

Living Above Sin

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Let us pray.

Dear Lord, we thank you for Sabbath evenings and we thank you that there is something timeless about the Sabbath evening. Our minds go back to the old frontier people, gathering in their cabins. Then our minds go back to even family gatherings when we were children and we think of singing hymns around the piano and that kind of thing. Lord, we know that somehow Sabbath evening is an eternal time.

We thank you that it seems always like the road to Emmaus when it was toward evening and the day was far spent, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. He was known to them in the breaking of bread. Lord, we would pray that you would make yourself known to us as you break the bread of your dear Word and your dear Body to each one of us personally. Lord, we so thank you that it does not depend on man or a preacher's words but we thank you that you speak to each one of us personally. We look forward to listening to your voice and making it real in our lives for your glory. Amen.

C. H. Spurgeon, loved ones, was a very famous Baptist preacher in London [1834-1892] and he wrote this, "There is a point of grace as much above the ordinary Christian as the ordinary Christian is above the world."

There is a point of grace as much above the ordinary Christian as the ordinary Christian is above the world. You see what he is saying. If the world is there and the ordinary Christian is there, then there is another place as far above the ordinary Christian as the Christian is above the world. "Of such," he says, "their place is with the eagle in his nest, high aloft. They are rejoicing Christians. Holy and devout men doing service for the Master all over the world and everywhere conquerors through Him that loved Him." It seems that that's the situation.

It seems that there are a lot of ordinary Christians, as we call them, and then there's this band of men and women that seem to live above the ordinary level. It doesn't have to be that way but it seems it always has been. It seems that when Paul, you remember, came to the Corinthians, he said to them, "Listen, I couldn't speak to you as spiritual people because you're still carnal."

Even Paul seemed to find that there were people who were Christians who were still living, as he says, as ordinary men and ordinary women. Still living in the midst of all the personal defeat that ordinary people have. Yet there were spiritual men and women, he called them, who were doing business for God throughout the world. So it has always seemed. It has always seemed that there are Christians who are born of God and then there are these other Christians who seem to have come through something different.

Loved ones, this is just one of the books that details the lives of men and women who came through some experience subsequent to the New Birth. That's how that man, Cook, follows that quotation of Spurgeon. Spurgeon says, "...devout men doing service for the Master all over the world and everywhere conquerors through Him that loved Him." Cook adds, "The experience to which Mr. Spurgeon refers has been described as the higher life, entire sanctification, Christian perfection, perfect love, the

rest of faith and by numerous other names or terms." This book details some of the men and women who have come into an experience, a deeper experience, a deeper faith in Jesus' death and resurrection, subsequent to conversion.

I could mention them to you. Savonarola, Madame Guyon, Fenelon, George Fox, John Bunyan, John Wesley, Whitfield, Fletcher, Finney, George Muller, Gordon, D.L. Moody, Booth. It seems that wherever you get a man or a woman who has been used, well, you say, singly, but really, who has been used as the scripture describes God's people will be used, you find a man or a woman who has come through some other experience subsequent to conversion.

D. L. Moody [1837-1899] probably is somebody we all respect, even if we are not all Baptists or we're not members of the Young Men's Christian Association, or the YWCA. We all think of Moody as a man who was mightily used by God. You remember part of his story, he was brought up in a poor home after his father died when he was 41 in, I think it was, New England. He went to a church Sunday school, never understood much about it and then in the meantime became a shoe salesman and quite a successful shoe salesman.

At 19, his Sunday school teacher, called Kimble, decided that he would make a call on the store where this young student of his, D. L. Moody, worked. "I made what I afterward thought was a very weak plea for Christ," Kimble says. "I don't know just what words I used, nor could Mr. Moody tell. I simply told him of Christ's love for him and the love Christ wanted in return. That was all there was. It seemed the young man was just ready for the light that then broke upon him. There, in the back of the store in Boston, he gave himself and his life to Christ."

"Moody's whole life was changed and became one of joyful Christian service. 'Before my conversion,' says he, 'I worked towards the Cross, but since then I've worked from the Cross. Then, I worked to be saved, now I work because I am saved.' Again, he says, 'I remember the morning on which I came out of my room after I first trusted Christ. I think the sun shone a good deal brighter than it ever had before. I thought it was just smiling upon me. As I walked out on Boston Common and heard the birds singing in the trees, I thought they were all singing a song to me.'" So, it's a real conversion. A real New Birth.

Then, he got into Sunday school work and he started a little Sunday school and the Sunday school grew and grew until it was 1,500 students and he became well known, really, throughout the nation at that time, even though he was not involved in evangelistic campaigns. Actually, by that time, he had met Ira D. Sankey, [1840-1908] you remember, the singer, who created hymns such as "The Ninety and Nine". So, they had a great ministry through the Sunday schools of America. Yet, about 10, 12, years later, he was still hungering for a victory that he knew was available in his own inner heart.

Loved ones, do you see that? He was very successful. Everybody said he was singly blessed by God and yet he was all the time hungering for a victory within, over the things that still defeated him inside his heart. He went once to Britain to find out how the Christian work was done there. He was accompanied by Mrs. Moody and he was particularly anxious to hear Spurgeon, the great English preacher, and George Muller, who had the large orphanages at Bristol. Moody was then unknown in England, except to a few prominent Sunday school teachers. He spoke a number of times in London and Bristol with good results.

It was during his first visit to Britain that Moody heard the words which set him hungering and thirsting after a deeper Christian experience and which marked a new era in his life. The words were

spoken to him by Mr. Henry Varley, the well known evangelist, [1835-1912] as they sat together on a seat in a public park in Dublin. The words were these. "The world has yet to see what God will do with, and for, and through, and in, and by the man who is fully consecrated to Him." I suppose there isn't one of us who haven't heard that sentence used before.

The world has yet to see what God will do with, and for, and through, and in, and by the man who is fully consecrated to Him. He said "a man", thought Moody. He did not say a great man nor a learned man nor a smart man, but simply a man. I am a man and it lies with the man himself whether he will or will not make that entire and full consecration. I will try my utmost to be that man. The words kept ringing in his mind and burning their way into his soul until finally he was led into the deeper, richer, fuller experience for which his soul yearned.

The impression the words made was deepened soon afterward by words spoken. And it's interesting to me, because in Dublin there is a famous Bewley's Coffee Shop, and I don't know if this is the guy but it's very famous. If you are in Dublin, Gresham Street is the main street, as you would say in America, but the main shopping street, and there's a beautiful coffee shop there.

But, anyway, the words kept ringing in his mind and burning a way into his soul until finally he was led into deeper, richer, fuller experience. The impression the words made was deepened soon afterward by words spoken by Mr. Bewley of Dublin, Ireland, to whom he was introduced by a friend. "Is this young man O and O?" asked Mr. Bewley. "What do you mean by O and O?" said the friend. "Is he out and out for Christ?" was the reply. From that time forward, Moody's desire to be O and O for Christ was supreme.

At 19, he was converted. At 34, he began to hunger deeply for a victory within when he was 30, and at 34 he went east to New York City to collect funds for the Chicago fire, you remember, the Chicago fire burnt up all their buildings. But, his heart and soul were crying out for the power from on high. "My heart was not in the work of begging," says he. "I could not appeal. I was crying all the time that God would fill me with his Spirit."

"Well, one day in the city of New York, what a day! I cannot describe it. I seldom refer to it. It is almost too sacred an experience to name. Paul had an experience of which he never spoke for 14 years. I can only say that God revealed Himself to me and I had such an experience of His love that I had to ask Him to stay His hand. I went to preaching again. The sermons were not different. I did not present any new truths. Yet, hundreds were converted. I would not now be placed back where I was before that blessed experience, if you should give me all the world. It would be as the small dust of the balance."

Well, that's it. There is a deeper experience, loved ones, that is possible to those of us who do not simply want to be saved and go to Heaven. But, to those of us who want to please our Father, who has made us, with all our hearts. Not only with our outward lives, but with the state of our inward hearts. That's the experience that we share about in Sunday evenings and I would like to zero in on particularly these few Sunday evenings.

Do you remember last Sunday we mentioned it isn't an experience that renders a man or a woman faultless. You still have a mind that can make mistakes and errors. You still have emotions that will, at times, over-react or be too passionate or too full of human sympathy or too easily moved. You will still have a body that will get sick and will, in fact, influence your own personality.

So, you won't be faultless before men and you will not be able to be judged by the perfect Adamic law that Adam was judged by, where any error and any mistake whatever was regarded as a sin. So, you won't be faultless before men and probably the world will always have something to criticize about you but it does render a man or a woman blameless before God. That's what the Father said, "Walk before me and be perfect. You walk before the world and they will always find something wrong with you, but I want you to walk before me and be in such a position where I am not able to blame you for anything that I have shown you to do." That's what God means -- that we should be able to be blameless before him so that whatever he shows us to do, we will do, and he will not feel that he has to regard us as culpable for some failing.

Loved ones, it is a state that renders us blameless before God, though not faultless before men. It is a state that does not save us from temptation. We will still face temptation. Any of us who say, oh, it renders you safe from temptation if there's no evil in your heart, how can you be tempted?

Look at Jesus. There was no evil in his heart. Yet, he was at all points "tempted as we are, yet without sin". [Hebrews 4:15] Adam was tempted and yet he had a perfect heart before he fell. So was Eve. Certainly, you can be tempted and tempted does mean the fiery darts of the wicked one being fired into our minds as we shared last Sunday. Where a thought can even occur to your mind. Indeed, at times, it can impress itself on your emotions. But it is at that moment that you decide whether to commit your will to it and there's a divide within you. That's the only time that you're involved in sin. But, nevertheless, it does involve living blameless before men, though maybe filled with faults in men's eyes, and yet it does mean that we still face temptation.

Now, loved ones, what kind of life is it then? It's a life above sin. It's a life above sin. Now, I think our whole world of Christendom is programmed against that. And, if you were brought up as I was brought up in the Methodist Church, and you were brought up in a similar kind of background, I have no doubt that the Westminster catechism was right that everybody is going to sin in act and word and thought throughout all the days of their lives. That's what I felt. Because I felt that, of course, that's the way I lived.

Now, loved ones, could we just look again at scripture and see that that absolutely and completely contradicts God's Word. Now, let's look at some of the verses. Matthew 1:21. It is one that we read at Christmas. The one that George MacDonald [1824-1905] talked about a lot. He was the old Scots preacher, you remember, that was regarded by C. S. Lewis as nearer to God than any other writer that he had ever read. Matthew 1:21, it talks about Jesus' birth, "she (Mary) will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." He will save his people FROM their sins. Now, I know at theological seminary we were taught to interpret that as saved from the punishment of their sins or the consequences of their sins, but it doesn't say that. It simply says Jesus will save his people FROM their sins. Of course, that's what the Jews needed. They knew what it was to have their sins covered. David, their great Psalmist, said, "Blessed is that man whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord will not impute iniquity." [Psalm 32:1] So, even the Jew knew what it was to be saved from the guilt of the sins or the consequences of the sins. But, Jesus was coming to save his people FROM their sins.

Loved ones, then if you look at Romans 6, Paul just contradicts, flatly, that whole idea that we are bound to sin in act and word and thought all the days of our lives. Romans 6:1, "What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound?" So, he says, now that we are dead to sin, are we to continue in it? Verse 2, "By no means! How can you who died to sin still live in it?" Paul says, "No!" So, it's hard to be plainer, loved ones. "Shall we continue in sin that grace may

abound? By no means. How can we who died to sin, still live in it?" Why I share these words so simply and plainly with us all is we all are victims of our present society and we have been brainwashed with the idea that we cannot actually do what God tells us to do.

So many of us are beaten before we begin because we have been impressed with the idea that our poor wills just can't make it. Now, loved ones, this is as subtle and insidious a form of brainwashing as any kind of communism that is inserted into our society.

Yet, we all are being encouraged to think that we are poor old jellyfish that just wobble and can never determine which way we are going to go. God's Word is different entirely. God's Word implies that Jesus came to save us from that -- not that we cannot sin. He can never make us so that we cannot sin, you see. You will never be brought to a state of grace in this present life where you absolutely cannot sin. We can always sin. You can always sin if you want to. You can disobey God if you so choose.

There's no state of grace known here on earth where you can come to a place where you can't sin if you want to. You can always sin. But, the state of grace that is described in scripture is a state of grace where you're able not to sin. That's it. Where you have the ability not to sin, if you so choose. That, of course, is what most of us are after. Most of us are after a strength or a power or a grace that will enable us to do what we really want to do.

This is what the apostles did, if you look at I Thessalonians 2:10. Of course, what loved ones usually say who want to fight this kind of thing is, they say, well, you're not perfect are you? Well, you're pretty dumb if you ever say you are and I'm pretty dumb if I ever say I am. But, that's what they say, oh, well now, have you lived without sin and did the apostles live without sin? Well, you have to look at these words that old Paul speaks to the Thessalonians. I Thessalonians 2:10, "You are witnesses and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our behavior to you believers." So, it's kind of strong words for a mortal man to speak to other mortal men. "You are witnesses and God also, how holy and righteous and blameless was our behavior to you believers."

Maybe it's good to mention that what we're talking about here is not the method of getting into heaven. Do you understand that? We get into heaven by only one means: the Blood of Jesus. It wouldn't matter if you could say for the last 20 years, I have never sinned. You have sinned before those 20 years and you are committing a thousand faults against God's perfect law of absolute perfection and purity that you don't know about and so the blood of Jesus is needed by every one of us and the only way we get into heaven is because we believe that his blood was shed for us. So, we're not talking about how to get into heaven. That is settled by our faith in Jesus' blood. But, we're now talking about the possibility of living the way our dear Father wants us to live.

Of course, this is put most plainly in John's epistle. It's the book before Revelation, loved ones, if you look at it. It's I John 2:1 and John explains that he has one purpose in writing this epistle, "My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin." That's pretty plain. "I'm writing this to you so that you may not sin." We need to see, loved ones, that that's pretty plain speaking and, if we are in any doubt about it, old John lays it on you, remember, two chapters later. I John 3:4, and the interesting thing is, of course, this is the way the dear old world thinks.

It's funny in that we Christians kind of like to brainwash ourselves to excuse ourselves. The world doesn't. The world believes the Bible. The world's chief charge against the children of God is, you

do not live the way you preach. You do not live your faith and we think you should. This is what John says. I John 3:4, "Every one who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared to take away sins." John's referring back to that verse in Matthew (Jesus came to take away our sins.) Verses 5-9 "You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him sins; no one who sins has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who does right is righteous, as he is righteous. He who commits sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God commits sin."

No one born of God commits sin "for God's nature abides in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God." ('Cannot' in the sense that God's nature is in him and while he obeys that nature.) "By this it may be seen who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not do right is not of God, nor he who does not love his brother." (verse 10)

This dear guy whom I quoted earlier in connection with Spurgeon says, another point is also, he says, no state of grace permits the committing of voluntary sin. That's kind of interesting because I think many of us think, oh, well, you see, I commit sin because, of course, I'm just born of God. I'm waiting for that great experience that was talked about tonight that will save me from committing sin. But, he says, it is important to see the Bible says, "No one born of God commits sin." So, he says, "No state of grace permits the committing of voluntary sin" and that's the important word. Even the lowest type of Christian does not continue in sin.

Spurgeon, who I mentioned at the beginning says, "No state of grace permits the committing of voluntary sin." That's kind of interesting because many of us think I can sin because I am born of God, I'm waiting for that great experience we are talking about tonight that will save me from committing sin. But he says it's important to see that the Bible says, "No one born of God commits sin." He says "No state of grace permits the committing of VOLUNTARY sin." That's the important word. Even the lowest type of Christian does not continue in sin.

Another point is also made clear in this chapter: that permanent Sonship and continual sinning are contradictions which cannot be combined in the same character. You remember, John says that "no one born of God commits sin." A person gets no more of being born of God in continuing sin than he can remain honest and steal, or truthful and tell lies. When a soul is born of God a new principle, the love of God, is admitted and takes up its abode behind the will. The attitude of the will can never be hostile to God's law so long as it is swayed by love to the Lawgiver. This interprets the declaration, "whosoever is born of God does not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him."

This is the new principle of love, and he cannot sin because he is born of God. Such cannot sin in the sense that a dutiful son says, "I cannot", when he is tempted to do wrong to his parents to whom he is under deepest obligations. He cannot because he will not. The impossibility is not physical, but moral. There is truth in the saying, if we will, we may, but if we won't, we can't.

Maybe it's good to point out the kind of sin that John is talking about. It's the kind of sin that is defined in James 4:17, "Whoever knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin." That's what the New Testament means when it talks about committing sin. It means conscious sin. You know what is right to do and you fail to do it. That's sin. There are a thousand things that you and I do wrong every day that we don't know is wrong. There are a thousand things that we do every day that we're not even aware of, involuntary things that we toss off and they hurt and they do harm and, at times, they cause us pain, also. But, we didn't know at that time that we did them.

In other words, there are unconscious sins and the Bible makes a clear distinction between conscious and unconscious sins. Loved ones, when the Bible says, "whosoever is born does not commit sin," it means commit knowing conscious transgression of God's law. It doesn't mean the thousand mistakes and errors that we're guilty of. It doesn't mean some of the involuntary sins. I think many of us do things that once we've done, we suddenly know that was wrong. I'm sorry, Lord. You are caught in a moment of unguardedness or lack of watchfulness and you do the thing and suddenly you realize you've done it. Immediately your heart turns in penitence. It isn't referring to those. It's referring to people who they know the thing is wrong and they do it.

Now, that helps a little when we come to, you remember, the popular interpretation of "whosoever is born of God does not commit sin." Because the popular interpretation, for we human beings are always excusing ourselves, is, "whosoever is born of God does not commit sin habitually". Now, it isn't in the Greek. The word isn't there at all. But, do you see that we can agree with habitually if we simply bring the thing down to our actual experiences. What gets you and me? Well, it's not that we're murdering three people every week. It's not. It's not even that we're stealing every month. What gets you and me is that we have certain besetting sins that drive us crazy.

Some of us have bad tempers that we cannot control. We know it's wrong to lose our temper. We know it is. We determine we will not lose our temper. And, we lose our temper. We know it is wrong to criticize and we determine we will not criticize. Or, we will not say anything about our friends. And, yet, we end up criticizing. We know it's wrong to be irritable with other people. And, yet, we get to a place repeatedly where we're irritable and, before we know it, we've hurt somebody by a caustic comment that we've made. That's what drives us crazy. In other words, the agony we feel is, I know what I should do but I do not do it. I don't understand myself. That's what we feel. We feel with Paul in Romans 7:15, "I do not understand my own actions. I do not do the good I want, I do the thing I hate." That's what drives us crazy.

I don't think we need to argue over the "habitually". Obviously, it doesn't mean murdering every week. If it does mean habitually in the sense of a sin that you repeat, well, that's our problem. Most of us would say, yeah, that's right. The thing that kills me, the thing that wears me down, the thing that makes me feel I am crucifying my Lord afresh, is these inner things that I cannot control and that I keep on doing again and again.

Now, loved ones, those are the sins that the New Testament talks about. Whosoever is born of God does not commit those. And what God tells us is, his Son Jesus has done something on the Cross that delivers you and me from the nature that makes us do those things. That's the secret and the key to it. That's why, you remember, Dan Lindquist wrote in his testimony in this morning's bulletin that he entered in by faith to the instantaneous experience of having his heart cleansed through the Holy Spirit. Because he suddenly saw and believed that he had been crucified with Christ and he had been changed and his nature had been changed. That's why Paul cried out in Romans 7:24, you remember, "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" Who has changed this nature that makes me act against my own will? That, I think, is the agony that we feel, isn't it?

Most of us WILL to do the right thing but we find that there's a whole nature inside us that seems to make that impossible. The magnificent truth that all these dear men and women found out was that it's possible to be delivered from that, through being cleansed and filled with the Holy Spirit and through entering into Jesus' death and resurrection. Loved ones, I'd like to talk next Sunday about the experience of sanctification as an experience subsequent and different from the New Birth.

Questions. Any questions?

Question 1: Is it possible to fall from that second experience or that sanctification?

Response from Rev. O'Neill:

Marnie, all that we can do is go by the words and scripture and by men's experiences. The man called Fletcher, who was a very saintly man in the 18th century, he certainly testifies that he fell from that grace and had to come into it long and hard by faith all over again. So, it does seem possible to fall from that. And, of course, there are many warnings in Hebrews chapter 4 that we ought to be careful lest we fall. There are many words like the ones in John 15:6, you remember, "If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned." So, there are many warnings that imply that we retain the freedom of our wills. There's no doubt, loved ones, we can choose to end our lives like that. We all know that too well. We can choose to commit suicide if we want, physically. It's the same spiritually. We do have free wills and it does seem, Marnie, that we are under God's grace so long as we remain under it.

Question 2: (inaudible)

Response from Rev. O'Neill:

Well, that's undoubtedly what Dan Lindquist was talking about in the bulletin this morning, because that was his problem. He was never sure when he was being blocked or deceived by Satan. It seems, at least what God has shown me is, I should always stand on the truth of Romans 6:6, "We know that our old self was crucified with him." That's settled, that's settled, Lord, I know that. I always have to fix my mind on that and keep my mind off my own personal experience. Then, I do need to be yielding and submissive and soft towards the Holy Spirit. So, Marnie, that's the way I have set my own course: to continue always to reckon myself dead, indeed, unto sin and to hold to that because God's Word says it. Then, to be soft and yielding to the Holy Spirit and that way not to cast away my confidence.

It does seem that if we have really fallen, the Holy Spirit would just make that very plain to us. He will convict us deeply and hard and clear. It does seem that through many of us not distinguishing between temptation and sin and through many of us failing to see that the Holy Spirit is constantly giving us more light and is constantly laying us flat. He is constantly making us feel, "I am the greatest of sinners", because he is showing us more. By us not realizing that we often, I think, mistake new light for conviction of old sins.

Question 3: It almost seems like two stages of grace, a sanctified grace that you are entered into and then a saving faith, or a justifying grace.

Response from Rev. O'Neill:

Certainly the theology makes those two distinctions. Justification is forgiveness of our sins and being put right with God. Sanctification is being freed from our sins and being made right like God. So, undoubtedly, theology has always emphasized those two things and it does seem that this experience always comes in a person's life after justification, after the New Birth. It doesn't mean that it's impossible for someone to enter in to both freedom from guilt and freedom from the power

of sin at the same time but it does seem that most people don't. Most people enter in later on. But, I must say, I think it's very important for us here to zero in on the reality of sanctification and, who cares, maybe it comes all in one ball of wax. I don't know, maybe it comes later on. But, to see that one can be free so that you can obey God. It seems to me that's the big need we have. I don't know that it matters what we call it and I don't know that it matters whether we all enter in the same way.

But I think it's very important in these days when there isn't one of you loved ones that hasn't come through the educational system here in the States. I'm maybe a couple of years older than most of you, but I feel sorry for you because we've been so brainwashed with the idea that you just can't do it. Really, Dave, the battle is lost before we begin. We just take it for granted, no, I'm a determined being. Through determinism and through my environment, my heredity, I'm bound to be this way. So, that's what has filled the psychologists' couches for years and it's what has kept so many of us in bondage. So, it is so vital to come into this truth that has always been in scripture and has always been emphasized down through the years. It's not popular. People don't like it. It makes people mad because we all like the idea of getting into Heaven on a freebie because Jesus has died for us but we don't like the idea of having to submit our lives to God.

Of course, that's the whole meaning of Christianity and the whole meaning of religion. That explains, David, why, in our day today, there is so much religious activity in America and so little effect on the crime rates of the nation and so little effect generally on the business practices of the nation. It's to a certain extent a bluff Christianity. So, loved ones, what we need to do is say that this is salvation. Salvation is by the blood of Jesus alone and, if you ever lose out on that and go back to being saved by the law, Satan will make a mockery of you, loved ones.

What we're talking about here is our dear God has given his Son to die for us so that he has opened his arms to us. Now we're saying, Dad, I want to be like you. That's it. We're not saying, Dad, please take us into your family. He's already taken us into his family. We're saying, Father, I want to be like you. Have I to do that by my own effort or have you done something in your dear Son's death on Calvary that will enable me to be like you? The glory is, He has. That's the glory. That Jesus has saved us, not only from the guilt of our sins, but from the power of our sins, and it is by faith, loved ones.

Question 4: (inaudible)

Response from Rev. O'Neill:

No, because you won't sleep tonight. No, I will Cathy. It's this old, terrible old verse. The killer of this verse is the people who need it don't take it seriously. The people who don't need it, take it seriously, and get into bondage. At least I think, if it's the verse I think. What is it, Cathy, it's Hebrews 6:4, isn't it? Yeah. Famous verse, you remember. The nightmare verse for all sensitive consciences and the ones that are supposed to be got by it, just ignore it. Hebrews 6:4, "For it is impossible to restore again to repentance those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then commit apostasy, since they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt." I think, Cathy, it is only right to say that verse 6 states it most clearly "if they then commit apostasy." Apostasy is a person turning completely against God, against belief in God, against belief in Jesus, against belief in the Holy Spirit, and living their life from then on independent of them. Apostasy is not a loved one

continuing to come to church and continuing to want to please God and then coming under this second conviction of sin because that's what it has to be preceding this experience of sanctification. Coming into this new conviction of sin and realizing what a wretch I am, what a rat I am. Because that's what all of us have felt. We've felt at times, we've never even been converted. We feel so bad. We feel it so deeply. The sin that is still in our hearts. But, we're yearning to be freed from it and we're respecting God. That isn't apostasy. Apostasy is turning completely against God, rejecting him, rejecting Jesus, turning away from everything that we have experienced of the Holy Spirit and of the good things of God's word and from then on living our lives as pagan rebels. It seems to me that's what that verse refers to and I think what it is emphasizing, of course, is the fact that that isn't just a warning, but it is in fact a statement that that can happen, that it can happen. That we need to be watchful. But, it certainly isn't speaking to some, I know. I don't know exactly who is here tonight but I know some loved ones in the body who have such dear sensitive consciences that they come under a new conviction of sin and they suddenly see what Paul saw. I am the greatest of sinners. They see how rotten they are and they see how they must be deeply saved through the fullness of the Holy Spirit. It seems to me that isn't apostasy. That's a heart hungry and thirsting after righteousness.