

ONLY ONE ATTITUDE TOWARDS EVIL

Transcript of a clip from the talk MADE FOR ADVERSITY by Rev. Ernest O'Neill.

So there are many theists. A theist is one who believes that there is some kind of supreme being but they don't know what He or it is like. So many theists accept the existence of evil as a necessary nuisance or a necessary inconvenience or a necessary unpleasantness, if we are going to have the possibility of free will here in the universe. That's the attitude they take.

They say, "All right, it's a less than the best way to ensure that we have free will to choose. It's not the best we could hope for, it's a nuisance, evil is a necessary nuisance and inconvenience. It's a necessary phenomenon that we have to put up within our world if we're going to have the possibility of free will here.

The interesting thing is that many of us who call ourselves children of God, we have that same attitude to evil. We have the same attitude as theists. We say, "Well, it's certainly not the best but we have to put up with it if we're going to have free will. So evil is an unpleasant experience that we have to face", and it's interesting that that reflects in our day-to-day attitude to all kinds of little evils that come into our lives, not just the big evils like communism overwhelming the country or being inflicted with sickness of some kind but the little inconveniences that come into our lives day-by-day, that's the kind of attitude we have to them.

We have the kind of attitude that comes from feeling that evil is a necessary nuisance and inconvenience that we would be better without. That's why we get irritated and why we get exasperated when we can't find the sweater or the shoes that we placed carefully in one position in our bedroom for the appointment that we had to make tonight and the chaotic carelessness of our roommate has taken care of our perfect placing of that sweater or shoes. That's why we get irritated or exasperated with them.

We think, "This is an unfair intrusion, on the otherwise perfect, flawless plan that God has for my life". That's why we regard ourselves as valiant martyrs when we find we have relatives even husbands or wives, but relatives of any kind that irk us and that frustrate our lives and that limit the possibilities of our futures. That's why we get exasperated with them.

Why we think we are valiant martyrs to put up with them. Because actually we are taking a theistic attitude to evil that it is a necessary evil, that it is a necessary inconvenience and nuisance that spoils the otherwise flawless, perfect, cloudless plan that God has for our lives and that's why we get exasperated and irritated when the flat occurs on our way to the barbeque. That's why we get irked and exasperated when we find some one doing something that affects our lives adversely.

We regard it as something that we should just not have to put up with. I mean our dear God certainly didn't intend us to be inconvenienced in this way, and so we have an attitude that resents every impact that evil or inconvenience makes upon our lives. We're always involved in the old cry of Adam, you know, "Oh well, it wasn't me Lord. It was the woman that Thou gave us to be with me in the garden. She gave me of the fruit and I did eat".

It is interesting how many of us here spend how many hours each week pointing out how somebody else has caused us to experience this or to have to do that. It's interesting how many of us spend our lives blaming other people or blaming other circumstances or blaming other events and we're very

sharp, we put it all under the general heading of evil. It's evil. Evil powers are trying to spoil my life and that's why I fail.

It is very interesting you know, that's completely different from the attitude that our dear Father takes towards evil. Our dear Father in heaven and Jesus, His Son, they never regard anything as something to be resented. They never regard anything as something that cannot be handled. They never regard anything especially as pervasive a thing as evil as something that you should not work into the whole plan for your life and in fact that's what God has done.

He has taken a whole positive attitude to evil and He expresses it you remember, if you like to look at it in Romans 9:22. And it is so different loved ones, from our carping, complaining attitude you know.

Romans 9:22, "What if God desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power", so He certainly wants to do that. He doesn't agree with evil. He didn't create evil. He doesn't want it. He hates with all His heart every angry word that has been spoken, every wrathful act that has destroyed a life. So He wants to show His wrath and to make known His power when He faces a person like Hitler or He faces something that's coming into your life and spoiling it but, "What if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power has endured with much patience, the vessels of wrath made for destruction".

So God faces them with absolute patience. He accepts them as part of the permissive plan that He has now allowed to come about in the universe and that's the negative side finished with. That's the only amount of negativeness that God expresses, that's it finished with, all the rest is positive. Why? In order to make known the riches of His glory for the vessels of mercy, which He has prepared beforehand for glory.

In other words, God allows powers of evil to continue so that He may have the opportunity to lend His life and His strength and His courage to the victims of that evil, so that they, in turn, will become more like Him and so God and Jesus have none of this down at the mouth, let's grin and bear it, let's put up with an attitude to evil, they embrace it with joy because they devise another plan for it and what Satan and others intend for your harm, God intends for your good.

So God allows Hitler to imprison Corrie Ten Boom in a concentration camp so that she will reach up to Jesus for the love which He alone can give her for the Gestapo and for her warders and then she expresses that love to them in her own life and in her books and the general result is that the very character of God is more fully and strongly expressed in His world than it would have been, had God destroyed Hitler the moment He was born and that's the attitude that God and Jesus take to evil.

They accept evil in the world as something that they did not originally plan but as something that is a necessary concomitant of free will and then they work it into the beautiful plan that they have for us in our own lives.

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