

The Anointing of the Holy Spirit

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

These evening services, loved ones, we've been talking about the problem of living what we say we believe. It is especially the problem that so many people who are born of God face. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. Many of us find ourselves unable to do that.

The heart of the problem you can find if you turn in your Bible to Romans 7:14. It just comes out so clearly. Perhaps we should read that piece because you may not have seen how it stands out so obviously, the basic problem of the defeated Christian life.

Romans 7:14-20, I'll emphasize it a little but really if you would just stand back and look at that, the letter would pop right out to you. This letter "I" in the English alphabet. "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. So then it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh." Then verse 19-20, "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now, if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin which dwells within me." It just goes on over the next few verses. That's the problem. We find that "I" just fills the whole screen of our lives.

We find, too, another problem. We find that there is in us a desire that that should be so. So, in the Old Testament, it is expressed like this by Satan in Genesis 3:5, "For God knows that when you eat of it [the tree of knowledge] your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." That's exactly what we find ourselves to be.

We have Jesus' Spirit within us but "I" is in the center of everything and it is like a great capital city that begins to draw from the hinterland all the supplies that it can get. That's exactly what we do. We find a spirit developing inside us that is called a "spirit of sin" and we find it has a law within our members that we keep on seeming to want to get from other people and to draw from other people in all situations. That's what we call our evil sinful nature.

So, we, at times, want to give to others but we find this law of sin within us always trying to suck from other people and to get from other people. Of course, we saw that there is only one answer to that sinful nature and that is the answer that God outlined in Romans 6. You might look at it just in that verse that we've read so often. Romans 6:6, "We know that our former man was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin." That's what God did. He destroyed the sinful nature. The whole of the old perverted personality in Christ, he destroyed it there.

Then, do you notice what Paul says? He says, now that the sinful nature is destroyed, you're free to obey. Now, you can go back to obeying the law. No, he doesn't. You remember Romans 7:1, "Do you not know, brethren--for I am speaking to those who know the law--that the law is binding on a person only during his life?" Then, he says, in verse 4, just as with a husband and wife, when one dies, the other is free to marry again, "Likewise, my brethren, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead in order

that we may bear fruit for God." Then, he says, in verse 6, "But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive, so that we serve not under the old written code but in the new life of the Spirit."

He says, you're free from the old sinful nature but don't go to the law now. Don't say, oh, good, now I am free to obey the law and I can receive my directions from the law. Because, he says look what the law did to you before. It provoked the eye to think that it could do something and the eye began to take control of life and it was "I" that was carnal. It was "I" that didn't understand my own actions. It was "I" that did not do what I wanted and that exactly will happen to you all over again if now you are freed from the sinful nature you go on to try to make that real in your own life by your own power.

Then, he says, you know, in chapter 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death." You can almost begin to read that same word in place of the "I". In verse 5, "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace."

Then, verse 9, "But you are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you." Then, he goes on in verse 15, "For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God."

Loved ones, the only way to have the victory that Jesus has won for us over our sinful natures on Calvary made real in us is if the Spirit takes the place of the "I". Many of us have run into grave difficulties in our own experience of the victorious life because we've tried to make it real in our own lives by dint of our will power and of our obeying this law or, indeed, some of us have tried to make it a law ourselves. We've taken the truth that we were crucified with Christ and we've thought, ah, that's a great and a dynamic thought. Now, if I think about that enough and if I imagine it enough and if I dwell upon it, that has a psychic mentality and dynamic within it that will affect me.

Many of us have ended up in the legalism of what is known in these days as holiness. True holiness was a beautiful experience such as we're outlining. But, holiness today is a term of opprobrium because it so often speaks of the legalism that loved ones have fallen into who have tried to make the victory that Jesus won for us on Calvary real in their own lives by dint of their will power.

Loved ones, that will always happen to us. The ground of the deliverance from our sinful natures is what God has done to us in Jesus. It's the Cross of Calvary. But, the effective cause of that in our lives is the Holy Spirit. The ground of our deliverance from our sinful natures is that God has taken the whole race, put it into Jesus and destroyed it and remade it. But, the effective cause of that in our present life is the Holy Spirit. That's why Paul starts with the victory that God won for us in Calvary in chapter 6 and, in Romans 7, he says, now, don't then go to the law. Don't then start trying to make this real yourself. He goes to chapter 8, the great chapter on the Holy

Spirit. He says, it's been done on Calvary but only the Holy Spirit can make it real in you.

In other words, loved ones, if that nominative "I" remains the chief person in your life, you will fall back under the control of the sinful nature. You probably know enough grammar to know that "I" is the nominative, "me" is the accusative, it's the objective case. "I" is the nominative case. It always signifies grammatically the one that does the thing, the doer, the actor, the initiator. While we remain the initiators, we remain god of our own religious lives. Only when the Holy Spirit becomes the great nominative and the great actor and the great initiator are we delivered from the power of self and of the flesh.

That was the same in Jesus' own dear life. He attributed all that he was able to do, strangely enough, not to himself, but to the Holy Spirit. You might want to look at that in Luke 4:18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." It is interesting, isn't it? That even he has his own dear name in the accusative, "...upon me". I'm just the one that is acted upon. He says, "the Spirit of the Lord" is the nominative. He's the actor. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Jesus says, I was born to do these things but the Holy Spirit's anointing enables me to do them. Without his anointing, I am not able to do them. He's looking back, of course, to the practice in the Old Testament, of prophets like Samuel anointing David or Saul as king. You remember, they would anoint the kings or they would anoint the prophets and they would actually put oil upon them and you could be born a king. You could even be born a prophet. You could be even born a priest. But, you could only enter into your priesthood or your prophetic role or into your full rights if you were anointed. So, you only became able to do the thing if you were anointed.

Now, loved ones, that's what Jesus is looking back and saying, unless the Spirit of God anoints me, I am not able to do the things that I was born to do. Now, all of us were crucified with Christ. That's a fact. All of us here, every one of us, Christ died for all, therefore all died. Every one of us here has a nature that has been changed but you cannot enter into it without the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Unless the Holy Spirit becomes a dear person and the dear master of your life, you can believe Romans 6 forever and it will not affect you. All the faith that you have in the truth of Romans 6:6 will have no effect in your present life unless you are anointed by the Holy Spirit, unless the Holy Spirit takes the place of the "I".

Loved ones, it just cannot be, oh, thank you, Lord, I've been delivered from this need to be angry or this need to hate or criticize. Now, I can be what you want me to be. If you do that, you'll fall back into the old sinful nature because there are twins that bring about the victory in your life. The one is Christ's death on Calvary. The other is the Holy Spirit whom he regarded as the great purpose of his life. Now, I wonder, have you ever realized that? You'll see it in Luke 3:16, "John answered them all, 'I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.'" It's interesting, isn't it, that John the Baptist laid emphasis on that. He himself preached that they should repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. But, he said Jesus was coming to baptize them with the Holy Spirit.

You can see where so much of our Christian message is off base because it's simply the Old Testament gospel of the forgiveness of sins which was what John the Baptist came to preach. But, when John

the Baptist talked about Jesus, he didn't say, Jesus is also going to baptize you for the forgiveness of your sins. He said, Jesus is going to baptize you with the Holy Spirit. It's interesting that we so often think Jesus' death is what he came to do above everything else. Of course, Jesus saw it as a means to an end. He saw it as the method whereby he might purify us so that the Holy Spirit could come upon us, simply because the Holy Spirit cannot come upon flesh. So, for Jesus, his death was a means to an end, to the continuation of his mighty throne work at the right hand of God through the Holy Spirit dwelling in us.

That's, you remember, what the apostles said. They explained it that way in Acts 2:33. They explained the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as something that Jesus was at that moment doing from his position at the right hand of God. That is, of course, Jesus' special task now and what he loves to do for us. Acts 2:33, "Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this which you see and hear." So, Peter is saying Jesus received a promise from his Father, a promise of the Holy Spirit, and now Jesus is pouring this out upon you.

So, loved ones, Jesus' dearest wish for each one of us here tonight is to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, to be filled with the Holy Spirit, to make the acquaintance of the Holy Spirit, to begin to treat him as tenderly as Jesus was treated by the disciples. The anointing of the Holy Spirit brings about all the goodness of Jesus in us. The death of Christ does away with the sinful nature, does away with the old self, with the angry self, with the critical self. It's the power by which you are able to put to death all the things that are wrong in you. But, only the Holy Spirit can create in you the beauty of Christ.

That's why so many loved ones get half way through. They get to the point of sweeping all the evil spirits out of the house and then they lock the house up and they try to obey the law. They come back to the house and the empty house has been filled with far more spirits of evil than they had before. Because, of course, what should happen then is the Holy Spirit comes and says, "Behold, I stand at the door [of your house and your heart] and knock. If any man will open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him." [Revelations 3:20]

And, that's first what the Holy Spirit does. He sups with us. We are born of God and the Holy Spirit advises us. He comes as a guest, sits where we ask him to sit, the furniture remains as we placed it. He is our guest. He sups with us. We are still the primary movers when we're born of God. But, there comes this time in our lives when we see that we're about to lose everything because of this old self that is stirring within us. Then the Holy Spirit has to take the place of the host and he will sup with me. There has to come a time when it's not the Holy Spirit supping with us but we are supping with the Holy Spirit and he moves into control and he directs the arranging of the furniture and he tells us where we should sit.

Now, that's part of what it means, the change that occurs in the person who is born of God and the person who is baptized with the Holy Spirit. The one is still in control of his life to some extent, taking advice and, at times, commands from the Holy Spirit. The other is utterly the servant of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is able to reproduce in you the beauty of Jesus and that's what the anointing of the Holy Spirit means.

The anointing as you can see in the etymology actually of the English verb, "oint" is like ointment, and that's what the anointing of the Holy Spirit begins to do miraculously in your heart and in your life. He brings to it the same effect as that dear ointment that was used on Jesus' feet by Mary.

It's in John 12:3. Jesus came to the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. "Mary took a pound of costly ointment of pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the ointment."

The Holy Spirit when he anoints you brings the fragrance of Jesus into your life. He brings a sweetness to your thoughts. He makes your conscience a feast that you enjoy. He makes you a fragrant odor and a fragrant influence in the church. He makes you a fragrance in your office. He fills your own heart with beauty and with the sweetness of Jesus' love.

That's something you and I cannot do. We can produce a hard righteousness. We can even produce an appearance of the victory of the Cross. But only the Holy Spirit is able to complete this beautiful experience of sanctification by filling us with the beauty and the fragrance of Jesus' own life.

You cannot do that. I cannot do that. We cannot grab at the supernatural fragrance of Jesus' life.

It's a beauty of restraint and quietness. A beauty of holding back and being silent. A beauty of speaking at the right moment. A beauty of having thoughts of love rise in your heart that you do not produce yourself. The Holy Spirit brings those. He anoints you with the fragrance of Jesus' own life.

He strengthens you, too. The ointment can strengthen you and can heal you and make you whole. In fact, some people have said, it's interesting, if you look at the ingredients that make up the oil that they used to anoint the prophets and the priests and the kings in the Old Testament. Almost each ingredient has some quality that the Holy Spirit alone can bring to your life.

They list them in a book and one of them was myrrh. Myrrh is used to ease pain and to take the soreness out of a bruise. That's what the Holy Spirit does. He brings upon you such a supernatural fragrance and sweetness and healing balm that you do not feel the bruises. You really don't. I know a number of you have said, "Oh, brother, you do get hurt, don't you?" I mean I do feel hurt and I want to agree with you with all my heart because I want to encourage you. I want to agree with any degree of victory you have.

But the fact is you don't. The Holy Spirit anoints you with himself so that there is no hurt and there are no bruises and you remain concerned primarily for Jesus and for his cause. Of course, it's beautiful because you aren't distracted by all that silly business of self pity and poor me. So, you can continue to get on with the job that God has given you. But, the Holy Spirit takes the soreness out of bruises. So, if you push me and you say, "Not even for a moment you feel hurt?" It seems to be he acts immediately. It seems to me there isn't that delay. Oh, what a thing to say to poor me. Oh, well, I must bear it.

It isn't that. It's that the Holy Spirit acts immediately. It's as if the blow comes and the anointing of the Holy Spirit comes at the same time, so that there are no sore hearts. There are no people who are running around hurt at what so and so has said. In fact, if you ask them, they kind of feel that it's kind of irrelevant. Hurt? No. I'm not. I've been crucified with Christ. Can you get more hurt than that? I'm dead and I'm raised with Jesus and I'm there. The poor souls! They'll stub their toes on this old dead horse that they're trying to kick to death. And, it's more that spirit that comes to you.

It's an attitude that the Holy Spirit brings to you miraculously. It isn't a virtuous thing. It isn't something that you produce yourself by stoicism or by autosuggestion. The Holy Spirit anoints you with that quality that myrrh brings to the body. He takes the soreness out of your heart and

may I just say to you that you don't get that by asking him to do that. You get that by attending to the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is a gift. You remember that. Jesus said the Holy Spirit is the gift. The disciples used to preach and say, "Be baptized in Jesus for the remission of your sins and you shall receive the gift of immunity to pain?" No. You shall receive the gift of peace? No. You shall receive the gift of joy? No. You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

That, of course, loved ones, is what is so hurtful to God. When you and I treasure the gifts that the Holy Spirit brings or the graces that he anoints us with instead of the Holy Spirit himself. It's like me buying you a beautiful Bible and I choose it with great care and I put it in a beautiful presentation box and then I give it to you and you look at it and you take the paper off and then you take the box and you put the Bible aside and you say, boy, what a beautiful box! Thank you for the beautiful box! And, I say, no, it's not the box, it's the Bible! That's the gift! The box is just what comes with it and that's what we do when we treasure for our own satisfaction the things that the Holy Spirit brings. So, it's the Holy Spirit. When you treasure him as the gift and you concentrate on him, he anoints you and takes the soreness out of bruises.

Another ingredient is cinnamon. Most of us know cinnamon is a kind of fiery spice and it's used to stimulate and to stir you up. When the Holy Spirit anoints you with himself, you are not left in those periods of indolence or lethargy that so often we sink into when all the things that we have been worrying about for the moment kind of pass away. It is not that kind of lethargy or languid motionlessness. The Holy Spirit stirs you with a sweet effortlessness.

It is not the chugging and the thumping, I must save people for the kingdom. I must do this to prove that I am a Christian. I must do this because God asked me to. It is a sweet effortlessness that comes from within you. The Holy Spirit, you see, is always moving. I mean, isn't it beautiful when you waken in the morning and you look out and the branches are moving in the trees. He keeps on going. He doesn't seem to get tired. You look out at the water and it's twinkling in the sunlight. You look at the birds and they are moving. The whole place is moving. The Holy Spirit just keeps it going.

Now, when you're anointed with the Holy Spirit, he brings that kind of beautiful activity and effortless movement in you so that you join with all of the creation to praise God by doing his will in a way that comes from the very bottom of your heart. So, the Holy Spirit brings you that stimulus that takes the place of the old chugging, driving motivation that governs us so often from fear of our hope of reward.

Calamus is another ingredient that is used in the anointing oil of the Old Testament. Calamus is used to counteract acids and it takes the sourness out of the stomach. When the Holy Spirit anoints you with himself, you don't see the sourpusses. You don't have trouble with sourness in your stomach. You don't have that desire to get back at someone. You don't have that desire to wipe out against them. It just isn't there. There isn't that acidity within you. There isn't that desire to strike back at them or put them in their place. The Holy Spirit acts like calamus. He takes all the sourness out of your attitude to people and you're able to see Jesus in them, to see Jesus.

Loved ones, it isn't a trying business, you know. It isn't. Some of you have said to me, oh, brother, I see, well, you know, I try to think of the goodness in a person. Well, brave for you. Very good. You deserve the purple heart or whatever it is. But it isn't a matter of trying to see

the goodness. The Holy Spirit enables you to look for Jesus. It's a bit like what we said some evenings ago. The wheat sees the wheat and the chaff sees the chaff. The Holy Spirit, when he anoints you with himself, enables you to be so glad to see goodness wherever you can that you look for it under any stone and you're delighted when you find it.

The Holy Spirit enables you not to talk about the negative things and not to look for the negative things. So, if you say, it's a kind of voluntary blindness. It isn't. You just, you see the nice things. What Paul said comes true in you by the power of the Holy Spirit "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. {Philippians 4:8}

Instead of trying to do that, which most of us try to do for the rest of our lives and never succeed, the Holy Spirit himself brings this about. He does it if you treasure him and you look to him as your Lord and your Master and you refuse to grieve him. You refuse to resist him and you obey him in the apparent irrelevant things that he guides you to do. When you treasure him, he takes the sourness out of your stomach and your attitude to other people.

Cassia is another ingredient and it's used to nourish and strengthen the body. The Holy Spirit enables you to go through things that you could not otherwise face. I don't know if you remember those verses II Cor. 12:7-10, "And to keep me from being too elated by the abundance of revelations," Paul says, "a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to harass me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I besought the Lord about this, that it should leave me; but he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities; for when I am weak, then I am strong." The Holy Spirit strengthens you to bear things that you could not bear on your own.

Don't you think that's a great source of our defeat in our lives? We have the binoculars on to sight the first trouble that we reckon we cannot face or handle and we want to escape it. So, we step back from what God is telling us to do. When the Holy Spirit anoints you with himself, you need fear no demand whatever. No difficulties, no problems, physical or emotional, nothing is more than you with the Holy Spirit's anointing are able to bear. He strengthens your body and strengthens your emotions and gives strength to your mind so that you can face whatever.

And, that's why the apostles were looked upon as people, their critics said, they out thought and out lived their contemporaries. When all the others were running from the plague ridden cities, the Christians were back there saving their relatives in the midst of the plague. Wherever there was trouble and calamity, the Christians seemed to have supernatural strength and energy. The anointing of the Holy Spirit brings you that. In fact, as you move on in Jesus' service, it seems to me he directs you into things that are more and more beyond your own strength so that actually you'll sink deeper into him and be more and more enriched by his life. So, the Holy Spirit does that.

Another ingredient is olive oil. Olive oil smoothes and takes the wrinkles out of the skin. It's used by athletes to enable the limbs to move without friction. Of course, when the Holy Spirit anoints you with himself, he takes all those wrinkles out of your life. All those silly, little idiosyncrasies. Oh, I want to serve Jesus, but I want to serve him my way and you're all elbows. The elbows keep getting in the way of doing what Jesus wants you to do. You want your unique little

idiosyncrasy to be seen. Your unique little personality to be seen. When the Holy Spirit anoints you with himself, he smoothes all that out. You remember, of course, old Peter, before the anointing of the Holy Spirit, the little maid said, you're one of the Nazarenes and he said, no, I'm not, no, I'm not, and clumsily he said, no, no, I didn't even know them. Yeah, you were with the Nazarenes. No, I wasn't. Well, that's what we're like before the anointing of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit anoints you with himself, life becomes simple. Everything smoothes out and you just are what Jesus has made you.

Of course, without the anointing of the Holy Spirit, you do work up a friction. Everything gets hot. You're full of little hot boxes. You're too hot to get to the prayer meeting, you can't get to this meeting, and you can't go to that. If you deal with a Christian who is not anointed with the Holy Spirit, they usually drive you pretty crazy. Because they kind of have to fit Jesus' schedule into their schedule and they never manage to do it. So, if you ask them to do anything, they never have time or they're never there.

But, when the Holy Spirit anoints you with himself, suddenly all the friction is gone. All the hot boxes, all the limbs that won't move right, are smoothed out and cooled and the whole personality begins to flow. I think my dad used to say, if you want anything done, go to a busy man. If you want anything done, you go to the Holy Spirit anointed Christian because they're always able to do it. They're always cool and calm and they always have plenty of energy to do something else. Loved ones, the Holy Spirit's anointing brings that.

You know, as you listen to me describe that kind of person; please don't say, oh, I want to be, I'm going to be that. No. Turn around, turn around. Look within. Speak to that dear person who is inside you and say, Holy Spirit, I believe you can anoint me with yourself so that I become like that. I believe you can fill me with the fragrance and the sweetness of my Lord. I believe you can make me like Jesus. Holy Spirit, I believe I was crucified with Christ. I believe that and, if there's anything there that I don't believe, you let me know. If there's anything that I'm not willing to accept there, you let me know. But, Holy Spirit, you alone can make me like Jesus. Now, I ask you Holy Spirit to become the Lord and the Master of my life.

Loved ones, there is just a sweet and holy restraint that comes into your life when you strike up that kind of relationship with the Holy Spirit. There's just a difference upon you. There's a sense at last that you are what you want to be and you are what you say you are. The Holy Spirit's anointing alone can bring that about. He is in you. I've told you that. You couldn't even sit through this stuff if the Holy Spirit wasn't in you. So, he is in you. But, he does want to take full control and possession of your life.

The fact is you and I have got used to a thousand ways of acting and living that do not, simply not consult him, but we don't make provision for him. Remember, there's that piece in the Bible, make no provision for the flesh. [Romans 13:14] Well, we make no provision for the Holy Spirit. We just are used, "I", "I", "I", "I". Oh, yes, "I" am doing good. "I" am trying to do Jesus' work. "I" am trying to be like Jesus but it is "I" and so the Holy Spirit cannot get a word in edgewise. He can't get us to listen to him because we simply don't look to him to hear him.

Now, loved ones, it means being willing to let him rule your life. That's it. All that has ruled your life up to now has been destroyed with Jesus. That has no power over you and you can believe that. But, only the Holy Spirit can make you like Jesus. Jesus' death delivers you from being a devil. The Holy Spirit alone can anoint you to be a saint. Of course, I mentioned it before, the

reason is obvious. The heart of sin is “I” movement, “I” movement, whether it be “I” movement like the Pharisees for goodness or “I” movement like the Romans were evil. It's “I” movement.

Loved Ones, the only one who can displace that incorrigible “I” is the Holy Spirit himself and that's why Jesus has sent him to us.

Let us pray.