Spiritual Life #16

The Cross and the Soul Life 2

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I'd just do a little commercial loved ones; in connection with the teachings that we're really sharing in these Sunday evenings I'd advocate "Love Not the World" by Watchman Nee. And then specifically on the whole business of the soul life is "The Release of the Spirit" by Nee. And some of you may not know who he is, but his name is a kind of nickname really, a "watchman of Israel" you see, and that's his first name in Chinese: Nee -- Watchman Nee. And I don't know how many of you know, but this is other book of his is kind of a second Bible for many of us and it's called "The Normal Christian Life" and that's the book most of us know him by. And really the sequel to that is "The Release of the Spirit" and that's what we will be talking about for the next two years in these evening services.

Loved ones, I thought maybe I'd just clarify some of the teaching and the terms for us tonight so perhaps I could just point out to you that most of us, when we started with Jesus at all, most of us got all we needed from the world. And that's the position of what you might call the Natural Man. The body, you remember, is the outside circle and the soul is the inner circle, and the inner most circle is the spirit. And most of us get all that we need in the way of security from the outside world. In the case of significance, from the outside world, and in the case of happiness from the outside world and that's the position of a Natural Man.

Now many of us became dissatisfied with that and we saw also that that was idolatry and we saw that we were going to end our existence after a mere 70 years and we realized there was a God who could give us his own life and who was willing to forgive us for the kind of life that we had lived and so many of us have moved in to really, what is a New Birth experience. We believe that God has done something in Jesus that enables us to give us his own Spirit of life and our spirits come alive with his Spirit. But, we still live like that [from the outside in]. We still continue to live getting the security, and significance, and happiness that we need personally not from the Spirit of God within us but from the outside world. And that's the position really of a carnal man or woman.

The situation there is Romans 7:15, "The good that I would I cannot do and the evil I want to avoid, the evil that I hate, is the very thing that I do." Now, that's the position of a carnal man or woman. And the reason is that the desires of the Spirit inside that they have received from Jesus are against the desires of the flesh that are coming in from outside. And so for instance, we've often talked about Peter's situation in the courtyard where he still depended on the opinion of men for his significance. And so when the little maid said, "Aren't you one of the Galileans?" he was all preoccupied with what people thought of him and he was preoccupied with what her opinion could do to him and he felt that he was at the mercy of what people thought.

And so even though the Spirit of Jesus from inside said, "Remember Peter, I said this moment would come," yet the desires of the Spirit to say, "Yes, I am one of the Galileans," fought against the desires of the flesh, the desires for men's approval and they prevented him from doing what he would. And that's the situation that many Christians are in. They're born of the Spirit but they still live from the world.

Now, then many of us have taken another step and we have actually not only kept the Spirit alive

within us but we have died to this incoming life from the world. We have decided, "I am willing Lord to die to what the world can give me." Now, that's a big step because that's really like going to your own funeral. It's like saying, "Lord, I'm willing no longer to depend on the world for my security. I'm willing for you to take everything that I have, all my food, shelter, and clothing if you want. I'm willing to live like you, Lord Jesus with only a stone for my pillow. I'm willing to be like that. Lord, I'm willing to die to what men think of me. I don't care if they despise me as they despised you. I don't care if they look down upon me as they look down upon you. I'm willing, Lord. I don't care what they think of me, I die to man's approval. I die Lord to what people can give me. I die to the happiness they can give me. I die to whether I'm married or not married. I die to whether I have friends or not friends. I'm willing to identify myself completely with you, Lord."

And we come to that place where we are saved from that incoming life of the world but we find that our soul has got used to that incoming life of the world. And so we're a little, you remember, like Peter in the garden when the high priest's servants came to arrest Jesus. Peter really loved other people through the power of Jesus and he really didn't hate the high priest's servant. But when he saw all these people coming to arrest his Lord, as a big strong fisherman his soul was used to reacting one way and one way only. And before he knew it he had the sword out and it sliced off the ear of the high priest's servant. Now, that's soulishness.

The soul is used to reacting from the outside all the time. For years it's been depending on people for its significance, other things for its security, relationships for its happiness. And even though you yourself have died to those things, yet you find your soul still carries on doing those things even though you don't want to. Now, what you do find in this area is there's a freedom from willfulness. Here the problem is the will, the selfish will. The will wants to get its own security, significance and happiness when it wants it from the world -- from things, from people.

Here it's not a case of the will. It's the case of an independent soul, a soul that has for years been trained to operate from the outside in and is just used to doing it. Here the problem is rebellion, there's real rebellion. The good that I would I cannot do, the evil I hate that's the very thing I do. I can't do it and there's a guilt that comes to our own conscience in the middle of it because we say to ourselves, "Well, I say I want to do it but there's something in me that doesn't want to do it. I say I want to be patient with this person but there's something in me that wants to strike out at them." So there's a real awareness of self-will inside in the carnal person.

Now, in the soulish person there isn't that same sense of guilt. There's a sense that this is not expedient what I'm doing but it does not carry the stain of sin with it. It is inexpedient, "Ah, I shouldn't have spoken just as loudly as I did there. No, I shouldn't have made that joke there. It was facetious; it wasn't the right thing to do. No, I shouldn't have depended on or appreciated that person's praise of me. No, that goes straight to Jesus, I hand it straight on through." It's something that the personality does almost without thinking. It's an involuntary kind of reaction which doesn't carry guilt with it.

Then of course, the position that God wants us to come into is the spiritual position where at last his Holy Spirit is able to pass through us to other people. And that is the position where a person is beginning to be a spiritual man or woman. Now, loved ones probably in that position God will continue to give us light and more light so that you can grow in anger. What I mean is, there are various degrees of anger. There's an anger for instance at this stage which is just out, it just

expresses itself outwardly, you're just angry. As a Natural Man you get angry at a person and you just strike out at them with sarcasm or criticism. But here as a carnal Christian, you have the power of the Holy Spirit so that the anger is seething inside but you don't express it -- but it's still there.

Now, just as there are degrees of anger and degrees of sin, there are degrees of beauty and fruit of the Spirit. And so here there is a continual, gradual improvement as the Holy Spirit refines you in the way you show patience, and the way you show love, and the way you show gentleness. And that is God's will, that we would continually be developing in the spiritual stage. Now loved ones, those are really the four main steps in the Christian life. And why I thought I'd put them up again was I think that you have to be very clear that unless you deal with this stage here you're going to make no progress in this stage here.

Do you see that there are many Christian books that claim to deal with temperament? That is, they claim to be dealing with this soulish life, this inexpedient life. But, you'll notice they'll often drift into little tricky techniques for keeping your temper. And really what they're trying to do is, they're trying to suggest that temper, and anger, and envy, and strife are not works of carnality but are works of soulishness. Now, it isn't so. Soulishness is an inexpedient personality habit that is not simple, is not part of the works of the flesh described in Galatians 5; it is expedient little things that you do. One example of it was in Galatians, if you'd like to look at it.

You remember the conference that they had at Antioch over whether they should require people to become Jews before they were baptized into the Christian church and Paul talks about his relationship to Peter in that regard. Galatians 2:11, "But when Cephas came to Antioch I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he ate with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their insincerity."

And really what Paul was opposing Peter for was a wrong move. He understands that yes, Peter didn't want to offend the Jews but really it was a wrong move; it was an inexpedient move. But, it was on that level, it was on the same kind of level as Paul himself discusses in 1 Corinthians 10 and it's something I'm sure many of you have come up against in witnessing. 1 Corinthians 10:23, "All things are lawful, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful, but not all things build up. Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. For 'the earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.' If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience."

Then in 29b, "For why should my liberty be determined by another man's scruples? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks?" And then the parenthesis, "But if some one says to you, 'This has been offered in sacrifice,' then out of consideration for the man who informed you and for conscience' sake — I mean his conscience, not yours — do not eat it." It's on that level — expedience. If this ministers life to my brother or my sister then I'll do it. If it doesn't I'll not do it. As long as it is not a matter of sin or not sin.

And that's the level on which we operate when we talk about soulishness. They are inexpedient

things, they are personality habits. You had a father who was very gruff, very abrupt and you have inherited his gruffness and his abruptness. It comes over to somebody else as a lack of love. It's a personality habit that the Holy Spirit wants to begin to work on in you. And yet loved ones, if you treat anger or jealousy as a personality habit, you will be trying to work out of yourself gradually what only God can work out in one fell swoop by being crucified with Christ. Because, that's the important thing to see, that there are two senses in which we are to experience the cross of Christ. There is this one mentioned in Romans 6:6 when it says, you remember, "our old self was crucified with Christ".

And there God states very plainly how we are to enter in to that. He says in Romans 6:11, "So you also must consider yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus." You've to reckon. And then you remember, in Romans 8:13 you've to submit yourself to the Holy Spirit. "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 that is an instantaneous experience. Those of you who know Greek will notice that all the verbs talked of as crucifixion there are in the aorist tense. That means it happens once and that's what George Muller says when he records, you remember, "There came a day," a day, a day, "When I George Muller died to self and died to sin."

Now loved ones, you can come to a place where you die to self will, where you die to living for what people can give you from the world. You can come to a time when you're delivered from sin, when you're delivered from the power that makes you sin. When you're delivered from having to lose your temper. There can come a time when you're delivered from that instantaneously. And most of us have taken a long time dying, but there's a time when the last breath comes and you know you're dead. And so the argument is not over "does this come gradually?" Yes, maybe it comes gradually but there comes an end to it, there comes a moment when you are crucified with Christ.

Now, that deals with the old self and the self will. On the other hand, soulishness is dealt with through the cross that is talked about in Luke 9:23. And it is not looked upon as a once for all instantaneous experience but you see really it's talked about in the very opposite way. Luke 9:23, "And he said to all, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." And this is what we're talking about when we talk about soulishness. We're talking about the daily cross that is born daily and continually throughout our lives. And that is entered into in the same way really. Trust and obey is always the answer to everything that God does among us -- and it is belief and obedience. But here it is belief as to what the word of God shows you and it is submission to the breaking experiences that God brings you.

But loved ones, this is a continual bearing of the cross -- and this is a once and for all. And that's why I think some of you loved ones, say, "Well now brother, isn't it a daily cross?" Well, it's a daily cross if you've experienced the once and for all cross. But, if you've never experienced dying to your self will and to your rights, and to your right to your own way, if you've never identified yourself totally with Jesus and been willing at last to accept from God all that you need, then you'll never be able to experience this daily cross.

Now there are some loved ones that are writing books on temperament and they're trying to somehow deal with anger, and envy, and jealousy as if it were a temperament problem. Now, that's not a temperament problem, that's a temper problem and a sin problem. But, when you're dealing with facetiousness or you're dealing maybe with a mind that is sluggish, or you're dealing with a personality has become abrupt due to the influence of your dad or your mum, or you're dealing with things that the psychologists would say are personality traits, then we're dealing with soulishness.

But it is important, brothers and sisters, to make a clear distinction. I found that it was good for me to be very straight with myself, "Alright, is anger sin? Okay, let me call it sin. Let me not call it a personality shortcoming, a personality weakness." And, "Is selfishness sin? Alright, let me call it sin. Let me not call it some trait that I've inherited from my father or mother. I've inherited it straight from hell, straight from Satan himself." It was good to identify clearly the works of the flesh and you might like to do that there Galatians 5, and just keep calling them sin, loved ones, because they are sin and it's sin that God deals with in the "once and for all crucifixion with Christ". It's S - I - N and it's the "I" in the middle that God needs to deal with in us.

Galatians 5:19, "Now the works of the flesh are plain: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Now, those things are sin, those are just plain downright sin. That's cancer. You may say, "Oh, can't I eat more and grow out of the cancer?" No, you eat more and the cancer grows more with you. You don't eat more, and grow more, and get more power to get rid of cancer. You have to have the cancer cut out by the circumcision of the heart which the Holy Spirit works in you when he cleanses you by faith as you're willing to be identified with Christ.

But it is a once and for all experience and yet it's an experience that you have to walk in daily. And of course, as you begin to walk into it then the Holy Spirit begins to reveal your soulishness to you. Now, loved ones, if you say to me, "Well what happens if we stop?" If you wouldn't mind me being a miserable mathematician, "What happens if you stop at number two?" Oh, I think many loved ones who are baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit stop at number two and they feel their personality is something that is precious and something that they ought not to allow God to tamper with. And so they get proud and possessive of their personality and it dominates them and it begins to actually destroy the outgoing movement of the Holy Spirit within them and eventually then they fall back into self. And of course from there they can fall really right to the bottom if they keep ignoring Jesus and keep ignoring the Holy Spirit.

So many of us who do not go on to number three and then to freedom from soulishness fall back into self. That's why even in churches where there is a real teaching of being filled with the Holy Spirit you can still find people having difficulty getting on with each other. That's why you could have several roommates who are filled with the Holy Spirit and have really been crucified with Christ and it's not the sinful things that they do that offend each other. It's drinking their soup noisily that offends them, or it's leaving the dirty socks continually in the same corner, it's things that they have got used to doing that are not placarded in the Bible as sin and do not come home to them with the guilt of sin but they are just inexpedient human traits. Yet they continue to niggle and cause friction with the roommates until really it is like hell instead of heaven. And yet, they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, they won't remain long of course that way because the Holy Spirit is continually showing them these things and revealing to them how they're not ministering life to each other. And this is what number three is concerned with. Number one and two are concerned with your salvation. But number three is concerned with your ministry of life to other people and that's why you talk there about inexpedience and expedience. And there are many of us who are filled with the Holy Spirit but when

people meet us that's who they meet, they meet us, us. Our personalities with all their idiosyncrasies and all their strange little ways, and the people are faced with us, not with Jesus.

And that's why Paul wrote about this daily bearing of the cross in 2 Corinthians 4:10. And Paul mentions this in connection with not our own salvation but ministry, "Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies." So you see it's for the purpose of manifesting the life of Jesus out through our personalities. And unless you let the mighty powers of your soul be broken and be redirected by the Holy Spirit you'll never minister life to people.

One example of this would be when someone comes to you and asks you about the creation of the world and begins to discuss the evolutionary theory with you. And you have just absorbed all of the tapes and you've read all the books in the library on evolution and you just whomp them with it. And the poor soul kind of backs off as you hit them with argument, after argument, after argument but your brilliant intellectual personality knows no stopping and just mows on through. And the poor soul's eyes get glazed and boy he never asks you another question, in fact, he avoids you. Now, that's soulishness. That's inexpedience. That's a failure to minister life. You minister a lot of knowledge but you don't minister life.

And it's the same with those of us who are particularly emotional people. As I shared with you before, some of us are very, very warm in our affections. Either we're naturally very warm in our affections or we had trouble because our mums and dads didn't give us enough love when we were young. And so we are very affectionate people and somebody comes to us and asks us where we go to church and that kind of thing and we smother them with love, with human love. And they feel they're being suffocated and they feel that they're not being given a chance to deal with God; they're being suffocated by your personality. And they begin to back off in fear that this is going to be too claustrophobic of a relationship.

Now, that's you ministering emotion or love you see. But, it's human love and emotional love to the person. And of course, it's stemming from your soul. It's stemming from your soul. It's not coming from your spirit. Now, if you press me and say, "Oh, do you mean that Jesus would not express love in that warm way?" You've only to look at Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, or to see tears in his eyes when he hears that Lazarus had died to know that of course Jesus expresses love, and sympathy, and sadness, and weeps with those who weep and rejoices with those who rejoice -- but it's under the control of his spirit. It has nothing of selfishness in it. And so often our soulish love has selfishness in it. We feel, "Well, quid pro quo, if we give them a little love maybe they'll give us a little love back."

And it's the soul just going on its usual old way of exchanging love for love. Maybe it's not even that you're conscious of it, maybe you're not even aware that you're seeking love, but your soul is used to it for so long over so many years that it automatically does it. Now, that's what we're talking about loved ones when we're talking about soulishness.

Now, what I'd just like to do very briefly is to point out to you the four times when Jesus talks about bearing the daily cross in regard to our soul life. And you remember we dealt with some of them so I shall just go fairly quickly through them. The first one -- and Jesus does talk about the soul you see when he makes these statements -- is in Matthew 10. And you remember we looked at it before. Matthew 10:38-39, "And he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."

So that's taking the cross. "He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it."

And any of you who weren't here in previous Sundays, you may be interested to know that the word for life is "psuche" in Greek and it means of course, it's the word for "soul". So it's the psychological life and Jesus says, "He who finds his life, his soul life, will lose it and he who loses his soul life for my sake, will find it." And you remember, that is in relationship to the words that Jesus speaks in verse 34, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace on earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me."

And so really, the love that Jesus is talking about there is that soulish affection or soulish human love. And every time that's what you're expressing, you're expressing something that has something of self in it and something that will really smother people and not minister life.

The second one loved ones, is in Matthew 16, where Jesus talks about dying to this soul life. Matthew 16:24-25, "Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'" And then the same words follow, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

And then in Verses 21 and 23, he expresses what that particular part of the soul life is that he's asking us to die to. Matthew 16:21-23, "From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. And Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid, Lord! This shall never happen to you.' But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me; for you are not on the side of God, but of men." And we might think, "Oh that was good of Peter, you know, to be concerned about Jesus but Jesus knew that deep down there was self concern in that.

And while we always say to ourselves, "Pity yourself Lord," he always says, "No, deny yourselves." And self concern is a soulish tendency that we have because we were all once little animals protecting ourselves from the next big lion or the next big caveman that would come along. And so our soul is used to defending us all the time. But that selfish concern will take you back into self again and it's so easy for it to develop among us where we're just concerned about ourselves. And I think we talked about it before; the whole experience of being depressed and of being bummed out and being filled with self pity is just soulish self concern that will take you back into self. And oh there's a great word you know, in Matthew where Jesus says, "The violent will take the kingdom of heaven." The violent.

And what he means is you have to be violent with yourself to enter in and to remain in the kingdom of heaven. And many times, we have to be violent with ourselves where we sink back into self pity and we sink into self concern, and we begin to be concerned, "Is so and so giving me enough respect? Is so and so looking up to me the right way?" Or, some of us I think are like my corny little dog, he's so small that you could tramp on him without realizing he's there. But, he's no fool -- he knows that -- and he has an early warning system. That's right. You could be a yard from him and he starts screaming and barking because he feels, "No, if I don't let them know early enough they'll

be on top of me."

And some of us have an early warning system; we see danger a mile away, we see how we might be inconvenienced a mile away, we see how we might have to suffer discomfort and we see it a mile away and we start backing off and escaping from it. And it's self concern; it's a desire to escape the cross or to make the cross comfortable enough to bear and it's a soulishness that Jesus says has to be worked out of us by being broken.

You know, it's easy for you to listen and for me to listen (because I'm listening to Jesus speak to me as you're listening) -- and it's easy for us to listen to him and to say, "Oh yeah, well I'll look out for that." You'll look out for it and you'll trip over it about 2,700 times. The only way is for that soulish power to be broken by the cross. And the only way is for you to ask the Lord, "Lord, bring me into breaking experiences that will destroy this hellish self concern that keeps popping up inside me. Lord, will you break it. Bring me into experiences that are so uncomfortable, that are so inconvenient that all this self concern will be driven from me."

And do you see that it's only when you're freed from that that you can be freed from self consciousness? Do you see that man fear is a sin; shyness is just an inexpedient human trait? It's just self consciousness. But, the fact remains that while you're self conscious you can't minister Jesus' life freely to other people because you're still a little conscious of how this is coming over to them. And so freedom from self consciousness is necessary in order to minister his life freely. And so it is with all self concern. If you're even a little concerned with, "Well, they're kind of ignoring me. They're not respecting me as they should. They're not looking up to me the way they should," then your mind must be partly on yourself and only partly on Jesus.

But when you're absolutely free from self concern then you're utterly taken up with Jesus and his life is spilling over. You probably realize that, don't you? That witnessing is Jesus' life spilling over. Don't you see that? Witnessing is just the overflow of Jesus' Spirit. That's why the Bible talks about you being filled with his Spirit. You're filled and some of it is bubbling over. That's what real witnessing is. Anything less than that is kind of soulish deliberate conscious witnessing. But, real witnessing of Jesus' life is such a preoccupation and a freedom about Jesus that his life is bubbling over to others.

Now loved ones, the self concern is something that Jesus says has to go. And then the third one is in Luke 17:32-33: "Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it." And why Jesus of course talks about Lot's wife is Lot's wife you remember, looked back to her possessions and looked back to all the world that she had to leave behind when Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed.

And the Father is talking there through his Son about love of the world. And it's something that we just bring ourselves up with and isn't wrong until you become concerned about your possessions. And unless you're broken from your possessions, unless you regard your car as belonging to Jesus and your houses belong to Jesus and you're willing to let it go whenever he wants it, then love of the world can draw you back into soulishness. And you find when somebody asks you for the loan of something that you lend it but you're almost hovering over it all the time you've lent it. And then it if comes back and it's a little damaged, right to your heart goes the sword and the spear.

And really it exposes to you that yeah, yeah you'll give "all to Jesus, I surrender" -- but still my possessions are mine. And many of us who are filled with the Holy Spirit fall back into self

through concern with the possessions that we have. Through a love of ease or a love of comfort we very easily get used to love of comfort. And there's going to be a real test for many of us here in the body when we work up to a certain level of comfort in our homes or our apartments here in Minneapolis and then Jesus calls us to go to Rio or calls us to go to Zanzibar, or calls us to go to Venezuela and start all over again in very uncomfortable surroundings. And of course, we'll be unable to do it unless we have once and for all put the love of the world behind us.

And you do see don't you that the world has a whole system that is based on making life comfortable for us apart from God. The world's system is that way so all of us who are involved in business, or money, or anything to do with the possessions of the world are always touching that world system and it's good to recognize it. You don't need to give up your merchandising or your business life but it's good to recognize that every time you touch it, it is part of the way the world is trying to arrange comfort, and security, and significance, and happiness apart from the Creator. So it's good always to touch it with a penitent heart always saying, "Lord, these are yours I don't want this to stick to my fingers. This is yours. This home that I'm able to buy, this is yours Lord. Whenever you want it you can have it. This stereo, this is yours; you can have it whenever you want it."

And it's good to walk that way. But, that's a soulishness that has to be broken often in many of us because it's a question of deception. We don't see it as something wrong; it's something that creeps up on us. You just enjoy the nice winter coat, you enjoy having that picture in your room and before you know it your dear heart has been drawn out after it. It's a deceiving thing and it's important to see that, loved ones. The tragedy about this is it's a question of deception and that's why next week when we talk about being delivered from it we'll talk about how God deals with the deception that we're in.

And the fourth one that Jesus talks about is in John 12. And we have to read a few verses there just to see it. John 12:12, "The next day a great crowd who had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying, 'Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!'" It was a great time, Jesus was really I suppose as popular as he ever was.

"And Jesus found a young ass and sat upon it; as it is written, 'Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on an ass's colt!' His disciples did not understand this at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that this had been written of him and had been done to him. The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead bore witness. The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign." So they recognized all his great powers and abilities.

"The Pharisees then said to one another, 'You see that you can do nothing; look, the world has gone after him." So Jesus was at the height of his power and his success and popularity. "Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks." So even gentiles came, you see. "So these came to Philip, who was from Beth-saida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus." So even the gentiles wanted to see him. "Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it," the same words again, "And he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life."

And Jesus was seen by everybody to be powerful and mighty and to have great abilities but he said

unless that soul power dies, there will be no fruit. So it isn't wrong to have a good voice or to be able to sing well, and it isn't wrong even to be able to speak or to be able to debate like Paul as long as you're prepared when you come to the Corinthians to say, "I came not to you with words of wisdom." As long as you see that all that so-called talent and ability that you have will not create one iota of spiritual life in another person. So don't despise the abilities or the talents that God has given you but see that they achieve nothing. Nothing in the kingdom.

At the end of all the things we can do we're unprofitable servants. So that's why when I think people talk about some of us being dynamic or having charisma it's interesting but it's inexpedient. It's of no value. It will work nothing. It's like saying you have brown hair, or you have black hair so all of us must see our talents and our abilities, whatever they are in that light, they achieve nothing for the kingdom, nothing. All the ability and the talent that you have, all the ability and talent that any of us have will not create one iota of spiritual life in another person.

And unless you and I are absolutely dead to those things, and hear people talking about us and say, "Look, it's irrelevant; you're talking to the wind. Those things mean nothing, they achieve nothing." Unless we die to our soulish powers and to their ability to create anything of spirit in any other person, God cannot work through us. And loved ones, really that's true. That's why you can see talent is nothing in the kingdom of God. That's why when we get to heaven we'll probably find that more people have come into the kingdom through a little old woman who was a cripple and stayed at home and prayed Sunday after Sunday than all the great choirs and the great singers and the great preachers that ever lived. Because the power of the Holy Spirit is transmitted to other people through the resurrection life of Jesus in a person who has no power of their own.

And unless a person dies to all of that they will build nothing but wood, hay and stubble and that's of course what we'll see in these days. We'll see a lot of great works, great so-called spiritual works, and they'll boil way up in the air and then they'll just collapse completely because they've been built on wood, hay and stubble and not on the power of the Holy Spirit. They've been built really on soulishness, on the power of the soul rather than on the power of the Spirit coming through a person. And that's why, oh I'd just urge you to see that loved ones, unless we come into a real daily experience of the breaking of our soulish powers and bringing them under the control of the Spirit of Jesus we will manifest life in no one, in no one.

And I'd just ask you to examine your own life and just come before Jesus and say, "Lord, am I being used to beget children in your kingdom? Am I?" And I would ask you that in fact, have you brought a person or been used by God to bring a person into his kingdom? And if you're like I used to be, I used to answer that question, "Well, so and so, certainly they're serious about God and yeah, John is moving on; now he's stepped back a bit but he's certainly moved towards God." If you answer in that kind of uncertain way that I certainly used to answer in, it is possibly loved ones because you're still working with the powers of your soul and the Spirit, the pure Spirit of Jesus is not able to break through. And what we're going to talk about next day is the deliverance from those soulish powers. So maybe we should just spend a little time in prayer and ask the Holy Spirit to give us revelation. Let us pray.

Blessed Spirit, you alone can reveal to us where we stand in regard to these things. And oh Holy Spirit I know that I cannot. I know that you only can. And I would trust you to speak to me and speak to all of us here in this room, Holy Spirit if you see us engaged in soulishness, engaged in the exercise of our minds, and emotions, and our wills, still in the old taking in fashion, the old

parasitic fashion, trying to suck from the world the security, and significance, and happiness that we need. Lord, if you see that happening and we don't know about it, blessed Spirit will you reveal it to us.

If we find ourselves suddenly guiding a conversation towards something that we know a lot about, so that people will begin to look up to us, Holy Spirit will you convict us of our soulishness. Blessed Spirit, if we talk too much to cover up our own lack of knowledge or our own insecurity, or our own self consciousness, instead of being quiet before a loved one who asked us a question, will you convict us of our talkativeness and our soulishness. Holy Spirit, if we have a quiet unconscious pride in our own understanding of the gospel and if that is preventing any life of yours Lord Jesus getting through to those to whom we are witnessing, will you convict us of that.

And then dear Spirit, if we are a pain to those with whom we live, if we are anything but a joy and a comfort to them, will you convict us of our soulishness and bring us into a daily bearing of this dear cross until our soul powers come under the control of our spirits and in patience we at last possess our souls. We find our soul life by losing it and putting it under your control. Holy Spirit we would pray that you will reveal these things to us and make them real to us for apart from you they are only good ideas but with you they are revelation and salvation.

So Holy Spirit will you make us aware of these things especially during this coming week and prepare us for the next Sunday when you will reveal to us deliverance -- deliverance from the powers of our souls and deliverance into the power of the Spirit. I ask this in your name and for your glory, Lord Jesus. And 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 evermore. Amen.