

Full Consecration and Sanctification

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I will characterize, briefly, the kind of life that many of us have entered into who have received Jesus as our Savior. It is a life that immediately senses a great liberation from sins, a great liberation from guilt, and a great freedom from guilt, and a great sense that we are forgiven and are God's child. We live in the glory of witnessing, and in the glory of reading our Bible and praying every day for a number of months often. And then many of us begin to be aware of something else inside us that is kind of wriggling and writhing, we begin to sense that there is something else inside us besides the voice of Jesus. We begin to find that this is something that doesn't appear to want what Jesus wants and so we find, as Paul said, another law within our members that seems to make us do the thing that we do not want to do, and makes us incapable of doing the thing that we want, so we begin to move into that defeated Christian life.

The tragedy of Christendom today is that it has tried its best to make that the normal Christian life by saying that the symptoms of this life are normal; they are not carnal they are simply normal human tendencies, and yet God's word is so firm and solid and keeps nailing these things as the works of the flesh. And so, many of us have had doubt as to whether we need seek anything further from Jesus because we've thought the things we experience everybody experiences and there's no way out of those things, so we have gotten used to a low level of justified living and we treat that as the normal Christian life.

Now loved ones, it simply is not the normal Christian life and if you ask me what things I'm talking about, generally I'm talking about attitudes. We've been encouraged to think that certain attitudes are expected, they're part of the battle that you wage against Satan. So we've been encouraged, in modern day Christendom, to think that if you don't murder, and you don't steal, and you don't commit adultery, and you don't get into trouble with the law, and you don't divorce your wife, and you don't beat your children over much then attitudes that you have of maybe a little critical spirit towards somebody, or maybe a little resentment to somebody else, that's just part of the battle that you wage against Satan. Many of us have been wooed into being content with our chains and our fetters. And of course, today's contemporary psychology doesn't help the matter much because it suggests that the anger is something that is very good and constructive; it's good if you feel anger at times, and it's good if you feel a bit of pride in yourself at times. So that, together with the wishy washiness of Christendom has encouraged many of us to get used to a low level of Christian living. That is not what the Bible sets for us. And yet many of us wonder why we have not the power of the Holy Spirit and why we do not draw other people to Jesus.

The reason is that there is this within us that we have not yet dealt with and we get used to letting it lie there. What are its symptoms? This that I'm holding in my hand is a blessed tract and it has been a blessing to me and you know it so well; the symptoms are very obvious of the defeated Christian life. They are "a secret spirit of pride; an exalted feeling in view of your success or position or because of your good training or appearance."

It was so good when I first read that because it made me ask the Holy Spirit to show me if I had that and I had no trouble in seeing that I had. I mean, we are such stupid people -- after you've looked at yourself in the mirror for a while you wonder why you could be proud of your appearance!

But we are incredible people are proud of our appearance, or our training, or our abilities. I remember so often feeling that's what makes me different from everybody else. I have something just a little different. It's not bad that we have something a little different, but it's the pride in that difference. It's the feeling that we're set apart from other people because of that.

Or we have an important independent spirit, a feeling of importance. It is good to feel we're individuals, but that feeling that when you come into a room, "I am more important; I ought to get a little more attention. Well, that person -- how could they expect attention being what they are? But I am due some important respect." And of course the resentment that follows when people refuse to give you that respect and overlook you. A love of human praise, it's not that praise is not a good thing, every one of us who have had to bring up children know what a valuable thing praise is. Every one of us here knows how it can express love to each other when we praise a person. It seems when someone sings a solo like Diane did you want to say, "That was beautiful." So there's no harm in praise itself, but it's this love of human praise. It's that desire to be praised, a desire to be singled out and it gets back to what that old man said about A. B. Simpson, that God knew that his glory was safe with A. B. Simpson.

Do you see that when God knows his glory is safe with a man or woman he is then free to give that man or woman the power of the Holy Spirit because he knows that man or woman will not use the power of the Holy Spirit to build himself up but to build Jesus up. But it's that desire for human praise that reveals plainly to God that his glory is not safe with us because we want some of the glory; a love of human praise. A secret fondness to be noticed. Now I was so anxious to get through to victory that I asked the Holy Spirit, "Holy Spirit, show me if I have that secret fondness to be noticed. Show me if I have a desire for other people to notice me. Show me if I'm glad when other people say something about something that I did."

I don't know how you are in conversation, but you're listening to somebody and you're almost waiting for them to get onto something that you have done, or they say something nice about you, you're just waiting for it because you've been hoping it would come to that bit in the conversation. That's a secret fondness to be noticed. And do you see the importance of these things? You may say, "Oh well now wait a minute brother those are little things." But loved ones, they help us to track down the heart of our problem with our defeated life. Do you see it helps us to track down that there's something inside us that wants to be noticed because most of us who are born of God would say, "Oh Lord Jesus, I'm willing for whatever. I'll drink the cup that you drank from. I'll be despised as you are despised." But at times we notice there's something else inside us, like another person who doesn't want to do that but wants to be noticed and wants to be looked up to.

"A drawing attention to self in conversation, a swelling out of self when you have had a free time in speaking or praying. The stirrings of anger or impatience which you call nervousness or holy indignation, a touchy sensitive spirit. A disposition to resent and retaliate when disapproved of or contradicted." Always that defensiveness. Always trying to prove, "But it wasn't that way. I didn't do it that way. No, that wasn't the way I felt." Tripping over ourselves to try and prove that we were right all along, that's what makes it unsafe for God to give his glory to us. And loved ones, there isn't a creed of any of the churches but admits that after conversion there remains within us some of the taint and corruption of original sin.

That's what that is. And there isn't one church that does not have that built into its creed. They vary in the name they give to it. Some of them say there is no question that after regeneration there remains within the believer concupiscence. Some of them call it that. Some of them call it

that desire, that covetousness for something for ourselves. Some of them say there remains even in the regenerated believer the carnal nature. That's what we're dealing with loved ones. That's what it is that makes us feel anger within and it shows itself most of all in our attitudes. That's why it's so essential if you want to come into full consecration, to see that God is concerned about your attitudes.

He promised that he would put within us a clean heart; it's our hearts that are dirty. Our outward lives after we're born of God are usually cleaned up. Those of us who drank too much usually stop drinking, those of us who swore usually stop swearing, those of us who stole usually stop stealing, those of us who have done and said things that weren't right are usually convicted of those and after we're born of God we forsake them. But we find several months after our conversion that there remains within us attitudes that are not right. Loved ones, I would encourage you to see that God does not want you to tolerate those attitudes or to defend them. He wants you to begin to hunt them down mercilessly because it is his will to cleanse us from them.

God has said he will sprinkle clean water upon us. Jesus said, "Out of the heart of man come anger, and strife, and selfishness," and then in Acts 15:9 God said, "The Holy Spirit cleansed our hearts by faith." So God has promised to cleanse our hearts of that stuff if we are willing to have them cleansed. And that's what many of us have entered into. That's what A. B. Simpson entered into, that's what A.W.Tozer entered into. They entered into a deeper work of God's Holy Spirit whereby they had their hearts cleansed by faith. And if you say, "What is required for that to happen?" Full consecration. That's it; full consecration of your life to God. And if you say, "Well, did I not make a full consecration when I was born of God?" Most of us made as much of a consecration as we could see to make. The fact was most of us were so miserable and coarse in our relationship to God that he could only show us the obvious and the coarse things in our life that were wrong.

And you know how that is, you know how when you're filled with a selfish life and you're preoccupied with cutting down other people, it's enough to get rid of those negative things without getting into the finer attitudes that you have in your heart and the finer motives that govern your life. And the fact is that when we came to Jesus for the new birth, we came with the consecration of all that we could see at that time.

But loved ones, the truth is that the Holy Spirit soon begins to show you other things in your attitudes and motives that aren't right other things where you're seeking your own way and you're seeking your own glory. It's as the Holy Spirit begins to reveal those things to you that God is challenging you to a full and absolute consecration of all that you are to God; a separating yourself from yourself in every detail. And if you will do that, God will come down and fill you with his Holy Spirit and will cleanse your heart from those things.

But I would first encourage you to see that that is God's will for us. Christendom and modern psychology lie when they say that these things are normal and nature. They aren't. They're human, but they're fallen human; they're not normal and they're not natural. They're not the kind of natural life that is described by Paul in Galatians when he says, "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Loving your own glory and wanting praise for yourself is not what God talks about in Deuteronomy 6:5 when he says, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul." Not love him with part of your soul and love yourself with the other part, but love him with everything.

Loved ones, the whole Bible, from beginning to end, is filled with the truth that we are made to worship God and him only, with all of our being, and to want his glory and it only, with all of our being, and to live only to bring about his will with all of our hearts. When we do that, we will be filled with his life and filled with his Holy Spirit, and we will live in an area of life where it is natural to do good. It's a place where it is easy to obey God and where you rejoice to love him and to love others and that's the will that God has for each one of us here. But it can only come with full consecration.

There's a verse in 1 Samuel 15 that is really a pathetic verse. You remember that God told Saul to destroy the Amalekites and to destroy everything; destroy the sheep, and the goats, and the cattle – everything -- the good and the bad, destroy it all. And Saul decided he would keep some of the good sheep and goats for himself and then Samuel comes and he asks Saul, "Did you destroy everything?" And Saul said, "I did." And then you remember that verse where Samuel says, "Then what is this bleating of the sheep and the goats that I hear in my ears? And when God looks down upon us gathered in this room tonight, he says, "What is this bleating of the sheep that I hear in my ears" and it's these little things that we talked about.

It's the little desire for our own comfort, for our own convenience, for our own way that prevents us going wholeheartedly out after Jesus. It's that desire to serve him as long as it doesn't inconvenience us and loved ones, that's why we do not go full of the Spirit to people. That's it. We don't go full of the Spirit because we serve God as it suits us. We aren't anxious to get out. We aren't just chomping at the bit to get out and do something for him or to speak to someone for him, we are kind of reluctant.

I joked with my wife because there's a piece in the New York Times today that says that the same kind of weather we're having now, England is having to a lesser extent and the police there have warned everyone to stay at home and not to take their cars on the road. And I said to my wife, "The dear old Britishers have probably just been looking for that excuse to stay at home so they won't have to go to work," because there is in England a dreadful reluctance to work too hard, and there is a desire almost to find an excuse to stay at home and not go to work!

That's what this is about. Do you find in your heart sometimes a desire for an excuse not to go to a prayer meeting, or a desire for an excuse not to do Bible study, or a desire for an excuse not to go out and do something for Jesus or do you find your heart bounding to go out? Now, if you find your heart bounding to go out, you're filled with the Spirit and actually, that's the effect that people have when they meet you. They think, "That person is filled with the Spirit of Jesus; they're just overflowing with it, they're bursting with it." That's what it means to be filled with the Spirit. Or do you go reluctantly because it's a duty and in a way you're sorry that you couldn't get out of it?

Now that's the difference between being filled with the Spirit and just kind of having the Spirit struggling to survive inside you and loved ones, the only way to come through into fullness of the Spirit is to come to a place of full and absolute consecration of your whole life to God where there is a readiness to let him destroy everything -- to destroy all that belongs to the Amalekites in you. And I sympathize with you if you're saying, "Oh, but is there nothing that I can have for myself? Is there nothing?" Well really there isn't. And you remember, I told you my own story.

I didn't know it would be as clear an illustration to me at the time but it was during those days in London before I came to America when I was trying to live a converted Christian life without going

on to a deeper work of the Holy Spirit in my heart. And I was living half in self and half in Jesus. You remember my wife was in dentistry and she had a German girl who was her assistant and this girl's name, I remember it still, was Helga. And with due respect to all the German's here, Helga was a real German and she would make it happen whether it wanted to happen or not! I was coming, I think, slowly to the end of my self and a pretty miserable creature you are as you're getting to that point, and I of all things got a boil on the back of my neck. I have never had a boil before and never since but I got a boil and Helga said, "Ernest, I will squeeze it." And I said, "Helga, it isn't ready." And she said, "It is ready." And it had to get ready!

So after of course about 15 minutes of agony, even she admitted that the boil was not German and would not obey her command and it was not ready! But I remember at that point, after she had worked and worked and nothing had happened, I remember thinking inside my own heart, "Lord, if you don't hurry up and save me there'll be nothing left of me to save." And yet that was the truth of it, you know.

You may be the same, you may think, "Oh but Lord, can't I have a little of myself?" And loved ones, you can have a little of yourself to go into hell with, but you can't have a little of yourself if you're going to get into heaven. That's what Jesus was talking about when he said, "It's far better to cut off your hand than to have two hands and go into hell fire." It's better to cut off whatever is preventing you coming into the fullness of his Spirit, and it means full consecration. And it does mean an enthusiastic search, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, for any of that "bleating of the sheep" that Jesus hears in his ears. So it does mean looking honestly at any of the signs of controlled surrender that there are in your life; any signs that the carnal nature is still alive inside you, still wanting its own way, still opposing God's will in your life.

And if there's anyone here that thinks, "Well, could I not hack it out and keep that alive?" Loved ones, I think you'll lose everything. I think you'll lose everything. That's what I saw in my own life; that if you try to let the carnal nature, or that old self, dwell together with Jesus' Spirit within you, gradually Jesus' Spirit will grow less, and less, and less. And as you look around at loved ones in our churches today, you see so many that are trying to pretend that they're serving the Lord but really, they're serving self. And as the years go by they grow colder and colder in their service of the Lord. And of course, you see it all around us.

I don't know that going abroad is proof of the full surrender. I don't think it is. I think there are lots of us who are called by God to stay at home and live a fully surrendered life. But you must admit it is amazing that with so many of us who are apparently born of God, how relatively few of us are ending up abroad permanently. It's amazing how many of us are still here in America. There is a lot to be done in America, but it is surprising isn't it, that with so many of us who are apparently born of God and that so few of us seem to be hearing his cry to the apostles, "Go and preach the gospel to all nations." I'm afraid the truth is that Christendom is filled with partially consecrated saints; with people who are still carnal and who are trying to live a controlled surrender, a life that isn't fully consecrated. It's the hardest life to live. It's the most agonizing life to live. It's far better to get everything on the altar.

Now I would ask you this evening, will you – well, I don't even need to ask you. You know some of the "bleating of the sheep" that God hears in your life. You know some of the desire in your own life for a little bit of comfort, a little bit of convenience, a little bit of quietness, and a little bit of things the way you want them yourself. If you say to me, "Isn't that human?" Loved ones, it's human to be like Jesus, that's human. Jesus is the perfect human being. The subject of

psychology is fallen man but the subject of true psychology is the risen man, Jesus. He's the perfect man, that's what's human.

He came to earth to tell us that he had become like us so that we might become like him. And it is possible to live with a clean heart that has only clean feelings, and clean motives, and clean attitudes within it so that only clean things are springing up in your heart. That's God's will for us and he will come down and fill you with his Spirit if you are willing to fully consecrate yourself to him.

So it would be good if we would have a little time of prayer where each of us could speak to the Holy Spirit and ask him to clarify in each one of us where there is some desire for self and where there is some desire for comfort, or for something other than Jesus' will, and where there is a desire, if possible, to escape the cross. And then loved ones, I'd go for that. I'd go for that with all my heart.

There are some of us that think, "Well, we go for it but what can we do about it?" We tend to say, "I can't stop thinking that way," or, "I can't stop doing that," or, "I can't stop feeling that." And this dear guy says, "Is it possible that a good God who hates sin has so created us that we can resist him and cannot resist the devil?" And in a way, that's what we're saying when we say, "I can't stop sinning." We're saying, "I can resist God but I can't resist the devil." And this guy says, "Is it possible that a God that hates sin has so created us that we can resist him and cannot resist the devil?"

The word says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." There could be no strife unless man possessed power to resist. And of course he says, "This is nonsense. The will is the pivot upon which all volitional action moves. I will to walk and I walk. I will to talk and I talk. I can be a Christian if I will or I can be a sinner if I will. I could go to heaven if I will or I can go to hell if I will. Our wills just enable us to execute our choice. Hence the scriptural injunction, choose thee this day whom you will serve." God would not say that to us if we had no the ability to choose. And that's the truth.

When we hunt down these things we can set our wills against them. And then if we do that, God remakes that old self so that we are able to express that in our lives. That's the truth loved ones; it is possible to reject these things. If the Holy Spirit shows you that you have a secret fondness to be noticed ask him, "Why is that Holy Spirit?" And let him show you that it's because you really think you are pretty important and indeed, that you think you are even more important than God and that you'd rather have the glory than that the glory would come to him, and that you want to be elevated even in place of him.

Let the Holy Spirit show you how mad it all is. How this love of self is actually trying to deify you and to tear down God himself. And then loved ones, when you see that you know, face it: are you will to join Jesus on the cross and to be regarded as nothing so that your God can be glorified. And oh, there'll be a peace that'll come into your dear heart, the peace of the fullness with the Holy Spirit, as you begin to settle these inner things.

So let's spend a little time in prayer.

Dear Father, we are aware of some of these things within us: we are aware of a secret fondness to be noticed. We are aware of a desire to throw sharp, heated flings at another, to resent when

somebody criticizes us or reproves us. Lord, we are aware of something terrible inside us that rises up and stands on its hind legs and wants to be praised and looked up to, and respected, something that draws attention to itself in conversation and swells out. Lord, we are aware of that.

We are aware Lord, of anger stirring within us. By your grace we are often able to hold it down, but yet it is there and we know it and it spoils the sense of peace in our own hearts even if outwardly we appear to be Christian. And Lord, we are aware of a critical spirit that is too ready to tear other people down in order to build ourselves up. And Lord, we do realize that there is within us at times a spirit of discouragement in the face of the difficult circumstances that providence brings. We are apt to get depressed and down. And Lord, we are aware that Jesus is never down and we are aware that Jesus himself sees all things clearly and sees that even in the most hideous circumstances you are still working all things according to the council of your will.

But Lord, there is therefore, within us something other than Jesus. There is this old carnal attitude within us, this old self that will not, and refuses, to give up its own right. And oh Lord, we do want to give that up. Lord we know that the moment we are truly willing, the moment we are truly ready to have done with these things, that moment the miracle of Calvary is made real in us by the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

So Lord, we know that you really do, in the last analysis, wait upon us. And oh Holy Spirit, we thank you that we can know that we have come to a place of full consecration. That you will witness in our hearts that we are fully consecrated, that we have really come to the end of ourselves. We thank you that we don't need to wander endlessly around in circles like the Israelites in the wilderness coming back to the old camp sites where we made the old resolutions and make them all over again. We can come to the end of that endless wandering, that endless making of resolutions again and again that we never keep. And we can come to the end of the endless wondering whether we're consecrated or not.

Holy Spirit, you will seal us with yourself. You will witness yourself that we are in a place of full consecration. And oh Lord, we want to come into that place where, though you hear now the bleating of the sheep in your ears, we want to come to the place where there is nothing wild inside us, nothing uncontrolled, but there is a clear stream of pure peaceful love and life coming from the center of our hearts as you promised Lord Jesus, that out of our inner being would flow rivers of living water.

Dear Lord, how we long for cleanness and we know Lord, whatever is placed on the altar is made clean and whole. Lord, we would place our whole selves on the altar. We know how the reluctance to obey you immediately gives an indication of where the area is that I'm holding back from you.

Lord, thank you that there are signs and symptoms that give us an idea or a hint of what area of our lives we have not given over into your control, showing us that after we've covered all the areas, then we're just getting to the heart of the matter because it's that old self that wants to invent other areas that is the problem. And oh Lord, we thank you that you have taken that old self of ours and destroyed it forever on Calvary. We thank you Lord, that this very night we can be free by faith of that old self.

Dear Lord, this night those of us who are at that place would take a stand in faith. Lord, those of us who are fed up with Satan having his way in our inner life, who are tired of the uncleanness that

no one else sees but that we know. Lord, those of us who are tired enough in order to receive that radical remedy of handing everything over to you. Lord, we would take a stand now by faith this night and we would consecrate ourselves fully to you and to your service. We would give you the right to move us as you want to move us and to do through us and speak through us what you want to do and speak whatever it costs us, Lord Jesus.

Indeed, we regard ourselves as no longer in existence so it is not any cost to us. But Lord, we give this body and mind and emotions over to you. And Lord Jesus, we give you the right to direct us to do whatever you want us to do in our lives. Lord, we would give you the right to bring us discomfort if necessary, or unhappiness if necessary, pain or hardship, happiness or peace. Lord, we would give you the right to do whatever you want with our lives. And we would separate ourselves from ourselves this night and lay our lives on the altar and ask you to bring down the fire from heaven, the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Amen.