

Faithless Living

Genesis 4

by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

We're so used to strain in everyday life that it's hard to get hold of the idea that we are meant to live in peace, we really are, we're meant to live in peace. And it is possible to live in peace, loved ones; it is possible to live in peace and deep faith in God and that's why we're talking in these Sunday evenings about the life of faith. Because the truth is that when you are disappointed in something, if somebody let's you down, or something doesn't work the way you thought it should work, that's really the time when God is trying to get you to stop using crutches and to lean on him.

It's really a good time -- I'm with you -- I feel just the same as you do; when those moments come, you think, "Ah, that person let me down or that thing didn't turn out the way I thought it would" or some happiness that you had planned doesn't come about. But it is a time when God is trying to wean you away from all the little happiness's that we create. It is so hard for us to see it, but that's what we're doing; we're trying to create a little world of little happiness's and little good hopes that will keep us going without him and he's just gently coming along and pulling these crutches out from under us and telling us, "Look, if you will lean on me, and I appear to be nothing -- I know you can't see me -- but if you lean on me, I'll strengthen your legs so that you won't need a crutch." And that's what he's doing so be patient as he works. We are going through the same thing, and it is his goodness that allows these things to come in.

So that's why we are talking about the life of faith, and I thought it would be good to start at the beginning of the Old Testament and go right through it and allow God to speak to us about himself and encourage us to lean on him more in our own lives. So that's how we reached Genesis 4. Genesis 4 has something very real to say to us; it's the record, you remember, of Cain and Abel. So if you turn to it loved ones, I'll share with you the way God showed me we should begin the study of this chapter.

You're lying in bed at night and you feel a sharp pain in your side and you spend a miserable night. You get to the doctor at his office the next morning and he diagnoses appendicitis. He arranges hospitalization and sets up the surgery and the operation for you for the next week and meanwhile he says, "Here are some pain pills, they'll keep you going until you're able to get into the surgery." Well, you take the pain pills and you remember next week is vacation week, your annual vacation, and you're feeling better. And three weeks later the poor old doc is still trying to get you to go for that operation. He's still persuading you, "Look I know you feel better with the pain pills, but believe me, if you keep going this way, the appendix will burst and you could die." And in a way you're as good as a dead man or as good as a dead woman if you keep on going around like this; walking as if you're not really sick. Now that's exactly the situation at the end of Genesis 3.

God started our hearts beating and then he said; "Now I want you to organize this world that I have given you, and I want you to organize it by faith in the supernatural life that I have given you to start your heart beating. I'll give you more of that supernatural life if you acknowledge me and trust me. I'll give it to you and I'll keep giving it to you." And we, of course, began to feel the old heart beating inside like that dear guy who's struggling at the moment, with that artificial heart. And we began to think that these batteries were actually generators. We didn't realize that

it needed to be charged and we began to feel "Ah, good, this heart is so strong, I'll be able to organize this world with the life that I have without receiving anymore new stuff and we'll be able to be the gods of creation by the life that we possess." And so that's what we did.

God kept warning us -- he said "Listen, if you try to do this by your own knowledge of what is right or wrong, without receiving from me more of this supernatural life that I gave you to start your heart beating, you're going to die, and you're going to be cut off from me forever." But we refused to believe that and very much like the guy who was warned he had appendicitis or the girl that was warned she would have to have an operation, once we got the pain pills and kept going for a while, we began to feel "Nah, we can do this on our own." Now of course what happened was, as we began to live independent of God, and as we began to do without his Holy Spirit, so the lack of the Holy Spirit actually took the same toll on us as the lack of blood flowing to your brain. I don't know if you realize it, but one of the things that concerned them about the guy who was on the artificial heart was that he wouldn't get sufficient blood to his brain and the brain could be damaged permanently.

That's what happened as we began to live without the Holy Spirit; our personalities began to be affected and they began to deteriorate. And as we began to live trusting just in ourselves and our own resources, our minds began to be impaired. And actually your mind isn't the mind that Adam had, you know. The mind that Adam had was way beyond even the mind that Einstein had; it was a mind that worked perfectly and could move by the intuition of the Father directly and was able to discern all kinds of things that our poor impaired minds cannot. And our emotions were not as unbalanced as they are now. Our emotions were once beautifully balanced in absolute peace all the time, but our emotions began to be unbalanced, and these old bodies were not as weak as they are now.

I don't know if you have read about that disease that seems to be passed on through homosexuals, but then through blood transfusions and is now attacking children? It breaks down all their immunity, all their ability to have immunity against germs. Now that's just an extreme example of the way our bodies are much weaker than they were when God originally made us. And so our whole personalities began to be effected through lack of receiving the Spirit of God's supernatural life into us. And of course our personalities themselves became utterly corrupted. They were meant to work from the inside -- from a sense of God's love of us and a sense of our spirit being fed with his Spirit. And then we were meant to feed that out through our minds and emotions, and not through our bodies, to other people, so that we actually would be absolutely self-contained in God. That is; we wouldn't need anything from each other we would simply give to each other because we were full, as Jesus was, of love. We wouldn't give to each other because each other needed it, but we would give something because we were filled with life and love.

And of course all that was reversed, and we began to try to get from each other what love we ought to have got from God so the whole personality was reversed and corrupted, and we fell into increasing decay. God, of course, had foreseen all of that and he had received us into his office and said "I prescribe for you an operation and in fact I have arranged an operation in my son that will completely change your decaying personality and will completely reverse it and turn it around, so that you will no longer have to depend on each other. You will again be able to depend on me. But it's an operation that you have to have done." And that operation is the one that is mentioned, loves ones, if you look at it, in Revelation Chapter 13:8; "And all who dwell on earth will worship it, every one whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain."

Even if you read it that way, which is the wrong order as we know from the Greek, it still means that the names were written before the foundation of the world in the book of the life of the Lamb that was slain. But in actual fact the Greek reads "everyone whose name has not been written in the book of life of the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world." In other words the adverbial phrase of time "before the foundation of the world" actually modifies the verb slain. So it reads: "the book of life of the Lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world." And God foresaw what would happen to us and he put us all into his son. We were all crucified there and raised, actually, before the foundation of the world.

That's why you find that statement made in II Corinthians 5:14 -- it may be new to some of you here who have not thought about it before and you may wonder, well really, is that in other bits of the Bible? It fits in with Einstein's whole theory of relativity that time is one great eternal moment, but of course, it's new to many of us. II Corinthians 5:14 repeats it: "For the love of Christ controls us because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died." And then what God did was he enabled these batteries in here [in the heart] to run us for another 70 years and he said "I'll give you 70 years to give you the opportunity to realize what I've done for you in Jesus and to have faith in that and to begin to live again in faith on the supernatural life that I originally intended you to live off." And that was our situation.

Of course, Satan has been intent ever from the beginning to persuade us, "You don't need that. You don't need that operation. You can do without it." In fact, the first time he said it, you remember, was back in Genesis 3:4, "But the serpent said to the woman, 'You will not die.'" That has been Satan's plan from the very beginning; to get us to believe that we wouldn't die and there was no need to have this operation that was wrought in Jesus -- there was no need for it. And so that's really the explanation of the whole Cain and Abel story; it's really the attempt of Satan to spread throughout the world the lie that this operation is not needed, that the lamb was not slain from before the foundation of the world, and that there is no need for this personality of ours to be changed radically by what God has done to us in Jesus. In fact his whole argument is, "There was never a fall. There was never a fall. Don't believe it. You never did fall. Nothing has ever happened to your personalities that God did not make them to be. Don't believe that. You're okay. If you just try a little harder, a little more will power, you can live like God without anything being done inside by God himself." And of course it's a pernicious lie -- it's a cruel and pernicious lie. Because it's saying to little ones -- whom he knows he cannot possibly lift this weight -- he's saying: "Lift it, come on, lift it, you can lift it, try again, try again." It's known as healthy minded optimism. That's it. It's healthy minded optimism. It's the power of positive thinking. It's the whole lie that has been spread throughout our history that nothing happened to us when we fell out of God's fellowship that cannot be rectified by our own will power and our own self effort. And of course, it's cruel and you see what it does -- it prevents anybody seeking the remedy.

I mean If you don't believe you're sick, you won't believe there's a remedy and indeed you won't feel a need to seek a remedy and you'll say, "I'm not sick -- I'm okay. There was no fall. There was nothing that happened to my personality that changed it radically. I'm not sick. I don't need a remedy." In other words, if you can keep the pain pills popping, and keep saying to the doc, "Hmm doc, I feel good, I feel good" then that appendicitis can continue to develop inside you and can eventually burst and destroy you and you will never know why you died. And that is Satan's great lie, loved ones.

It fills our present attitude in philosophy; you know that; Dr. Spock started back in Genesis 4.

Dr. Spock and the whole belief that we are inherently good and that there is absolutely no reason on earth why, given good surroundings, good environment and a good dose of will power we cannot live as we were meant to live. It sounds so kind, it sounds so optimistic, and it sounds so upbeat. But really it's the most cruel and pernicious lie you could tell to anyone. Well you can imagine what its like -- it's like that doctor diagnosing acute appendicitis in you and then saying "Go out, take these pain pills and if you keep going and keep exercising you'll be okay; you'll live to be a hundred." Well, it's not only a lie, but it's a rotten and cruel lie because it persuades you that you do not need any surgery and that you can do it yourself. It is really the final self-righteousness.

Now that's, loved ones, the explanation of the Cain and Abel story. If you'd like to look at it, its Genesis 4:1, "Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, 'I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord.' And again, she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. In the course of time, Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell."

Now why did God not accept Cain's offering? Both the brothers came and offered something to God and God rejected Cain's offering and accepted Abel's. Why? It's mentioned in Hebrews 11:4, "By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he received approval as righteous." So you see, Abel offered it by faith through which he received approval as righteous; "God bearing witness by accepting his gifts; he died [Abel], but through his faith he is still speaking." So the Bible says God accepted Abel's offering because it was offered by faith and therefore, he received approval as righteous. By faith in what -- what kind of faith causes God to declare you righteous? It's Romans 4:22 if you look at it. "That is why his faith was 'reckoned to him as righteousness.' But the words, 'it was reckoned to him,' were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him that raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification."

Abel had that faith; that's why he offered what he did. You see in Genesis 4 if you look at the two gifts in verse 3 of Genesis 4; "In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, and Abel brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions" which he had to kill an animal to produce. Cain came with the fruit of the ground and said, "I thank you Lord that you are my Creator." And Abel came and said, "Lord, I present this blood before you because I thank you that you are my redeemer. And I thank you that you have done a work, that I don't fully understand, somewhere in eternity that has enabled you to change what I became when I was born of my mother and my father, but I thank you Lord that you have redeemed me. I don't understand at all." And yet we don't really know how much he understood. "I don't understand at all, but I know that there was a terrible death that took place in your heart and in that death, you changed me and you reversed all the effects of the fall of the Garden of Eden."

And loved ones, it falls right in with what we shared before; if you look at back at Genesis 3:21 that's the first intimation that death took place; "And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins" of course animals had to be killed to produce those skins and so right from the fall, God was indicating the only way I can change this is by a death. I cannot explain to you, mankind in its childhood, how cosmic that death is, but it has to be by death; I have to destroy everything and start over again.

Abel acknowledged what is mentioned there in Genesis 3:15, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." And you remember he, the seed of the woman, Jesus, shall bruise your head, Satan; shall actually trample your head under foot and eventually cast you into the Lake of Fire even though you should bruise his heel. You will bring wounds upon his body and God-forsakenness into his heart as he goes through hell for all of us, but still, he will be the Savior that will come and die -- and Abel acknowledged that. So he offered his gift by faith in what God had done to change him. And loved ones that's the first essential step for us living in faith; that's how we differ so strongly from the power of positive thinking people and the healthy minded optimistic people, and the whole tendency of our present society in the past especially to have said, "There's no need for any change -- you can do it, you can do it."

And Satan is still at that and you know that -- the idea of being crucified with Christ is attacked more strongly by Satan than any other because it's the heart of victory; it's the secret to a victorious life, so you know that Satan does all kinds of things to wipe it out. He tries to create in us the feeling that it's a purely emotional experience that we can never achieve and so he creates a sense that you have to start a feeling inside you that this has happened. And on the other side, in evangelical Christendom, he creates the sense that it's just an assent-- it's just an intellectual assent to what Christ has done for you on the cross. He'll do anything to keep us from entering into that operation and into that surgery and being delivered from within. And of course, as long as we refuse that, we'll find we enter into the same kind of life as Cain, a life of hopelessness -- because that was the beginning of the faithless generation, loved ones. Cain was the faithless generation and he begat a whole civilization that lived like that. Let's look at verse 5, "but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell." Still, God is always involved and trying to call us back to what has happened in Calvary. He's always trying to say, "Look, it's real. It's real" so he's even then holding onto Cain. Verse 6, "The Lord said to Cain, 'Why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted?'"

So God was saying, "Look, if things are right inside you, I'll accept you, you know that. Now if I've rejected you, it's because something is wrong inside you, don't you see that?" So even after the incident that had happened, God was saying, "There's something wrong inside you" and it's still with us, loved ones -- really. If you find that something is wriggling and twisting and turning inside you that will not obey, then that's God lovingly and kindly saying, "There's an answer for that, don't pretend that it isn't there. Don't get angry with it and don't get sad and depressed. There is an answer for this -- I have delivered you in Jesus. There is closeness to my son that you can enter into that will deliver you from that." Loved ones -- see it that way -- grab for him with all your heart. Grab for Jesus; don't grab for theories, don't grab for me, don't grab for this guy or that girl, don't grab for principles or doctrines -- grab for Jesus! Say, "Lord, I'm dying inside. I'm still having trouble with these things that overcome me. Lord Jesus, I know I was cleared of that in you. Lord, take me. Take me in. I want to pull you into myself." That's it, loved ones; that's what accepting Jesus is. Accepting Jesus is not "I accept the idea that Jesus died for my sins." Accepting Jesus is "Lord, I have to get into you somehow or another, let me come into you." And that's what God is saying, you see, when we have difficulties. He's saying, "Why are you troubled -- if you do well, you'll be accepted. If you don't do well, it's because there's something inside that I have delivered you from in my son and if you grab for my son desperately enough, I can show you that. If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door." God was saying, "The greatest sin of all is to reject the provision that I have made for your deliverance." Do you remember that verse in John 16:8 "And when he [the

Holy Spirit] comes, he will convince the world concerning sin [verse 9] because they do not believe in me.”

The greatest sin is not believing in Jesus -- that's sin. The greatest sin is rejecting your death with Christ. That's the greatest sin of all and that's what God was saying, "Sin is ready to eat you up. If you're not doing well it's because you are not receiving the position that I've given you in my son; you're not accepting the change I've wrought in him and sin is right there ready to take over." And of course, sin is "I don't need that! I don't need that kind of deliverance! I can do it on my own! Sin is S-I-N; Sin - I -not -- I am not sinning! I am not unrighteous! I can do this on my own by my own power!"

That's sin. It's standing up on your own and saying, "Whatever happened to me in the fall, I can overcome myself" and God is saying "This thing is greater than you; you cannot overcome it, only I can deliver you" and that was the situation with Abel. Of course, this is so hostile to the carnal heart that either the carnal heart must die or the carnal heart must kill that and you can see that. That's what happened in AIDS: you either have to enter into that or destroy it. You might have wondered why people are so antagonistic against this thing. Why do they want to destroy it? Because it's either them or it; it's either -- you have to go or this truth has to go. And that's what happened, you see; it kills. The carnal self that will not allow itself to be changed goes out and aggressively kills, and that's in verse 8. "Cain said to Abel his brother, 'Let us go out into the field. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.' And even then "Then the Lord said to Cain, 'Where is Abel your brother? He said, 'I do not know'" a lie. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

When you don't enter into what God has for you, then you begin to alienate yourself from other people and you begin to feel that it's me alone that counts. [Verse 10] "And the Lord said, 'What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground.'" And loved ones if we don't enter into the death and the resurrection that God has for us, our lives get filled with death. That's right -- your life fills with death. It's interesting; if you don't enter into your death with Jesus, you see death everywhere. And if you enter into your death with Jesus, you see life everywhere. But if you don't come into what God has for us, then blood is all around you, and death. [Verse 11] "And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wonderer on the earth." You see what happened; "When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength." And that's why many of us feel life isn't going right; it isn't working right: "I do what I'm supposed to do and it's not working. I do what others do and it works for them and it doesn't work for me. I till this ground and you'll see at harvest that it's not yielding for me." It's because the earth yields according to the faith of a man or a woman in God's power and God's life. It does not yield according to the actual things that you do, though you have to do them, but it yields to your faith in God, and your faith in his life, and your faith in the fact that he completely renewed you and made you like himself.

So that's why when you find that life isn't working right, it's usually because, in fact, you're not living by faith in the Father. Or you're involved in trying to do some things that he doesn't want you do to at all; usually when you're putting your faith in him, the thing works. There are some obstacles, some difficulties to strengthen your faith, but the thing has a flow to it and there's some kind of flow of the Spirit in it. [verse 12] "When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength; you shall be a fugitive and a wonderer on the earth. Cain said to the Lord, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me this day away from the

ground; and from their face I shall be hidden; and I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will slay me.”

And, of course, we're already a generation of fugitives and wanderers; we know that. What all the psychologists talk about is the alienation that we all feel and that we're a rootless generation; that we have no roots, we have no basis. The reason the program “Roots” was so important to all of us was we thought “Oh roots -- that's what we need -- if we can find our way back from where we came from then we'll have some stability and some balance.” But of course the reason [we feel rootless] is that we're fugitives and wanderers because we do not rest in the Father who is willing to give us everything we need in this life. Had God left us to ourselves, you realize we would have chewed each other up -- that's why Cain says, “Whoever finds me will slay me.” We would have chewed each other up. That's it. In fact, you see it in these days, don't you? You see it in situations like Iran and actually you see it even in our own situation, at times, don't you, where people would almost consume each other and in actual fact if God had left us to ourselves after being born of Cain, we would have just killed each other outright -- we'd have destroyed each other. And that's why God did bring in these pain pills, as it were -- as you see what he did in verse 15, “Then the Lord said to him, ‘Not so! If anyone slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.’ And the Lord put a mark on Cain lest anyone who came upon him should kill him. Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden.”

God actually, by strengthening our consciences which were almost dead after we had been cut off from the Holy Spirit in the Garden of Eden -- by strengthening our conscience and by strengthening the rule of law, God prevented us from destroying each other. And he did that, of course, so we would still have a chance of entering into what he had wrought in Jesus on our behalf. We would have destroyed each other if God had not strengthened our consciences and brought the rule of law into the world. “Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, east of Eden.”

It's very interesting that “East of Eden”, you remember, brings to you Steinbeck's novel and there is a book called “The Mark of Cain”, that some of you know, traces some of the truths of scripture right through the literature of the world. And he [the writer] says in relationship to this “East of Eden”, “Hamilton in John Steinbeck's novel East of Eden relates two stories that haunted us and followed us from our beginning; the story of original sin and the story of Cain and Abel and I don't understand either of them. It is these stories” the editor says “which provide the pattern of Steinbeck's exploration of the mystery of inherited guilt, of recurrent evil; first in the unhappy lives of Adam and his brother Charles and then in the lives of Adam's twins Caleb and Aaron in the original “East of Eden” novel. Lee, the faithful Chinese servant, who has the instincts of a philosopher, insists that the curse of guilt can be lifted. He tells them that in the Biblical narrative when God speaks to Cain he uses the Hebrew word, “timshel”.” That's the word that we translated “Sin is coaching at the door; its desire is for you but you must master it.” And the Chinese servant says, “The word is timshel, this word, Lee explains, carries with it if not the promise, at least the possibility of victory; thou mayest triumph over sin.” Actually that's the right translation; not “you must master it”, but “you may triumph over it.” “The conclusion of the novel, negatively expressed is “Thou mayest, thou mayest, what glory.” And I don't know if you've read East of Eden, but it's amazing, you know, that that is the echo way in the back; “you may triumph over sin if you really want that.” And so despite that Cain went out of the garden and went East of Eden. And then in verse 17 you find that he generated a faithless civilization; “Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch; and he built a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.”

It's not fair, I think, that cities therefore are the result of fallen man; it seems that God had left in us a good deal of his own image and we continue in some way to express that image and we built cities in the early days. It shows you too that the deterioration that has taken place in our minds has been a gradual one. The indication that the Incas and even the people before that created magnificent civilizations; the implication that the Chinese were able to measure the planets and the stars in amazing ways despite the fact that they hadn't our computers, is an indication that you have here also, that in the early days of mankind our brains still had a great deal of the infinite capabilities that were given at the very beginning. It was a gradual deterioration that took place down through society so you get the mention, you remember, of these amazing manufacturing capabilities that they had.

Verse 18, "To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael the father of Methushael, and Methushael the father of Lamech. And Lamech took two wives; the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have cattle. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who played the lyre and pipe. Zillah bore Tubalcain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron." Obviously way, way before we knew of our Iron Age, there was a very high degree of civilization and great capacities for manufacture in the early days. "The sister of Tubalcain was Naamah. Lamech said to his wives, 'Adah and Zillah, hear my voice.'

And of course, this was the tragedy; the early civilization had all these capacities but it had them with that arrogance that it was by our own strength, by the strength of our own life we are doing this and you see that in verse 23: "Lamech said to his wives: 'Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, hearken to what I say: I have slain a man for wounding me.'" Actually the Hebrew is "I will slay a man." So Lamech was saying, "I will slay anyone that wounds me, a young man for striking me; anybody that hurts me in the least, I'll take vengeance" [Lamech continues] "If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold." So it was a proud and arrogant generation and civilization that was proud in their own strength and their own power and knew nothing of the deliverance from self that was available from even the fall in the Garden of Eden. That's why, of course, God had to start again and he did --- you see that in Verse 25. "And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth." That means the appointed one. "For she said, "God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, for Cain slew him. To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time men began to call upon the name of the Lord." And God began again and created, through Seth, a new generation who could again have a chance of living by faith. Of course, we know that in our society the two civilizations are still represented. And you and I are one or the other.

Let's pray.

Dear Father. We know that you want us to be of Seth's generation, we know that Lord. You want us to be like Abel who brought a sacrifice that required the shedding of blood that symbolized the blood that was shed on Calvary in your dear heart for each one of us. And, oh, Father, if you see in us a self-righteousness such as Cain had that declared that we have no need of cleansing, we have no need of deliverance, we have no need of embracing the sacrificial lamb on Calvary, we have no need of being lifted up on that cross with Jesus, we have no need to be willing to face what he faced; Lord, if you see any of that in us, we ask you, Father, to speak directly to our consciences and show us the horror and the pride and the futility of trying to cleanse ourselves by our willpower and our self-effort, and enable us to see that there is only one way; and that is to believe that you

destroyed us, as we are, back in Calvary, and back before that, in eternity. You have a completely new being to reveal to us, and in us, this very night.

Dear Father, we want that tonight. Lord, we want to leave behind all that we have been even up to this present moment and we want to let that be taken to the tomb with Jesus. And, oh, Father, we want to receive that new person that you have made us. We want to receive that new being off the shelf in heaven and allow it to fill us here, now, and from this moment on to be that new person, to be that new creation. Christ Jesus, Holy Spirit, show us what has to go; show us what we have to leave behind; show us what we have to let go of. Lord, if you see any of the pride of Cain in us, any of that murderous desire, to destroy, Lord, will you show us that? Enable us now to see that that must die or it will kill us. Dear Father, Lord Jesus, we see you as a bride coming out of heaven. Oh Lord, we would receive you into ourselves now, and we would let you take away from us what you destroyed in Calvary. And from this moment on, live by faith that you have changed us and delivered us and that we can live above sin because you have made us new people who are victorious. Dear Lord, we thank you. Thank you for your goodness. Thank you for your dear word, in Jesus' name.

Now, the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us, now and throughout this coming week. Amen.