

Deliverance from Passivity 2

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Loved ones, what I thought we might do this evening is that I would hope just to introduce the subject. And then we could have a few questions because we have been studying the whole question of the 'passive mind' for some weeks now. And even though I teach the homiletics class, this is not the way you should begin a sermon because I'm going to ask you to turn to [Asks the audience for help to know which chapter and verse in John] John 7:37. "On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, 'If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, "Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water."' Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

And we have received the Spirit, those of us who have believed in Jesus and have repented and given our lives to him. And you can see what the essential characteristic of our life is. It's not the presence of his Spirit within us. It's not that. But it's "out of our hearts shall flow rivers of living water." It's the flowing of God's Spirit. And if the Spirit is not flowing loved ones, then you may believe all the right things about Jesus, and you may have repented of your sins, and you may have given your life to Jesus, but there's a dryness, and a deadness in your own life. And it's because the Spirit has stopped flowing 'through' your life.

And so when we talk this evening just for the last time of the 'passive mind', really what we're talking about is the importance of the Spirit being able to flow right from inside your spirit, out through you, to achieve what he wants to achieve in the world. I don't know if you have ever suffered Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" ["The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire", a book of history written by the English historian Edward Gibbon, published in 1776], but one of the factors that caused the decline of the Roman Empire and its fall was, believe it or not, the very long supply lines that the Roman army got itself involved in from fighting campaigns far from Rome itself. And it became very, very difficult to keep those supply lines open; the army was fighting so far away. The same reason that we had our problems with the attempt to save the hostages in Iran [1979]. It is just very far away to be able to deliver all your equipment to the right place at the right time.

Now loved ones, that's what we're talking about when we're talking about the 'passive mind'. For Jesus' Spirit to come out from where he is inside you and to get to other people here in this world, he has to pass through a 'supply line' system. And part of that 'supply line' system is what the Bible calls your 'soul'. Or today in our terminology we call it the 'psychological part' of our personalities. And there is no way in which the Spirit of Jesus can come out from you and touch other people, or even touch your own body, but certainly touch other things in the world, unless the Spirit comes through your soul. And your soul consists, among other things, of your mind.

And there is exactly the problem in God's world today. Not that there are not a fair number of Christians; not that there aren't a great many people who are born of the Spirit; not even that there aren't a great many of us who want to share that with others, but that the supply system that runs through our minds is twisted, and in some cases has absolutely disintegrated. That's the importance of this subject of the 'passive mind'. If your mind has fallen into passivity then

Jesus' Spirit is not able to get through you to other people. He isn't loved ones.

God has designed that little dogs have bodies but have no spirits. And those little dogs in some way have something that looks even like souls, something like minds, something like feelings -- though you question if they're the same as our minds and feelings. But the thing that the little dog hasn't got is a spirit. Now, we are different from little dogs and animals, we have a body, and we have a soul, and we have a spirit. But, the only way to get that spirit to our bodies and out to the outside world is through our souls. In other words, your soul has to come into line with what God is doing in your spirit. Otherwise, your spirit will be repressed and the Holy Spirit himself will be grieved, and you yourself will begin to fall into deadness in your own relationship with God.

So that's it. It isn't just to have a good mind, but it's the fact that if your mind is not a good, effective, submissive servant to your spirit you will in fact lose all life that you have at this present time. And so that's why we talk about passivity of mind because many of us of course, have come under the old deception that the mind is alien to God and is hostile to him, and that if you ever use your intellect or ever use your mind, or your thoughts, you're doing something that will eventually drag you out of the faith. Now that is an absolute lie.

The 'mind of the flesh' is enmity against God. The mind that is governed by the body all the time; the body says, "Oh, I want more money, I want more money," and the poor little mind gets to work and tries to make money; that 'mind of the flesh' is enmity against God; a mind that is dominated by what the body wants. But the mind itself is good and is meant to be used by God's Spirit. But many of us have determined, "Oh, the mind is hostile to God," and so of course we have stopped using it. And that's why many children of God have allowed their minds to go passive.

I would just remind you -- if you'll be patient just for the sake of opening into the discussion afterwards -- I'd just remind you of some of the incredible signs of the 'passive mind'. Some of the signs that never -- none of us think are the signs of a 'passive mind'. A 'passive mind', as you remember, is not a blank mind. A blank mind is just a mind that you don't use. A 'passive mind' is a mind that is beginning to be used by evil spirits -- not possessed by evil spirits but beginning to be used by evil spirits, so that there is activity in the mind that comes from an outside source other than you. Because that's the mistake we make. We think, "Oh God will use our minds." No, he won't. It's us that have to use our minds. But many of us say, "Oh no, we hand it over to God." What we handed it over to is evil spirits.

If I could remind you, evil spirits are not always looking like that. [Holds his thumbs up to his ears and waves his palms and fingers -- audience laughs.] They aren't. They all haven't horns and tails. Evil spirits try all the time to appear to be the same as the natural processes of our own personality. And so many of us have let our minds be used by evil spirits.

Forgetfulness: And I won't drag these things out, but I'd just remind you of them again because so many of us have -- well, actually there are evil spirits that are interested in making us think that we do not have these signs in us. But many of us have good memories and suddenly like that! The memory utterly fails! Abrupt forgetfulness! Inability to remember things that really would be useful to remember from the point of view of ministering Jesus to others. Inability to remember things that would actually make our own lives go more efficiently and would make God's own body operate more efficiently. Just sheer forgetfulness!

We're up, ready to give a testimony, and what we were going to say disappears. That's not normal. That's not the normal action of the mind. You know how many of us have heard something good from some speaker, or read something good in a book. We're about to tell it to somebody, and it just goes. Forgetfulness! Loved ones, the Holy Spirit intends to use our mind consistently, and effectively, and efficiently. And it's not meant to be opposed by a bad memory.

Going to sleep at night: The mind is turning, turning, turning. Tumbling thoughts, tumbling after one another so you can't stop them, so that you can't get to sleep. And about two o'clock in the morning you're still not asleep, and you're churning over the things that you did during the day; or if you're not churning over those things, you're turning over the things you're going to do tomorrow. And two hours ago you decided, "This is stupid, I'm worrying about something that I should commit to God." And you're unable to commit it. It's as if somebody else is using your mind. It's as if some other power is keeping the thoughts turning.

Lack of concentration: God's work is hindered throughout the world because so many of his children are spinning their wheels. They're spinning their wheels. They have all kinds of experiences with God's Spirit, but they can't concentrate enough to get their life going in a settled pattern whereby God can achieve something through them, because they can't concentrate long enough to do that. They can't concentrate at bible studies. They can't concentrate at sermons. They can't concentrate when they have to plan what to do in their life. And so the result is their wheels are spinning most of the time. So forgetfulness!

Talkativeness: Many of us find our tongue is running away as if it's a record needle on a record [reference to vinyl records that can be damaged so that a groove is repeated over and over] that just goes round, and round, and round. And we really don't want to talk. And we don't really have that much to say but we get into a swing and we just babble, babble, babble like that, as if the mind is running on its own, and as if the tongue is just flapping on its own, and we can't control it. And it occurs not simply in long parades like that, but often we come to a point in the conversation and we've said what God gave us to say, but we babble on as if we can't control it. Now that comes from a mind that is not really under control.

And you know that it shows up terribly in – well, it's just downright gossip. It's just gossip. It's idle chatter. But, we like to say, "Oh no, we're just sharing a deep concern we have about some other brother or sister." But it is just gossip, and idle chatter straight from the pit. And really normally our conversation with one another should be on the same basis, you remember, as that famous White House saying, "On a 'need to know' only, basis." And really, that's the way we should relate to each other, on a need to know basis, that we don't tell anybody anything unless they need to know it, so that they can do something about it. But so often with minds that are passive, we cannot control what we talk about. And before we know it we're into idle chatter and gossip that has no value to it at all. And of course, that's the kind of thing that, as you and I know, cut apart Jesus' body.

Flashing pictures: Both at night -- when sometimes God can use dreams to bring truth home to you -- but there are dreams that are hideous. There are flashing pictures of things that you do not like at all, that you detest, that are grotesque, that even would frighten you. Or, flashing pictures during the day -- you're doing something and suddenly a picture flashes across your mind that you didn't create at all. And it's as if somebody else has inserted it into your mind. Now loved ones, those things are the signs of a passive mind.

Now what we've been sharing is that, the moment you decide to do something about that passive mind, you'll find that Satan and his powers oppose you. And they do it for a reason. If you'd like to look there's a verse in John 8:44. "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies." And so the first thing that happens when you try to get free of this passivity is that Satan lies to you.

And old Nee puts it this way, some of the lies that he tells, "Those sudden beautiful thoughts of yours are from God." And I think some of us get into that. We say, "Now wait a minute. I can see the bad thoughts are from Satan, but sudden thoughts that just flash into my mind, those are wonderful revelation from God." Loved ones, normally God does not work abruptly. Really, he doesn't.

And I could share with you from my pitiful experience as his servant that thoughts do not come like that. That's not the way I get sermons. You're not sitting there and suddenly it comes. It doesn't. You're worshipping God; you're thinking about the subject; you're talking it over with him; you're reading the Bible about it. And gradually the subject is laid open before you. So it's like going through a door, and then another door, and then another door. And no, it's not a surprise when you come to the door. You don't suddenly think, "Oh, what a thought. That's from God." No, it's a beautiful thing, like the Father taking your hand, and he says, "Oh, you see this?" But he's led you up to the point where seeing that is not a surprise.

So God's revelation does not come abruptly like that. But Satan, you see, uses that lie, "Those sudden beautiful thoughts of yours are from God. Those flashing revelations are the fruits of spirituality." Well, revelation doesn't come like that. Revelation is a gentle unfolding. God is so good; he does things so naturally.

"That bad memory is due to your ill health." Or we say, "Well we inherited our bad – my mother had a terrible memory." As if we could inherit a memory. But Satan will lie to us: "Ah, it's because of your parentage." Or, "It's because you didn't do memory courses when you were young." Or all kinds of reasons to get us to accept it, "It is natural for you to become abruptly forgetful. It is natural for you." So, Satan will say that, "It's natural for you to become abruptly forgetful. Other people, no. But you, yes."

"Your over sensitiveness is because of your temperament. Your over sensitiveness is because of your temperament." And some of us say, you see, "Yes, we're very sensitive, and that's why we're over sensitive about people. It's just our temperament."

"Your weak memory is inherited."

"Insomnia is an outgrowth of sickness," And Satan will say that. "Ah, it's because you're not well. That's why you can't sleep."

"You cannot think because you have worked too hard." I don't know – I remember my mother telling me, "Don't think too much, Ernest. You can't think too much." As if the mind kind of ran out of energy after a while. And a lot of us do that. We get home – you remember, that's how we get into daydreaming. That's how we end up watching one of the greatest servants that dear old Satan has, that thing – it can be God's servant, but too often that old 'tube' [television] is Satan's servant.

And we just say, "Oh, I'm too tired to do anything. Read? I couldn't read; my poor mind couldn't concentrate." And so we sit in the chair and we say, "Satan, just send it to me. I'm ready. Just send me any pictures on the tube you can give me." Or, "I'll just daydream. My poor mind is too tired. I'll just look out the window." And actually you see what we do, we get involved in TM. [Transcendental Meditation] We do. That's it.

You drift into transcendental meditation. You do. You begin to let your mind go passive, and the elemental spirits of the universe realize that, and they begin to move in. And you sink from the daydreaming into transcendental meditation and into contact with the elemental spirits of the universe. Truly! But we so often do that, we get home and we're too tired to think. And so we daydream and put ourselves under Satan.

"Impure thoughts arise from your sins." So that's what we say you see. "The impure thoughts that are flashing into our mind arise from my sins." No, your sins don't help, because they open the way for Satan. But the impure thoughts come from Satan using your mind.

"You cannot listen to others because of your particular environment and because of their faults." And so you find all kinds of reasons for keeping on talking instead of listening. Now loved ones, whatever the Holy Spirit -- and that's the important thing -- whatever the Holy Spirit brings home to your mind tonight as some sign of passivity, receive it. Don't let Satan argue you out of it.

Now what do you do about it? If you try just mind control, you'll never win. The reason is that the trouble is not just a mind that needs to be trained, and that's what some of us misunderstand. The problem is not just a mind that needs to be trained. The problem is a mind that is so passive that it is being controlled almost at will by evil spirits. The battle is a spiritual one. It is not just a business of mind control.

So some of you think, "Oh, well, just some of the techniques of remembering scripture," or, "Just some of the memory courses that you can do today. That will take care of it." It won't, loved ones. The more you try simply to do it with your own mind the more you'll sink under the control of the spirits.

The only place is to start at Calvary. Start at Calvary. And Calvary is the place where Satan cannot reach you. You remember that when the Israelites got over the Red Sea then Pharaoh could not touch them. Now, when you get over to the other side of Calvary, Satan cannot touch you on Calvary ground. And Calvary ground is death. And that's the only place where you can begin really. Only if you are prepared to "consider yourself dead indeed unto sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus" and are prepared to exercise faith in that position, only then can you begin to move forward against the spirits of error.

And loved ones, that's the start. You need to see that that mind of yours is polluted. Absolutely, irretrievably, irrevocably, incurably, polluted, twisted, and perverted. And the only thing to do with it is to destroy it. And that's what God did in Jesus on Calvary. Our old self with our old twisted mind was crucified with Christ. Stand on Romans 6:6, "Lord, that mind had some nice things that I liked about it, but it had a lot of wayward habits that I had no power to control. So Lord, thank you that this mind of mine, this mind that belonged to Steve, this mind that belonged to Ernest, this mind that belonged to Laurie, this mind that belonged to Al, this mind that belonged to Dave, to Tom, this mind was crucified with Christ."

Loved ones, that's the blessed place to start: To say, "Lord, this old mind, it's only good for the scrap heap. And I gladly give it to the scrap heap and thank you Lord. And now Father, I receive from you the mind of Christ, because we have, according to your word, the mind in us that is in Christ Jesus. And Lord I receive your mind. And Lord Jesus, I now ask you, through the Holy Spirit, to show me how it differs from that old mind that is now destroyed." That is the beginning.

And then loved ones, there are three types of ground that you need to retrieve. First of all, to begin renewing your mind: renewing your mind on the basis of Calvary. That's Ephesians, you remember, so maybe you'd look at it Ephesians 4:22, "Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life," in other words, you've been crucified, so now just put that off. If you weren't crucified you'd have to struggle with it and still fail, but now you've been crucified. So, you believe that. Now just act in the light of that, "Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds."

How? "Put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another." Start speaking truth; start being honest. "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger." Don't be resentful; don't hold resentment in. "Give no opportunity to the devil. Let the thief no longer steal." Don't be dishonest; don't take from others whether it's their reputation or whether it's their property. "But rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands." Work enthusiastically and energetically, "So that he may be able to give to those in need. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths." Stop talking in evil ways about people; stop speaking lies about other people; stop criticizing other people; start being sarcastic about other people. "But only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice."

So you see, don't be bitter. Stop filling your mind with bitter thoughts. Stop filling your mind with wrath and anger. Stop filling your mind with strife and clamor. Stop filling your mind with slander against other people, "With all malice, and be kind to one another." Fill your mind with tenderhearted thoughts and forgiving thoughts. Renew your mind; let your mind become like Jesus. That's the first step.

Loved ones, I think you have to be just hard on yourself. I think you shouldn't let one evil thought dwell in your mind when you become aware of it. That's what renewing your mind involves, not letting one evil thought dwell in your mind. And maybe I could say something to those of you who do come up against slander, or criticism, or that little kind of naïve gossip stuff. I think there's a time for just letting it be, but there is also a time for gently saying, "Well, that's not the best thing probably to talk about anyway, so maybe we should just talk about something good about that person." And actually it's worth doing that, do you know that? Do you know that every time you talk about a work of Satan your mind becomes dirtier, do you know that?

It's very interesting, after you've counseled for a little through the years, you get to the place where you don't want to hear any bad. You don't want to hear any bad. You just want to talk good things. You just want to think good things, because the more you see of the world, the more you see what a cesspool it is. And so you yearn for cleanness, and for good thoughts, and for pure thoughts. And loved ones, that's it! Renew your mind! Make your mind new by willing the thought

patterns in it!

And I would say this to you, if you let one critical thought dwell in your mind, you weaken your mind. You make it harder to face another temptation later on that day. You do. And if you let one critical thought dwell in your mind, you weaken and sicken your whole being from the point of view of resisting an attack from Satan later on in the week. So don't! Have clean minds! Renew your mind! Make it new and fresh.

Some of our minds are narrow. In Ireland we certainly have narrow minds -- not only about Protestant and Catholic relationships -- but we have narrow minds as far as thinking in a big way about life. Well, many children of God have narrow petty little minds. Renew your mind! Let it become as big as God's mind. Dwell in his word. See how big he is. See how big he thinks. Let the Holy Spirit reveal to you ways in which your mind needs to be expanded and enlarged. Renew your mind.

The second step in recovering ground that you've yielded to Satan -- because that's why your passive mind has fallen under his control -- is the denying of lies. The denying of lies. In other words, we're into passivity because of all kinds of lies that we have accepted from Satan, all kinds of lies that he has practiced upon us about Jesus, himself. "Jesus will use your mind; you don't need to use it." "You leave it in Jesus' hands, and he will use it." "Jesus will use your body; just leave it to him. You don't need to activate it; he will do it." "At work Jesus will do the thinking for you. That's what the victorious life is about. It's an effortless life where you just relax and let Jesus do things through you." All those are lies loved ones, but they are lies that have brought many of us into passivity.

"You have to talk about some things that are wrong in the operation. You have to; it's the only way to put it right." "You have to talk about some things that are wrong in a person's life; it's the only way to put it right."

Sometimes it is right for those in authority to speak to somebody about something in their life. Sometimes it's right for somebody in authority to speak about something that is wrong in a certain operation.

Usually for us who are simply part of the thing, it is always wrong for us to talk negatively, even about something that is wrong in someone or some organization. But Satan tells us, "No, sometimes it's right." Of course what happens is it becomes 'right' for us every day. And so we fill our thoughts and our conversation with the things that are wrong.

Discover the lies that Satan has brought you under. And the Holy Spirit will show you those lies. And that will be surprising at times. It will amaze you, the lies that you've lived under, and the bondage that you've come under, because of those lies.

I remember -- it's funny to think of it now -- but I remember in the early days in Fish, in our business, I remember one young person who was working in one of our new businesses. And our salaries weren't what they are today, and they certainly were not very great in those days. And after a while, I watched her for a long time, and she was kind of easy going about everything. And it's good to be kind of loose, hang loose and all that, but she was very, very easy going. I mean, half an hour late into work, and then kind of tickle the typewriter a little, and that kind of attitude.

And after three or four days I talked with her and I said, "Now, what -- you seem to be taking it a little easy, this business of coming on time for Jesus' work. And you don't seem to really work very hard according to the other guys that work with you." And eventually after a lot of conversation she said, "Well I mean, isn't that why we're not paid much? We're not paid much, and I like that because it means you don't have to work hard." Oh, I just -- I think I went home that day and prayed.

But that kind of lie: it's amazing how many of us have received that kind of lie about not only our own secular work but especially about God's work. It was a great lie that we had to defeat in Fish from the early days. The lie came because, you remember, so many of us were brought up to do a little something for God; go down and type a little for the minister after school is over and that sort of thing. Do a little for God. But we never thought of it as kind of a full time energetic occupation. And so many of us carried into the Christian businesses the kind of attitude, "Well, that's the good thing about being in Christian business; you don't really work as hard as any other business. You do a lot of praying, and praising God. And you can kind of come late; and sure we don't get much money, but that's what Christian's are like. They're kind of poverty stricken creatures that live on a low level."

And loved ones, it's amazing, how many lies like that that we have accepted into our hearts about our ministry for Jesus, and the work we do for him. So ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you have yielded to lies that Satan has passed onto you. And if you have seen any lies in recent days, it would be good at times to share them in testimony, either even this evening or in 'open mike' sessions, because God can often use that to bring it home to someone else: lies that we've accepted. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you ground that you've yielded to Satan in that way.

And then simply, passivity of mind. And the only way to work against passivity is to think, to begin to use your mind. I would urge those of you especially, who have now graduated from college, I would urge you to seriously consider always being involved in some kind of course or class that will enable you to keep your mind active and exercised. I think that's one of the great values of the Christian Corps training school that we have here. I think it enables those of us who have left college, or maybe those who have never been to college to come to a class on Mark, or on 1 Corinthians, or on theology, or on apologetics, or on how to witness. And you can be involved in an active application of your mind to the thing in life that you consider the most important.

And I would urge you to do it loved ones. Especially, if you're going home at night and you're just sitting down, flicking the TV on, or you're just sitting down and kind of moving vaguely through some fiction every night; do something with your mind. Ladies, I would even say that it is tricky the old -- I don't know what you do. I think needle point you can do and that sort of stuff. But it's tricky with that. It's easy to get into a manual occupation -- I suppose even us guys among us who love woodwork and that kind of thing, it's important for us to see even -- I know that I can often be hammering the old nail in, and the mind could be passive if it chose to be because, the manual action is such an automatic thing.

So I would urge you to watch even when you say, "Well, I don't go home and watch TV, and I don't go home and daydream, I'm always doing something." Well yes, but be careful that whatever you're doing does require some thought, or some activating of your mind because it is amazing how many manual practices we involve ourselves in that actually enable us to daydream while we're doing them. So I would urge you, take back the ground that you have yielded to Satan in passivity of mind, through

not activating your mind.

Could I say this? If you're sitting there and Satan has planted this lie upon you, then reject it. And the lie is this, "You're stupid. You're stupid. You're not very bright. You just made it through high school; and you haven't the greatest mind in the world; and all those geniuses at those classes, they'll just show you up; and you hate that old 'grade business' anyway." There is no 'grade business' to hate, but Satan tries everything on you. "But you just wouldn't be any good at it." Can I say this to you? If you had the intellect to get here tonight, that is, if you have any thing around average intellect, you can do with your mind any of the things that we will probably have to do.

Now admittedly, we may have trouble with the 'theory of relativity' but we don't have to work that one out. Einstein has already done it. So, the things that we have to do together to energize our minds, are things that any of us could do. Really loved ones! So just reject that lie that Satan would plant on you that you're stupid, or you're not up to it, or you never were any good at book stuff. Don't, don't take that at all. Energize and activate your mind.

If you do nothing else, at least get a Bible study course. Do you realize how many of us could be experiencing a renewal and a redemption of our minds in Bible study? And actually for us, it's just another version of transcendental meditation. Did you know that? And I can tell you because so many of you have said to me over the years, "What do I do for Bible study?" "Oh well, I'm reading through the gospel of Mark at the moment." I know what you mean when you say that. I don't even need to embarrass you by speaking any further, because, what most of us mean is, "Well, some days, if we remember, we read a chapter. That is, if we have time that day and we've got up early. But other days, we might forget."

But it's interesting; do you realize you can miss for five days and Satan persuades you, you have just missed it one day? Do you know that? You can miss it for a whole five days, and you're absolutely convinced you've only missed it one day. I'll tell you how to do it, put the date on each piece that you read. And it will amaze you how the date has missed four or five numbers, and you think you've just missed one day.

But many of us say, "Oh yes, I'm reading through Mark," and we mean, "Well, we do a chapter an odd day, most days we do maybe a couple of verses."

And then, "Well how do you do it?"

"Oh you see, well I just read it, you know. I maybe read the story of the Good Samaritan and I just pray, just pray about it."

And you've achieved nothing. Do you see that? Your mind has not been engaged with wrestling with God's word at all. All you've done is read a chapter. And then you may as well not have read it. In fact, some of us have real trouble remembering the chapter that we read half way through the prayer time, because, you haven't actually engaged in any kind of study of that passage. And so don't do Bible study that way. That leads into transcendental meditation. That leads into the thing: you read the story of Jesus blessing the children, and then you go into a kind of bright blue moonlight, twilight area where you imagine Jesus blessing the children, and how nice it was, and how beautiful... And then, "I think I'll pray for my mother, and I think I'll pray..."

That's for the birds! It's just transcendental meditation! And that actually increases passivity of mind, it doesn't decrease it.

So loved ones, if you're doing Bible study, get some book like "Search the Scriptures" that has questions in it. Questions! And have a notebook. And write down the answers in the notebook. And engage your mind with God's mind. That's what is involved in Bible study, engaging your mind with God's mind, dealing with questions about that word that force you to get underneath the level of the text itself. So, if you do Bible study, do it with a study book of some kind that provokes you and stimulates you to use your mind.

Really, the best is to begin to follow some class or some course. Now, I would urge you to do it, whether you think you're called to go abroad or not. I would invite you to come to the Christian Corps training school here and do some of the courses that are offered in the evenings. There are many offered during the day, but there are always maybe five, six, seven, or eight classes every evening. And begin to engage your mind in God's affairs.

Okay, any questions? So you take Calvary ground in faith and belief because only Calvary will deal with Satan. And it's only the Holy Spirit that will be able to lead you in this. And then you ask the Holy Spirit, "Holy Spirit, show me. Show me either lies that I need to start denying. Show me places that I need to activate my mind where it's been passive. Or reveal to me where I need to renew my mind." You see, where the Holy Spirit shows you the thing, all the responses are yours. You have to respond. You have to exercise your will.

Question from Audience:

All the places in scripture where it says, "Meditate on the scriptures, what do you think it means, meditate?"

Response from Pastor O'Neill:

Good. I always understood, Tracey, that meditation was thinking about say, "Bless the Lord, oh my soul and forget not all his benefits." And then it was not only blessing the Lord, letting my spirit rise to him -- because I think that's adoration and praise --but meditation was putting my mind upon that phrase and beginning to see all of the many facets of that phrase. And so what I did with that, "And forget not all his benefits," I would see, "Forget not all his benefits." Well then Lord, I won't forget them. And here are the benefits that you've given to me," and I would go through the benefits.

Or, "Who healeth all thy diseases," and I would see, "Lord, that's all the diseases. That's everything that prevents me from being wholly yours." I would meditate like that. I would think through all the various facets of that piece of scripture and all it's applications to me -- as opposed probably to taking it apart theologically and analyzing what the doctrine was in this. Rather thinking what its application to my own life was. I felt that was meditating.

Question from Audience:

What about reading books on prayer?

Response from Pastor O'Neill:

Loved ones, if you read Madame Guyon, or you read Saint Theresa, or even you read certain parts of Fenelon, Christian Perfection, although that is, I think, a safer book -- but if you read Theresa's life where she deals with the various levels of prayer or you read Madame Guyon, or you read Saint John of The Cross, realize that you're going into deep areas as you begin to read those dear men. And you need to be guided by the Holy Spirit when you should read what, Mark. The truth is that there are various levels of prayer. And there is the prayer of contemplation which is higher than meditation. And then there is the prayer of faith. And then it comes into a place where there is absolute quietness and peace.

But if you'll notice in Theresa's book she says, "The Holy Spirit lifts you. He brings you into those." And if you try to engage on the prayer of quiet before you are ready for it, you'll sink into transcendental meditation. That's roughly the answer, Mark. The key is to be drinking milk when you need to drink it and eating meat when you're able to eat it. And I found that the dear Holy Spirit will guide you if you'll trust him as your guide and not just jump into things.

Question from Audience inaudible:

It seems to me Mark, it's the same as -- I always get into trouble when I go with American sports, I can do better with soccer. But it seems to me -- I'll go with soccer, I'm happy with that. But it seems to me with soccer, a fellow like Stanley Matthews, who was an excellent right winger in England some years ago, you get to the point where ball control is just natural. It just comes naturally. No longer is it a problem for him where exactly the ball is, or whether he's dealing with it on the outside of his foot or the instep. He knows exactly where it is. And he can concentrate on the moves on where he's going to in the field.

So, it seems to me it's the same in this business of prayer. It comes to the place where you've worked through the business of a mind that is active and wholly engaged with God. And the mind itself then is in good shape and almost does automatically what it is meant to do. It seems to me that's how you come into this.

I would say for us a safe guideline is "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind." Love God with everything you've got. Praise him with everything you've got. Let him decide when you can 'free wheel' over certain things. But until then, love him with everything you've got. I remember Fletcher, [John Fletcher, vicar of Madeley] the old saint being asked, "Well, how do you come into the fullness of the Spirit? Is it mainly God's work or is it mainly man's work?" And he said, "Both. Both. You do everything you can as a man and you trust God to do everything he can." And that seems to be right. It seems you're always in danger where you're kind of lying back, letting God do it. God has given us wills and they're meant to be activated cooperatively with him. So it is an active thing loved ones: worship. It really is.

If I could just share one lie that I see very plainly offered by Satan to any of you who want to be used by God. And that is that you get in your life with God to the point where a daily quiet time is not needed. And I think that you've only to look at the lives of the men and the women of God through the years to see that the daily quiet time was a more and more important part of their life. And so be wise about that one loved ones. Where you come to the place where you're saying, "Well yeah, I'm not under that kind of legalism now. I don't have to get down, you remember, and pray every day, and read the Bible and all that stuff. No, no, I'm really -- I'm in a place with God now

that I'm in continual communion with him."

Well yes, that's good that you are, as long as you have an altar place where he knows he can have your undivided attention at the beginning of every day. But that's a lie that I think some of us accept, "Now, we're baptized with the Spirit, we have no longer any need to be absolutely precise and faithful about our daily quiet time." Well, you'll find that the apparent peace that is coming into your life since you gave up your quiet time is not the peace of God. It's the peace of death. And it's the peace of passivity, and the peace of "lukewarm-ness". So be wise about it.

Well next Sunday I hope to talk a wee bit about some laws of the mind that will help us know how to operate. Let us pray.

Dear Father, we thank you that do not leave us in our sickness, or in our sleep. But you, through your word and through each other, constantly stir us up and show us what life is meant to be. And Lord, we would engage our hearts to the Lord, and we would engage our minds in loving you, and worshipping you, and serving you.

And oh Lord Jesus, we thank you that you took that old mind of ours and you destroyed it on Calvary. And we thank you that you have a clean, sharp, alive, perfect mind and that now that we are in you we have that mind. And that mind is within us. And it's there for us to use as use it. And oh Lord, we thank you for that.

And we ask you now Holy Spirit, to reveal to us any ground that we have yielded to Satan. Any ground that has allowed our minds to become passive either in lies that we have accepted, or in a mind that has become polluted, and unrenewed, and old, and stale, or in a mind that has become passive. Lord, we trust you through the Holy Spirit to reveal those things to us that we may take back what is rightfully ours, because in Christ we have everything and we thank you for that.

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 ever more. Amen.

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