit does not govern by good and evil, he governs by what will draw us from the cross and what will keep us on the cross and so immediately you question the Holy Spirit in terms of whether he's right or wrong, you're beginning to distrust him and he's unable to lead you any further.

So it is important for those of us who are in some state of victory to see that the Holy Spirit will often lead us in ways that go beyond good and evil. Some of us slip from the cross in regards to self management. That is, we're a bit like Abraham and Rebekah. You remember, God promised them a son and they got impatient and they said, "Look, God has forgotten about us; we had better make our own arrangements." So Abraham agreed to go in to Hagar his wife's maid and to have Ishmael as a son. And you remember the disaster that that was.

It was the same with Rebekah and Jacob her son in regard, you remember, to the blessing they were expecting. And she persuaded him to get the blessing from his father by dressing up or pretending that he was Esau. And you remember the chaos that that brought about. So self management is taking things into your own hands. And many of us slip from the cross by ceasing to trust the Holy Spirit when things get a little tense in our lives. And we decide, "No, we can handle this better ourselves. We better take action." And so we part from the Holy Spirit.

Loved ones, I don't know how I can tell you how gentle and quiet the Holy Spirit is. He is a real gentleman, he really is. And he will not force you and you have to want his guidance -- otherwise he will not give it. And the moment you begin to manage your own life and begin to take hold of the thing in a kind of self managing way, the dear Holy Spirit just gently draws back, witnesses that he's grieved -- but if you don't respond to that he draws back a little more. Many of us slip off the cross gradually because we begin to try to manage our own lives, manage our crisis.

Another example is 2 Samuel 6. And it's good just to read it because God can use his word to apply it to something in your own life as you read it. 2 Samuel 6:6, "And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled." Now the ark of God was sacred and no one was to touch it but the priests. "And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there because he put forth his hand to the ark; and he died there beside the ark of God." And it was because he put out his hand to try to save something that only God could touch.

Sometimes we're facing situations in our families, and in our jobs, and in our schools where we put out our hand too fast to save the ark from falling and we slip off the cross. And do you see what you're doing loved ones? You're grieving this dear Person that is mentioned in Romans 8:13, "If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body." The Holy Spirit wants to be consulted on everything and he wants you to do what he tells you. Often in our homes we would just keep our mouths quiet if we would listen to the Holy Spirit. But we're so eager and so ready to save the ark of God from falling, save God's reputation from being lost that we speak when we shouldn't speak. And we grieve the Holy Spirit and then his voice is a little quieter next time and we grieve him again and before we know it we're off that cross that took us such agony to get on to. So self

management, loved ones, is one of the ways that we do it.

Another way is a word that we often think of in connection just with maybe businesses or our attitude to each other, but an officiousness or a manipulating the work of God or spiritual work. That can be a sign that we're slipping off the cross. Some of us get that way in regard to people that we're trying to witness too. We begin to take the whole operation over. "We know exactly Lord what they need and so we pray that you'll do this. And then we explain this bit to them and then we'll put them on to the Basic Youth Conflicts discipleship course there. Then we get them into this next one. Okay, we just need a little help from you."

And really, the only way to minister life to others is by playing by ear with the Holy Spirit what you need to say to a person. Not becoming officious about the work of God. And those of you who are in Fish Enterprises or who work in other ministries-- because some of you are in other churches -- I've seen us lose the place we have in Jesus by beginning to manage as if we had control of it, as if we could call God to action or as if we could create spiritual work. See, the moment we do that, that moment we're ceasing to lean heavily on the blessed Holy Spirit. That's why you should always be careful when you find yourself talking glibly about the kingdom of God, or talking even facetiously about God's work because it's probable that you're beginning to become officious about his work and beginning to be familiar with the Holy Spirit in a way that indicates really that you're slipping off that cross of his.

Another way loved ones, is in self confidence. And that was, you remember, the kind of thing that Peter showed when Jesus explained, when everybody was going to leave him and Peter said, "No, no, even though they all leave you I will not leave you." And it was in all the confidence of his human flesh and of course he left like a tornado when the moment came. But, many of us I think get confident of our own abilities. God does a miracle in us, makes a new person of us and then we begin to be confident of that.

Do you see that nothing that you've got is your own? Do you see that? Nothing that you've got is your own. You have nothing that is your own. If you have any patience it belongs to Jesus. If somebody says, "Oh, you're a very kind and understanding person" it isn't your kindness and understanding -- it's Jesus, it doesn't belong to you. You don't own it. To be confident in that as if it's yourself is foolishness. It is Jesus only. That's why God's word says, "Put no confidence in the flesh." Because there's nothing good in the flesh and anything that is good in you is Jesus and belongs to him and you only have it as long as you depend on him. And so as soon as anybody says anything good about you, be sure you say what you'd like to them, but in your own mind be quite clear that it's not you that they're talking about. Be very clear about that.

Never take anything to yourself. When somebody compliments you in some way, never take it to yourself. Make sure you pass it fast on to Jesus who has given it to you in the first place. But self confidence loved ones, where we begin to take the things, and the graces, and the beauties that Jesus has given us and we treat them as our own and we begin to depend on them and think that oh yes we can do whatever is needed -- if we begin to put our eyes on these things, we can begin to slip off the cross.

Peter did it, you remember, when Jesus said, "Walk towards me." And Peter began with his eyes on Jesus to walk towards his Savior and then he began to hear the lapping of the waves and feel the wetness of his feet and he began to look down at the difficulties over which he was walking and he began to sink. And so you find yourself slipping off the cross if you begin to look at

difficulties. And actually if you begin to look at negative things you'll begin to slip off the cross.

Never pay much attention to a work of Satan. That's important in your own personal life, and your family life, and your school life, and your work life, in your ministry for Jesus. Never pay much attention to negative things. They aren't worth that. It isn't worth spending that amount of time on something negative that has happened in your own life or somebody else's life. The moment you're putting your eyes on negative things you're turning your eyes to a work of Satan, you're looking at Satan, you're beginning to slip off that cross. The only way to stay on the cross is to "look unto Me and be ye saved". Look unto Jesus and cling to that cross.

And loved ones, Satan will work all kinds of tricks with you. He'll say, "Oh, but you have to work it out. You have to work it out. I mean, the money is in a mess so you have to get down to it and work it out." And actually the truth is you have to keep your eyes on Jesus and praise him, and rejoice in him and say, "Lord I believe that your Father will supply every need of mine from his riches that he has in you and Lord I'm trusting in you to do that and I trust you as I praise you, and as I glorify you these days to enable my mind to see the whole financial situation clearly and to know what to do." And as you do that you know fine well during the night the mind works guided by the Holy Spirit of God and you waken up with the solution in the morning.

But only if you keep your eyes off the difficulties and off the negative things. And so really, if you find yourself criticizing at all, loved ones, it's just the first beginning of the slide off the cross. It is. Jesus never criticized. He told the Pharisees directly what he thought of them but he never criticized others. He always looked positively at others. Could I say that to you again because probably there isn't one row here that has not somebody in it who criticized someone or something this past week. Don't criticize. The moment you're involved in criticism and looking at difficulties and negative things you're slipping off that cross.

It's the same really in a sense with the whole business of material possessions. If you begin to set your eyes on material possessions or to look back at them you'll find yourself like Lot's wife. Just one look back is enough. So if you ever find yourself beginning to wish you had that stereo or beginning to be sorry that somebody broke something that you own, get it before the Holy Spirit fast because material possessions can bring you off Jesus' cross quickly because of course he had none. He hung on the cross and he had one garment and then they took that from him so he had nothing. He had nothing of his own and when you're on that cross that's the way we are. Nothing that we have is our own.

And do you see that your car belongs to Jesus? Your car belongs to Jesus, and your clothes belong to Jesus. Now, he has wishes for them and he does not treat them badly and you need to treat them the way he treats them but they all belong to him they don't belong to you. They are not your right to dispose of the way you want and they're not your right to protect the way you want. You need to protect them the way he protects them but only because you're his steward. And the moment your eyes begin to turn to your material possessions as your own, you begin to slip off the cross.

But loved ones, what is the remedy? Well, the remedy is the kind of attitude that will keep you on that cross of Christ and the first is a real attitude to yourself of distrust and that's good. You would not appear to others as uncertain. That's the incredible paradox. The people who have abased themselves before Jesus and said, "Lord I cannot trust myself" -- the Holy Spirit of Jesus comes into them and everybody else can see a great sense of confidence. And so you do not see people who

are on the cross of Christ who are jabbering, neurotic idiots. They aren't. They are confident, they are outgoing, they are every way victorious in all situations.

But they are confident because of an attitude of distrust in themselves, an attitude of no confidence in their own flesh, an attitude before Jesus of self abasement, an admission, "Lord, there is nothing good in me and Lord the moment you point out something to me that's wrong I admit it right away." In fact, that's what I've seen more and more in the lives of the old saints. Many of us think of the saints as being people who think they are in some way better than the rest of us. But if you go into the lives of the saints they are more sure of their own evil than we are. They are surer they are hopeless creatures than we are.

I've seen that is often the difference between a victorious Christian and one who is defeated. It's not that the victorious Christian is actually better -- but he sees how bad he is. And the defeated Christian still thinks he can do something on his own and so he produces his own effort and produces his own defeat. And so we need a real self abasement before God, a real attitude to yourself that you are worth nothing, that you can do nothing good.

Always make things right with others. Don't let things remain wrong, loved ones. "Never let the sun go down on your wrath." But on top of that, never let a misunderstanding remain between you and another person. Satan can give you all kinds of reasons why you shouldn't go back and apologize, or why you don't need to explain this to them. But immediately when the Holy Spirit speaks to you about some relationship that is wrong, put it right. Get it clean and clear right away. As you sit there can you think of little tensions that you have with other people? Do you know you can actually settle all those now? You can actually settle them this moment. You can go through each one and if it's just your attitude to them you can actually settle it, you can stop it this moment. You can. Satan tries to persuade you, "No, no it's deeply ingrained." No actually, you can stop it and you can forgive them this very moment.

And there are other relationships that you need to call somebody tonight about. You actually need to get on the phone, call them, say, "Look I'm sure you think this is foolish but I just wanted to apologize for that thing and that's me clear before God." And some of us just need to do that and get finished with it. And we would be on that dear cross but we pile up lots and lots of things that we need to attend to and we don't attend to them and our mind clutters up with all kinds of obligations that we should fulfill, repentances that we should make and we don't make them and they just pile one on top of the other. So really making things right with other people is part of the remedy to slipping off that cross.

Then, looking to Jesus only. Looking to Jesus only for comfort, and for encouragement. Many of us begin to look to other people. Really, it applies to our husbands and wives, loved ones. Many of us begin to look to other people for a little encouragement or a little comfort and we subtly begin to change the basis of our lives. No longer are we depending on Jesus only but we're depending on a human being and so we're slipping right back off the cross.

Don't do it. Do you know the way you crave comfort and somebody to say, "Oh you poor soul, what a hard time you're having." You know the way it feels so lovely to kind of bathe and wallow in that kind of stuff? That's sick, sick, sick, sick. It really is. And it's the heart of carnality and whatever comes in your life, look to Jesus only. If you get into a carnality of some kind in your life, look to Jesus only to deliver you. Don't look to men or women, or to books, or to little techniques, look to him only and it's a way that he'll keep you on that cross with himself.

Use the failures, loved ones, and see them positively. I don't know how you think about failures but it seems to me when you're on the cross with Jesus and you mess something up, if you're on the cross your response is, "Lord, thank you for showing me that I am an idiot and that I am the worst of sinners. Thank you, Lord. And thank you that you showed me now how I fell into this. Thank you. And Holy Spirit I now give myself to you again."

But see failures like that. Don't be self defensive. Don't say, "No, no I didn't really do that. Well, if I did do it, it was justifiable because he tricked me." No, don't defend yourself. The only person who defends themselves is someone that's still alive. A person who is dead can't defend themselves he just lays there, he can't do a thing. So if you're dead in Jesus there's no defense necessary. You know the way we always want to explain ourselves to other people, we always want to explain, "Well, you see I did it because of this." Well, if you're dead you can't do that explaining. You're not alive to do it. He can say what he likes about you and you just have to lay there and take it.

And a person who is on the cross with Christ uses the failures that come to him and says, "Thank you Holy Spirit for allowing this to come. Thank you for showing that in this way I'm not on the cross the way I should be." But use the failures that come in to your life to put you more deeply on the cross. And that's why some of you say, "Oh, what happens if I think I've come into crucifixion with Christ and the next day I fall?" Then I've said to you, you remember, "It's good what the Holy Spirit is showing you. He is preventing you entering into some kind counterfeit experience. He's showing you that there's something else to go on that cross. Rejoice, rejoice."

The only reason you wouldn't rejoice is because you don't want to get on the cross. But, if the Holy Spirit is showing you, "Look, get this hand up here and I'll get the nail through." Then if he's showing you and you want to be on that cross you'll say, "Thank you. Thank you Holy Spirit for showing me that." The only person who will resent the Holy Spirit convicting them is a person who doesn't want to get on the cross. So loved ones, use the failures that come to you to allow the Holy Spirit to nail you firmly on that dear cross.

Then an old one that we used to talk about years ago but don't talk too much about now, is self denial. It should be increasing. It should really increase. The whole experience of self denial should increase. Do you see that the more we're in Jesus and the longer we walk with him, the more we can do without. That's true. The more we can do without, the more we become like Jesus himself. The more we can do without the comfort of a settled home, the more we can do without the encouragement of people, the more we can do without the comfort of good food or good clothes. The more we're in to Jesus and grow in him, the more we can do without. And so self denial will grow in your life and it ought to grow. And that's the remedy for ever slipping off the cross.

Today's surrender will not get you through tomorrow. God is increasingly taking over more and more of your personality and redeeming it. "Emo" in Latin is to buy back; he's buying back more and more of the life that you used to control and so it's important to see an increasing self denial in your life. And you should be able to live without some of the things that you needed a week ago, or a month ago, or a year ago. And so increasing self denial in material possessions and what other people think of you but always moving on loved ones, into a deeper place in the cross.

And then really, in the whole experience of sin, have a constant sorrow for sin. You remember, Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn for they should be comforted." And it's sorrow for sin.

Don't think that you ought to always be saying, "No, no, no I don't sin. I don't sin." Really you shouldn't sin, you shouldn't sin. But you don't need to protest continually that you don't sin. If the Holy Spirit shows you that you've done something that is inexpedient or that is not right, there ought to be a sorrow in your heart for that and a dear sorrow that goes up to Jesus, "Lord I want to be better than I am. I want to be different." There ought to be that attitude in old Paul, you know, "I am the greatest of sinners. Yeah, yeah, I'm the greatest of sinners. There is nothing good in me at all." A constant sorrow for sin.

And so loved ones, do you see that the greatest saintliness is consistent with the greatest repentance. And indeed you could say that the victorious life is only possible in a heart that is continually penitent and continually distrusts itself and that's of course, where I have a little trouble with the current emphasis that we ought to have a "good self concept". I probably think that we ought to have no self concept. Forget self, forget if you have a bad self concept or good self concept. Forget that and have a concept only of Jesus. And the self concept will take care of itself. The Holy Spirit will look after your reputation if you look after Jesus' reputation.

And so loved ones, how to continue in victory? Still, still the way you entered in originally. Still having that attitude of absolute belief that you've been crucified with Christ and that you're no longer alive to do what you want with this life but it's his only. And then a sensitive, tender, trust and responsiveness to the Holy Spirit. And to do that you really need to love him and honor him. And I would ask you to do it. Love and honor the Holy Spirit. He is a dear friend to you and a dear counselor and the more you treat him as a real person in your life the more he will keep you on the cross of Christ. But if you try and keep yourself on it by methods and techniques, or by reading the right books, or keeping in with the right people, all you'll succeed in doing is taking over in a self managing way the crucified life.

The only way to stay on the cross is to listen to the Holy Spirit. He keeps you on the cross of Christ. He keeps you there. Any questions loved ones?

Question from audience:

What about those areas in our lives where we don't really, if we're honest, want to give them up?

What I did in my life was I saw that there were some things that I did not want to yield on and so I applied the sword of the Spirit to my life, God's word. And I looked at the things his word said particularly about those areas and I memorized verses about them and I asked the Holy Spirit, "Holy Spirit give me the same attitude to this as God has. Enable me to see this through his eyes."

And really, what I did was I put myself in a position for the Holy Spirit to convict me deeper, and deeper, and I applied his word to myself so that I actually in a sense convicted myself and set myself before God's words until I saw that actually it was a clear choice. It was either yield on this or lose everything. And probably that's the truth of it. Until we come to the place where we see it isn't just a defeated Christian life or a victorious Christian life but it's either hell or heaven, until we come to that point probably we will not yield.

And so I came to that on each of these issues. I saw that actually what I was doing was slamming the door in Jesus' face. I was simply crucifying him afresh and saying, "No, I don't want that." And of course I saw that you cannot be his friend and do that to him. And you certainly can't be a child of God and do that. So that's what I did Bob. Now, I would say loved ones, that yes you cannot be delivered from self until you take the same attitude as God has to the things in your

life. And deep, deep down take it so strongly that you're willing to let go.

Now, I would say the mind of the flesh is enmity against God and it does not want to see things that way and so it will try a thousand tricks to keep you from looking at the verses of the scripture, keep you from coming to a final point on the issue and will try to keep it fuzzy. Or Satan, I think, fights to keep you off the cross because you see while you're off the cross you're useless anyway to God. Fairly useless, I mean most of us know that. You're periodically useful, God is sometimes able to do some things through you by his sheer grace -- but on the whole you transfer to others as much of yourself as you do of Jesus. So Satan knows that and he's happy for you to be half alive.

Question from audience re: Self confidence.

The question is in regard to self confidence and when you say you have confidence in yourself and since Christ is in you, you may say you have confidence in Christ but you're not saying you have confidence in yourself. More or less that's the problem. And don't you see that it's tricky to get involved in a semantic discussion about it because it's very easy to put it absolutely clearly intellectually and still not see it. But, if I could say this, I know that models who have to walk down in the Paris fashion shows, have to walk down those narrow platforms you know, with everybody looking at the. I know that they are trained to be free from self consciousness. And the way they train them is they say to them, "Look, pick somebody in the audience and look at them, just look at them as you walk and you'll forget the way you're walking and you'll forget whether it looks good or it looks bad. You'll be so taken up with looking at that person."

I think that's part of it. It seems that when you're taken up with Jesus and when your eyes are on him and you're utterly engrossed in what he wants to do and wants to say then your eyes seem to be off yourself and you're able to be yourself naturally without any self consciousness or without any pride in self, -- either confidence in self or lack of confidence in self. And that seems to be connected up with that. You know, when you concentrate on, have I good self concept? You know, if you ask me, "Have I good self concept?" I don't know if I have a good self concept or not -- I never think of it. I can give you plenty of reasons why I shouldn't have a good self concept. I can give you plenty of things that I see wrong in myself, but I just never think of it.

You don't think of it. I've been crucified with Christ. The miserable old creature that I use to be is destroyed and what I am now I am by God's grace, however good, however bad it is. And it seems that that's the way the Father works in you.

Question from audience:

Is it ever right to point out faults in each other?

Well in fairness, for example in mechanical things like writing, a little child needs you to say, "Yeah, you wrote that well." You know, or mathematics, "Yeah, you did that well." I think they need encouragement in mechanical things but I think probably what we're talking about is not so much mechanical things as primarily our very own character, the kind of people we are and that's probably where it hurts most. And it seems to be that's what we're talking about rather than the praise that is part of love's expression to encourage a person, I would think.

I don't think you come to a little kid and say, "You know, you're rotten, dear." I don't. Jesus said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom

of heaven.” And he in his own attitude to us is always saying that love is eager to believe the best and is always pointing out the positive and so I think in our attitude to each other we have nothing to do but to love each other and so you have no right to tell somebody else how rotten they are. But, we have a responsibility to see what the Holy Spirit is showing us about ourselves.

No, I think in our attitude to each other we’re always loving each other and encouraging each other it seems to me and pointing out the things that God has already done in us.

Question from audience:

How does this relate to God’s guidance?

Most of us get wrong guidance on our careers, or our futures, or our marriages, or our friendships, or our locations because we’re filled with self desires. We want things that God actually doesn’t want first and foremost for us. We want so much money, we want this kind of a car, we want this kind of a house, we want this kind of a husband or wife, we want this kind of a job situation. We are full of all kinds of wants that are throwing us off center and these wants are coming into us so strongly that we cannot tune in the station of God and we cannot hear what he’s saying to us.

And the truth is that if you accept your position in Jesus as being crucified in him, and being destroyed and ever being separated from this world and everything that it has to offer, then it’s like tuning out all those other stations. That’s where there’s a real problem in those little ejaculatory prayers that we throw up to God. We are absolutely determined that we will get a job that pays so much but as we go into the interview we say, “Lord, if this is your will for me get me the job.” Well, it’s dumb. Your will is so strong that God, even if he had chains, could not pull you back.

So we tend to know – “prayer is the soul’s sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed.” Those are the words of an old hymn. Prayer is the soul’s sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed. God answers our real prayers and that’s what our nature wants. That’s why we end up in some marriages that we do. We’d all like to think, “No it wasn’t so.” But actually, we end up usually in the marriages that we’re in because we actually wanted that deep down at some point in our lives. On the whole, we get what we want. It’s interesting, on the whole we get what we want.

And so that’s the importance of coming into oneness with Jesus on that dear cross because that’s in to purity and cleanness at last.

Question from audience:

Does the Holy Spirit sometimes tell us to do something he hasn’t asked our friends to do?

Yes. In Corinthians you remember, the spiritual man is judged by no one because actually the spiritual person is one who is governed by the Holy Spirit and does what the Holy Spirit tells him to do. And so if the Holy Spirit tells him to sacrifice his own son as Abraham was told then he is willing to sacrifice him. Other people may say he’s being cruel but you can’t judge him because only Abraham knows what God said to him. So why even look at other people? That’s not our business. That’s the Holy Spirit’s task to convict the world of sin. Our business is to keep our eyes on Jesus and walk along rejoicing.

Well maybe we should pray loved ones. Dear Father, we thank you that there is a way of victory and a way of constant victory. And we thank you Holy Spirit that you are a good match for Satan and

that you can warn us of every twist and turn that he takes. And thank you Holy Spirit that you are our counselor and that you can keep us on the cross with Jesus. And Holy Spirit we would ask you to do that. Those of us who have come on to that dear cross and are delivered from our carnality and those of us here tonight who want to be, who want to end that live that cries out, "The good that I would I cannot do and the evil I hate is what I do." Holy Spirit, we would look to you and we would ask you to bring us into our full death with Jesus and into our full resurrection and regeneration through you filling us with his life.

Holy Spirit we ask you to lead us as a body and to lead us onto that dear cross where alone there is salvation. Thank you. 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 evermore. Amen.