

The Submissive Will

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I think it's very easy for us almost to get professional in our attitudes to each other. And I don't know if you have thought of that. But I think it's possible for us to think, "Well, the Bethel [Bethel College in St. Paul, MN] students have to get back to the dorms. The U [University of Minnesota] students have to get ready for Monday morning. The Fish [Fish Enterprises, the businesses that were part of Campus Church in Minneapolis, MN] people have to get to bed to get up early to run the restaurants and the rest of us have 'miles to go before we sleep'." And so it's very easy I think, in a body like ours, to have all kinds of great reasons for not really spending time with each other. And yet love means spending time with each other. It just does.

And you wives are very good, or you ladies -- maybe all of you, wives or not, are good at keeping us men realistic in our love. And we're great guys at saying, "Oh I love you." And you're great girls at saying, "Well show it." Because, showing it means you care for us in some practical way. At least you're home in time to have supper at night, and at least you have time to talk with us a little in the morning before you whip off to work." And so love is very practical in that way.

And I do think that what God is anxious for us to come into is a very practical thoughtfulness for each other. And I think another difficulty that we fight is our particular generation. I don't know how you have analyzed the whole business of the 60s, and the 70s. [These talks were given in the 1980's.] But it does seem to me that we did face a lot of alienation and hostility, and feeling that we weren't close to anybody. And then in the whole 'hippy movement' and even in the 'Jesus movement', we had a kind of moving together in a 'show' of love, but just how realistic it was, I'm not too sure.

And so in a way you can almost think that we're a generation that has missed learning how to love each other. And so we have forgotten what maybe our mums and our dads learned in ordinary churches, that if you really love a person, and you see a person isn't there next Sunday, when they come back the next Sunday, you ask them where they were. And you tell them you missed them. Marty was saying about the nursery school kids, they're just so open. I mean, one little guy was away for one day and all the others said, "Boy, we were so lonesome without you. Are we glad you're back!"

And it seems that that's the kind of love, and care, and thoughtfulness that Jesus wants us to share with one another. And I do agree with you that we have often kind of 'played it cool'. And we don't want anyone to feel they're pushed or pressured; and we don't want to force anybody to come to church. And I suppose that's good. But I think there does come a time when loved ones do appreciate if they were missed; or they do appreciate if somebody asks where they were; or they do appreciate if somebody phones them up and says, "I missed you." And so those are very practical ways loved ones, in which we can love each other.

Somebody else said to me last week, "It's interesting how easy you can get into running your life according to what is convenient for you yourself to do." So, after the benediction this evening, "Well, I don't feel like talking to anybody. So I'll go home." And so often of course, we can choose to do that, because we have lots of other people to talk to tomorrow. In fact, maybe we have too many people to talk to. But, there is some other 'little one' here this evening who actually

doesn't have another chance to talk to any of us, because they aren't here through the week. And they aren't actually here until next Sunday again. But we have kind of just decided, "Well, I don't feel like talking to anybody tonight."

And so it is possible to kill the whole expression of love to other people in your own heart by getting used to running your life according to what just suits you, and according to the way you feel.

And I could share with you a little about us miserable ministers. I was trained as a Methodist minister and trained in seminary. And of course we were so glad, especially, in the country churches that we served, to see 'anybody' at church that we were delighted to spend all night if necessary with them. And one of the things that was dinned into us, just by example, and by training, and by our own realization that that is what was needed, was that you were prepared to be the last one out of the door after service. You were prepared to be the very last one out of the door.

And we usually felt that because we felt, "Well, we're the guys who know what's going on. And obviously, somebody who doesn't know very much what's going on is going to feel kind of strange if they're the last one out of the door. And really, they'll feel more like staying around if I myself am around." And I think that applies to those of us who have been here for years. Not only people in Fish, not only the elders, though it does, I think, apply to all of them, but those of us who have been around for years.

Okay, you might have your life pretty nicely organized. And you might just have had enough love today to do you for another few days. And you might know that your family group meets on Tuesday anyway, so you'll see them all again. But, do you realize there are some of us here this evening, and we won't see any of you again? And actually we don't -- we can't stay around very comfortably without being embarrassed, because we don't actually know anybody. And it's kind of hard -- us guys, we try our hand in that pocket and then in that pocket. And I don't know what you ladies do, but we do all kinds of things to try and look as though we're comfortable. But we're miserably uncomfortable, and we just wish somebody would come over and ask us something -- anything, "What color was your hair?" or anything.

So I think a lot of us -- a lot of us would, boy, just probably appreciate ordinary friendship. And I think that's what real love is. I think it's just friendship. I think it's just trying to think what is the other person thinking? That's what I do. If one of you comes up here, I just think, "Boy, what would I feel like if I had come up here?" And I immediately think, "Oh, now who are you and what do you do?" And I start asking questions. I suppose it drives you crazy. But it's natural to me to want to know where do you work, or where do you live? And a lot of us are very happy if somebody shows some interest in what we are as people.

And loved ones, I would encourage you to do it, really. I would encourage you to -- oh, just love each other and be kindly affectioned towards one another. And oh, I shared I think this past week, the fact that it's very easy, I think, for you to see this happy old smiling Irishman here. And he seems a loving kind of guy, and you get the idea, "Boy, well, this seems like a nice kind of church." And then it's miserable, if you find, "Yes, but nobody else is like that. He's like that. But nobody else speaks to me." And I think that comes as just cold water on a loved one who feels, "Boy, this just does seem like a neat church."

And I think it depends a great deal, loved ones, on what way we behave and what our attitude is to people ourselves. And maybe I could encourage you to be what we ministers that were trained -- even in those main line churches. I was brought up in a liberal seminary. We were taught to tear the Bible apart, but we were brought up to really put other people first. And in the church we felt, the other person comes first. In fact, a lot of us got in trouble with our wives because they were put last, too then. The family was always put last, and everybody else was first. It was Jesus first, and then everybody else next, and yourself and your concerns well down the line.

And in a way it isn't a bad pattern. And I would ask you just to consider yourself, when the benediction is pronounced this evening, what is your immediate response? Is it kind of a feeling, "Well, I have to get home to get up for work tomorrow?" Is it, "Well, I have to see so-and-so about this?" Or, is it really, "Lord Jesus, here I am available for you? And there's some loved one here tonight that I can share you with. And I can share some of your interests, and some of your love with them. And I can ask somebody here tonight whether they would like to come to something with me through the week." And it just seems to me that that is what Jesus wants.

Now, the other attitude of course is the attitude that we developed ourselves. We have developed pretty naturally a very self-centered life and that's what we've been talking about. And that self-centered life does result in our whole soul being almost programmed. That's why -- I don't really blame you actually for thinking the way many of us do, because it just comes naturally. Really, when you think of yourself as the center of the universe; and you think of only what concerns you; and whether things make you happy or not; or whether things are convenient for you; actually your whole mind and your emotions take on that bent. And they just operate that way naturally, so that you don't even think of it. You don't even think it's happening.

And that's of course, the way all of us developed away at the -- right from the beginning of the world. And the amazing thing that we have shared is of course, that God foresaw that that would happen. That God in his great wisdom foresaw that we would love ourselves before everybody else and we would want what was comfortable for ourselves, not only in front of everybody else, but in spite of everybody else. And he foresaw that we would develop personalities that would become so blind, and so dead to him, and so dead to other people that they would be incapable of expressing love or concern to others at all. And you know that we have shared before that he then, when he foresaw that -- in fact, I've tried to outline it at times with the old time line. [Pastor begins to draw a line from the left of the display.] If you think that the Father conceived of the creation of the world there. [Pastor makes a mark on his line.] And then he conceived what would happen to us men and women if he gave us free will to do whatever we wanted in the world. Then he realized after conceiving the creation, he realized that we would turn independent of him, and turn selfish, and in on ourselves. And then, at that moment, he conceived of the great need for a transformation of those miserable personalities of ours. And so he conceived of the Lamb, you remember, that "was slain from before the foundation of the world." [Pastor draws a cross on his line.] And he conceived of all that before he actually created the world there at that point. [Pastor makes another mark on the line further to the right than the cross.]

And we've shared that in connection with that dear verse you remember, in Revelation, if you'd like to look at it. And it's Revelation 13:8, "And all who dwell on earth will worship it," that is the beast and the antichrist, "Every one whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain." And of course the Greek is actually, "Every one whose name has not been written in the book of the Lamb that was slain from before the foundation of the world." Because there [Pastor points at the cross on which is before creation] is

where that mighty act took place, where God foresaw what would happen and he destroyed us all in his Son and remade us.

And then here's the interesting thing loved ones, there runs right through time, [Pastor draws an arc from the cross all the way to the end] there runs that 'risen life' that is the true life of each one of us. And here along on this line, [Below that arc Pastor writes "Fallen Life"] is the fallen life that we were born into when we were born out of our mother's wombs. And actually, this is the unreal life, [Indicates that "Fallen Life"] it's the life that has been condemned to death by God. And the only real life of yours -- whether you're living it or not -- the only real life of yours that exists, is the one that God raised in his Son, where he transformed your whole personality. And that life is running right alongside yours. And that life is available to you at this very moment.

You have a personality that John described, a personality that maybe loses its temper, or gets angry, or a personality that is filled with selfishness. That personality has been crucified with Christ. And the only one that really exists is this one [Indicates the arc over the "Fallen Life" line]. And you can tap into that, any moment at all, that you are willing to accept what God has done to you in Jesus. And the moment you are, the moment you are willing to cross that old self life, that moment all the benefits of that risen life begin to come down to you.

Now that's what happened you remember, when they walked around the walls of Jericho. They walked around the walls of Jericho, and the walls of Jericho fell down, because they were always down -- because they had been brought down in the Lamb that was slain from before the foundation of the world. And when they walked around it, it was actualized here in time and space. It's the same with you. You have a perfect personality that is filled with God's love, and is able to live for other people. And the moment you believe that, and accept that in your own life, that moment that life is manifested in you.

That's where you get your good aspirations at times. Do you know that? That's why you have good aspirations at times. That's why you sense at times, "Yeah, that's the way I should be." That's why at times you find some good thoughts shooting up inside you, even when you're not a Christian. You find some good yearnings. It's Christ in you trying to break through and say, "This is what I have made you. I've made you to live this way." And if you would for one moment give way to that, and let that take you, you would begin to rise into that life.

But loved ones, that's the kind of situation we're in. And Jesus, you remember, was pointing to this truth when he said something in Luke 22:67. Maybe you'd look at it. And the chief priest and scribes were speaking to him, "And they led him away to their council, and they said, 'If you are the Christ, tell us.' But he said to them, 'If I tell you, you will not believe.'" And Jesus was pointing to the fact that people don't fail to believe in him, or fail to believe that they were crucified with him, because they haven't heard about it. They don't fail to believe in him because they aren't sure of the facts. He was pointing out that, "Even if I tell you I am the Christ, you will not believe, because actually you don't want to live this way. You want to live your own way."

And that's where loved ones, the element of will or volition comes into your experiencing the risen life of Jesus inside you. It is important to believe that you were crucified in Christ and that you've been raised with him. But it's vital to be willing for that to be made real in your own life. And if you aren't willing, then you're in the position of the chief priests and scribes. You believe it in your head, but you 'will' not believe it in your heart. And therefore, of course, the

walls of Jericho don't fall in your life. Therefore, you are not able to strike a rock and see water come forth.

And that's why it's quite important this evening after the benediction, it's quite important to decide, "Am I my own little person here who have the right to choose what I want to do after this service? Am I my own little person who can make for the girl I'm interested in, or the guy that I'm interested in, or can go home, because I have something to do there? Or, am I crucified with my Savior? And is my Savior living in me? And has he the freedom to do what he would want to do this evening? And am I really willing? Lord Jesus, am I really willing to be laid out for you tonight? Am I really willing to lay myself out and be available for you to use me tonight?"

And that's what's crucial loved ones. And that's why -- do you see -- we choke Jesus to death? That's how we choke him to death. It isn't actually that we don't believe in him. It isn't even that we commit massive sins. It's just that repeatedly, wearily, grindingly, persistently, he says, "I'd like to do this," and you say, "Dah, stay dead! I want to live! You decrease! I want to increase!" And that's what happens.

And that's why you might wonder why your life doesn't open out and flower, and blossom, and multiply. Do you know that wherever Jesus comes, he gathers a circle of loving enthusiastic friends? So every one in whom Jesus has his way in their lives -- everyone like that gathers a circle of enthusiastic friends. That's right. Now that's true.

Now don't you come with the business, "Oh, if you have an extrovert personality that's maybe true." No! I have told you often of my dear friend -- Leslie, his name was. He was in the same class as me at grade school. Leslie was one of triplets, except that I really think today, we would probably call him retarded. And he worked in the Belfast Telegraph which is the newspaper in Belfast. And Leslie's job was: The newspapers came off there and he lifted them and put them there. [Pastor demonstrates with both hands lifting something from his right and placing it down on his left.] And that's what he did. That's what he's doing today, I know. That's what he does.

And Leslie was very slow of speech, and not at all a kind of enjoyable guy to be with from that angle. And yet he came to Jesus and he has a vast circle of enthusiastic, interested friends, because Jesus in him is always going out. When my dad died, the door knocked; Leslie was there with a little piece of scripture to give me. He was the first one there at the door. That's what Jesus does in a person's life when you lay yourself out for him and say, "Lord, it is no longer I that am alive. I've been crucified with you. That is dead and gone Lord. All the kind of social life that I hoped for, or thought would be good when I was born, that's finished. Lord Jesus, here: it's your life. Let's go. What do you want to do tonight?"

And immediately loved ones, you begin to submit your will to the truth that you know is real: that you were wiped out in Christ 1900 years ago -- indeed, before that, from before the foundation of the world and that your life is his alone. The moment you believe that, the moment the flood and the fruitfulness of his life begins to pour through you. And that's what a submissive will is. A submissive will isn't all this business of, "Oh, I have to grind it down to the 10 commandments; and I have to pray every day; and I have to read the Bible every day; and then I have a thousand other things to remember to do." It isn't that. It's lovingly submitting your will to the movements that Jesus himself is beginning in your own heart.

It's interesting, God isn't so concerned with what you do as with who started it. That's it. God

isn't so concerned with what you do as to who started it. Did you start it or did he start it? And the truth is that all of us here are in Christ. And Christ is in seed form, at least, in each one of us. And he's making all kinds of little wriggings inside us, almost like a baby does in its mum's womb -- all kinds of wriggings and little initiatives. And if we'll go with him, we'll begin to move into resurrection life.

That's, you remember, why Jesus laid such emphasis on the whole business of putting yourself last and him first. And you might want to look at it. Matthew 16:24 is one of those spots. "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 that's why Jesus said that. He was pointing out that, unless you denied what self wanted, you couldn't follow him. And every time you do deny what self wants, he springs out from you.

Now I think a lot of us feel, "Oh well yeah, but boy that's a pretty -- I mean, like old Thomas A. Kempis, or a monk, or some kind of saintly person who has no friends and just serves the Lord all day." But loved ones, look! Look at the life we create with our own self-love. Think of it just for a minute. Think of the friends that we try to gather around us. And we try to get them to like us; and we try to nourish them; and we try to nurture them; and we try and encourage them to be our friends. And it, so often, is just a miserable failure, isn't it? They never seem to be able to rise to what we expect of them.

And the self-love that we try to produce in other people never seems to give us the great pleasure that we think we'll have. And the amazing thing is, when you go the other way; and you forget yourself; and you just think of the other person all the time; and you think of what Jesus wants to do, it's incredible. You get back far more than you've given. And that's why Jesus said that. "If you deny yourself and put yourself last," he said, "You'll find that my love will bring forth all kinds of new friends that you could not create yourself." And so God is always trying to draw us into more, and more of a will that submits to the fact that we were crucified with Christ.

And loved ones, that's the key to it all. And oh, a lot of us think, "It's great feelings, in Christianity, that means you're being used by God." And so we search for great feelings. Or, some of us think it's deep knowledge. And so we search for deep knowledge. It's none of those things. It's cold bloodedly submitting your will to the promptings that Jesus puts within you, as you believe firmly that you were wiped out with him on Calvary, and you've been raised with him to the right hand of God. And now you don't need anything else, because everything is available to you there. And you're at his disposal on this earth. And as you operate in that way, on that belief, and submit your will to that truth, so God begins to pour through you.

Now I think what happens to many of us is we just are very, very willful. And many of us initiate all kinds of things because we 'feel' like doing it. And we like to pretend that it's for God's glory, but it's something that 'we' want to do ourselves. And so God often has to work with us. And you remember, he talks about that in Hebrews 12. And it's really good to look at it, because you've perhaps had some of the experience yourself and wondered why they came about. Hebrews 12:5, "And have you forgotten the exhortation which addresses you as sons?—'My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him. For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.' It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers to discipline us and we respected them.

Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time at their pleasure, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

And so, you, I think, are like me. You have come into different experiences that aren't too pleasant. And some things don't turn out the way you hoped they would. And it seems that that is the dear Father gently telling you, “Look, I want you going around striking a lot of rocks and getting water out of them. I want to pour a lot of my power through you, but I have to get you to the point where you'll at least do what I tell you. And when I tell you to strike a rock, you'll strike a rock; or when I tell you to lay hands on a leper you'll hands on a leper. And so I'm sorry, but I have to bring you to heel. I have to begin to get you to see that the most precious thing to me is the submission of your will to my will, that you've been for too long, people that have done what was right in your own eyes -- done whatever you wanted. And now I want to bring you to the point where my will is your 'meat and drink', the way it was my Son's 'meat and drink'. So, I want you to see what I'm teaching you in this situation.”

Loved ones, I think we should look at some of the things that happen that way. I don't think we should look at everything as brought by Satan. I think that God lovingly allows some things to come down on top of our heads to point out to us, “Now, listen we're walking in more difficult ways and deeper ways now. And I want you to do 'exactly' as I tell you. Not whenever you want to, not more or less, I want you to do it exactly.” Now you all will know what God is dealing with you on. I don't. But I do know that he does deal with us in that way in regard to discipline.

I think another thing he gradually moves on is, many of us do what he tells us, but we don't like it. And so God works on us continually, because he doesn't want unwilling servants. He doesn't want rebellious slaves. He wants friends. And so often, as you begin to bring your will under God's dear will for you, you'll begin to find him working even on your heart; so that you begin to eventually like what he wants for you.

I don't know if you get up at four o'clock in the morning, that very, very desolate time, it always seems to me, of the morning, when everything is dark; nobody is up in the house; and nobody seems to be up outside. And it's kind of a time of no life at all. There's nothing there. That's a good time to seek God, because I think the Father is all the time involved in trying to show us, “You know there is nothing apart from me. There's only blackness and darkness apart from me. You can light up your little lights; you can marry your wives, and marry your husbands; you can have your children and you can have your friends, but really there's nothing! There's nothing! They all have their light from me, and really I am the only life.”

And I think loved ones, God is trying all the time to draw us into that place, where we at last see him as God, and as the most precious one. And that's so good, because then you begin to love husband and wife as you should. Then you begin to love friends as you should, when you at last have your dear God in the primary place in your life, and where his will is above everything else.

If you say, “Oh well, should submitting your will to God be a hard thing?” Not a hard thing, but you should be afraid to hurt him. Yeah! You should not be afraid of him, but I think it is good to see we should be afraid to hurt him. We should love our God. We should see him as the dearest, kindest person in the whole world, as the one to whom we owe everything. And we should be afraid to hurt him or offend him. And we should be 'hanging' on his every will for our lives.

And if you say to me, "Is it a slavish thing?" I don't think it's a slavish thing. If a dear God dies for you, and gives everything for you, and goes through all the agony of remaking you again so that you can live in heaven with him and his son, it seems to me we owe him everything we can in the way of the submission of our will. And really, the submission of the will is the whole purpose loved ones. The reason God gives us the life of his Son is so that we will come into oneness with his own will, because that is the only safe place for us; it's the only prosperous place for us; and of course it's the only place where he can bring about his will through our lives.

Any questions? I do that because I'm trying to encourage you to think.

A submissive will is a submissive will to our dear Savior. If you're back in the other agony of submitting your will to the God of Jacob, the 'God of wrath' and all that, then that's not what I'm talking about at all. What God wants is the loving response to his Son who has died for us. It's submitting your will to a dear friend. That's it, because the beautiful thing is he has a personal will for each one of us. See, that's what's so good.

I used to think that song was heretical, the "walk in the garden alone" and "he speaks to me things that no one else has ever known." And I used to think, "Oh, that's very egotistical." But actually yes, Jesus says things to you that he doesn't say to me. He says things to you that he's said to nobody else in the world. And that's amazing. And he gives you directions that he gives to nobody else. And that's so good. He's your personal dear Savior.

Question from audience:

First you said when God can see Christ's death before the foundation of the world. And then you said when he was crucified before the foundation of the world. I just was confused because we know he was crucified in history.

Response from Pastor O'Neill:

Ted is asking about the whole concept of Jesus being slain from before the foundation of the world. And I think he is maybe drawing out the idea, "Well can you say perhaps that God certainly conceived of his Son having to be crucified, but then perhaps he was not actually crucified?"

All I would say is -- from what we puny human beings can see of the infinite mind -- it would seem to me that for God to think a thing: it's done! The moment he thinks it, that moment it's done! It's almost the moment he thinks of the world it's done. Now, he may express it to us in time-space over a period of time. But it seems to me Ted -- I mean, I'm sure we're treading on holy and dangerous ground when we try to talk about the way God himself thinks -- but it would seem to me that God conceived everything in one moment. And to that extent it was done. It was done in his heart then.

Someone has said that if you cut a tree at any point you can count the rings in it and, of course, establish the age of the tree. And you can cut it at any point, you can cut it near the top, near the roots, but the rings are still there. God's heart was cut 29 AD. But cut it anywhere, cut it from before the foundation of the world and the dear heart was still bleeding. So that's it.

Question from audience:

When we're talking about obedience and aligning our will with God's, which comes first or which looms up the largest: agreeing with God that it's important that we align our wills with him, or becoming aware of one little thing that God want, and grabbing a hold of that, even though maybe we're not sure we're able to say, "Alright Lord, here's everything. I'll go where ever you send me."

Response from Pastor O'Neill:

He says, you know, which comes first: the big agreement that we ought to align our wills with God? Or maybe you would say, the acknowledging that God is God and we ought to obey him. Or does it happen that God gives us a definite command in some little area, and we may not have faced the big issue that he is God, but we do obey him in the little area? It does seem to me that most of us probably were first convicted of sin by the realization that some power wanted us to do some particular thing that we were unwilling to do. And so it does seem that God often at least begins his dealing with us on a particular command that he gives us.

And I could testify that I think I dealt for years on separate particular issues, before I really saw that the problem was that I was still 'God of my own life' inside, and I appeared to be obeying God, but all I was doing was obeying him – well, like C. S. Lewis' dog, "sometimes he agreed with us." "He didn't actually obey us. Sometimes he agreed with us." And I began to realize then that all my little acts of obedience that I thought were obedience were actually just, "They were convenient. I was prepared to agree with God at that moment."

And so it was only as years passed that the Father began to reveal to me that inside I was negotiating: Negotiating with God, and just negotiating, "I'll obey him here. I won't obey him there." And so I think the symptoms come first and the disease comes later. Or the actions, the sins, are exposed first to our consciousness, and 'sin' as an attitude that wants its own way and regards itself as God, comes later. I think.

I would think that that's a lot to do with the fullness of the Holy Spirit. That that's how a person can come alive to God, and can begin to experience some of the life that God has created for him in Jesus, and yet inside he still has a lot of his own self will. And so he isn't 'filled' with the Spirit. He has the Spirit within him, but he isn't filled with the Spirit. And it seems to me being filled with the Spirit is when at last you bow down completely and you say, "Lord God, whatever, whatever in the future, whatever in the present you ask of me I will do." I would think. But I'm sure the Father is good and differs with his dealing with all of us.

But I think you obey, obey, obey, obey! And if you fall to obey, you repent and you obey. But you keep moving towards obedience. And what I tried to do in my life was, where I saw there was disobedience cropping up in certain areas, I asked the Holy Spirit to show me why, and to begin to bring me into a deeper place. Really it's always, it's always, our dear Lord! Really loved ones, he's bled and died for each one of us. I mean, that 'dear man', he's died and bled for each one of us. He bore the agony of your destruction and mine.

I mean, we shouldn't think for a minute – isn't it a bit like Roger -- some of us know Roger is now in heaven. You remember I told you about the money that he had given to the church. And he's in heaven. Now, would you think of making fun of him? I wrote to his mum and dad saying, "I hope you feel really free. I know that this was part of the insurance policy. But I hope you feel really free. If you would like the money, boy we don't want it, if you think maybe it was an 'over

generous moment' on Roger's part." Of course they, they sent me two more checks, because that's your response, isn't it? You wouldn't dream... The dear brother is heaven now. Isn't it the same with Jesus? Would you take advantage of him? Would you? Yeah, I don't think you would.

Question from audience:

I'm sure there isn't one here tonight who, if they knew somebody else was hurting or lonely tonight, would not stay until midnight here for them. But really what happens is most of us come here to be taught, and we kind of regard everybody as healthy here, and then we go home to go out into our own job areas.

Response from Pastor O'Neill:

I think that's Clyde, what maybe Jesus spoke to me about. It seems that maybe Jesus is never off duty. Maybe Jesus is never off duty. And maybe even when he's with his disciples, he never thinks, "Well, these guys are alright, let's concentrate on the people who have not heard." I think there's always in him an 'awareness', and a 'searching eye', and a 'loving heart', and a 'sensitive spirit' just watching for any signals. And so I agree with you, I don't think we all need to stay around here at all. But I do think we need to have Jesus' 'sensitive heart' and 'searching spirit' that looks out for anybody who might need just some friendship. And of course, what I'm saying is, there are some loved ones -- I can't say tonight there are. But I know in other nights and other mornings, there have been loved ones who have kind of been on their own. And I think we've missed it. And I think that the Savior doesn't.

So really, probably what I'm saying is going back to the heart of the whole thing. Is he what we most care about? And is pleasing him what we most care about? Do we really enjoy him? Are our minds really preoccupied with, "Lord Jesus, what do you want to do now?" Or, are our minds filled with our 'programs for evangelism', so that we may miss the person who is sitting on our very doorstep. Of course that's so often what we have done with husbands and wives, with friends, with roommates. We've been so busy going out to all the world to convert them that we have failed so often to love and to care for those who are right beside us.

But I think our hearts are bent towards Jesus. I think that's all we want. But it seems to me what happens is the 'cares of this world'. That is, the 'cares of this world' come in and choke that sensitive life and intuition of Jesus inside us. And when you think of it, isn't that it? "I have to get gas in the car for tomorrow morning, because I'm going to hit that road at six o'clock." And that's it. And those strong needs, those strong things that we have to get done, so often actually, our life can be run by those. Isn't that terrible? I mean, so often our lives can be run by what we have to get done. And it seems to me that Jesus wants us to at least simplify our lives sufficiently so that we can be freer to move through the world with a sensitivity and a sensitive ear to what he wants us to do and say.

Oh he is a dear person, isn't he? It's amazing when you look at him, he was never too busy. And with all the burden that he obviously had with the whole universe, and yet he was always ready to talk to anybody. Little Zacchaeus [Luke 19:1-10], whom everybody despised, and how he heard him in the crowd at all, because Zacchaeus was so small and yet Jesus heard him. And I think that is what has drawn us all to him.

None of us are too small, or too unimportant for him to bother with. And every time he has his way

in our lives, that's of course the impression we get over to other people. That's why whenever we act within that, we refresh others. But, "We have to be scheduled..." See that's – we don't! We don't! Probably the truth is if we were maybe – if we used our time wisely and got the things done, and then were available for him, then we would be happier people. Isn't that it? Often we don't use our time wisely and we're kind of indolent. And we kind of move inefficiently through the day and so it takes us forever just living.

Well that's terrible, especially in America where every modern convenience is ours. We really are the people who should have all the time in the world available to be at Jesus' disposal. And when you think about it, isn't that what our society needs? Our society is worn out. We're worn out! Nobody has time for anybody else. We're just worn out. We just go, go, go all the time. And that's what drives us crazy. And you can see how much Jesus could do through some of us who would rest a while. Of course, "We have a pretty busy schedule compared with Jesus...???" But, you see, it doesn't-- it just doesn't work! Sure, it doesn't!

Well, let us pray. Lord Jesus, we thank you that there is, we are glad, no excuse or reason why we should not be at your disposal, and why we should not live some of our lives less hurried. And Lord, especially these times when we gather together in your house, we see that quality time is time that is at your disposal: time that is given to others; time just given to friendship.

Dear Lord, we would many of us, confess that our nerves are often tired, and tense. We're often worn out, because we never rest; we never relax; we never just have a time for friendship and conversation. We're always trying to bring something about, or achieve something. Dear Lord, we see that you who saved the world and the universe, you had time for Mary and Martha. And you said to Martha, "You're careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful and Mary has chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her." And Mary sat at the master's feet and heard his word. And dear Lord, we would begin to do that with you, and with each other, so that our lives may begin to be fruitful, and may begin to have that stream of peace flowing through them, that draws others to the living water.

Dear Lord, we thank you. Thank you that you're in us. Thank you that each one of us has been placed in you by our Father in heaven, and all we have to do is live 'like' this, and we'll begin to see your resurrection life pouring through us to other people, and beginning to make the desert blossom as a rose. We thank you Lord.

We look forward to this week Lord Jesus, and to having some times like this with the ones that we work with, so that they themselves will be healed and made whole by your touch.

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 ever more. Amen.