

Spiritual Warfare 1: Passivity

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

I'll just explain where we are in our studies of the Spiritual Life. This is the second year of what normally takes us three years. And what we're trying to concentrate on is the life in the spirit and how to walk in the spirit. So I'd just maybe mention to you again, that it is really better if those of us who come on Sunday evening are children of God. That is, are born of the Spirit. It is very difficult for loved ones who aren't born of the Spirit to really understand the things that Jesus is sharing with us on Sunday evening in a spiritual way. So I'd just mention that to you.

What we have done is spend the first year talking about the New Birth, the Baptism of the Spirit, and Walking after the Spirit. Now, this year what we're beginning to try to do is deal with the spirit -- the spirit inside us -- and talk about the different parts of the spirit and how it operates. But just before we concentrate on that we've been trying to hit some general truths. And the one I'd like to share a little about tonight as God's Spirit gives us wisdom is spiritual warfare. And it may be, loved ones, that the Holy Spirit will keep us on that for several Sundays but at least we can start it this evening.

Now, if those of you who know all this would just be patient, I really do think it's necessary to mention it. What we see in scripture is a certain outline of the psychology of our own personalities. And it's the outline in 1 Thessalonians 5:23. And if you don't know that verse then look it up and if you do know it just say it again to yourselves with joy. 1 Thessalonians 5:23, "May the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And that, loved ones, is really the outline of the personality that the scripture gives us.

This verse says that we have three different levels to our personality: the spirit; the soul; and the body. Now, last year we followed out all the times that the spirit is mentioned in the Old and New Testament and the times that the soul is mentioned and we began to see that they each have these functions. The spirit inside us is able to commune with God; that's where we commune with God. Through that communion we're able through our intuition to know what God wants us to do. Our conscience judges us and our actions on the basis of that intuition and constrains our wills. Our wills are the vital link between our souls and our spirits. Our conscience constrains our will to direct our mind and our emotions to do what God is guiding us to do through our bodies so that it affects his world. That is God's plan for the operation of your personality and of mine.

May I just point out so that you see the relevance of it all -- some of us, especially in evangelical circles, get into real trouble because instead of allowing our conscience -- which is part of our spirits and which is receiving the information that we have in our intuitions through our communion with God -- instead of letting our conscience constrain our wills to direct our mind and emotions to do what God is telling us, we often break completely the connection between our conscience and our wills. And many of us feed our wills with what our mind is receiving from other people and so many of us in evangelical circles run our lives by the accepted standards of our particular group, or our particular church. And the whole concentration of our wills is on being at the right prayer meetings that they want us to be at, and not going to the theater if they don't

want us to go to the theater, and reading the Bible as they tell us to read the Bible.

And often the Holy Spirit of God is trying to get at some other subtle things that are present in our lives through our conscience and we don't listen to our conscience. We run our wills by the information that we get from our minds instead of by the revelation that we receive through our spirits. And often many of us wonder why we are not growing in God and it is because we are running our lives by the external information that we get from our particular reinforcement group instead of by the true light that God is trying to get through to us through our spirits.

Anyway loved ones, that was the way God planned for us to operate – from the inside out. [pointing to a diagram of Body, Soul and Spirit] Each one of us here have certain things to do, certain lives to live -- and it was God's will that his Holy Spirit would reveal that to us as we're in communion with him, which is why we spent so many weeks on prayer. Because, if you don't pray and if you have no living communion with God, you'll receive no direction from him at all. So it is God's plan for his Holy Spirit in communion and in prayer to tell us the things that he wants us to do.

Now loved ones, it doesn't come like, "Get up and stand on your head and say the Lord's Prayer backwards." It doesn't come like that. Sometimes the Father gives us very clear directions that are either mental thoughts or impressions in our spirits, or at odd times verbal directions in prayer. But normally, I'll tell you this, it's like walking with a friend. It's like walking with a dear friend down through the years whom you get to know more and more in communion until you just know what they want you to do. You just know it.

It's like a dear husband and wife who have been together for years. You ask the husband what the wife would like to do this evening and you suggest ten things; he knows whether she'll want to do those things or not. Not because he's talked about them but because he knows the kind of person she is and he understands her nature. Now, that's the way we mean God gets his directions to our lives. Through communion we receive intuition of what he wants us to do and our conscience then constrains our will to do that. And it is his will that our will would obey our conscience and therefore that our will would control our minds and direct our minds to understand what God has told us.

So often the Father will give you an impression about the people that you work with. He'll give you a sense through the intuition of your spirit of what he wants them to come into and how he wants them to change. And then it is up to your will under the direction of the conscience to direct your mind to work out what this is going to mean that you do with them, or that you say to them, or that you keep absolutely quiet about. But, it is your will that does it.

Now, where we have real trouble many of us is that we don't think that that link exists. Many of us think that God does not expect us to use our wills and so many of us sink into absolute passivity of will and we worship God, and hallelujah, and amen and we think that somehow just by drifting into the office, or drifting through life trusting the Lord, "letting the Lord lead us" as we say, and "letting the Lord speak and use my lips", that he will lead people to himself. The Lord will never use your lips. He has committed himself to trusting you to use your lips. That's why he gave the lips to you, not to himself. He gave the tongue to you, not to himself because he expects you to will your mind to direct your emotions and your body to do certain things. Now loved ones, that's God's plan.

Now of course, we men and women did not want to be under God's direction. We didn't want that and

so we rebelled completely against him and as soon as we rebelled we felt like lost little children. It was terrible. We suddenly became aware we're like little insects on a planet that is flying through space, and we don't know who's holding it up, and we don't know why we're here, and we don't know where we're going and we got terribly insecure because we didn't any longer have the love of the person who put us here and we didn't know why he had put us here. And so it became very insecure and very unsure of where we'd get our next bite to eat.

And so we began to decide, "Well, we must get our food for ourselves." And so we began to concentrate on trying to get all the food, and the shelter, and the clothing that we needed and of course, all the other people were doing it too so it became a massive scramble and the whole world began to get chaotic as everybody tried to get what they needed to keep themselves physically alive.

And of course, we had a dreadful sense that we were in the midst of a mass of people who didn't care about us at all. And we had a dreadful sense of, here we were like thousands of little flies, and of what importance were we to anybody? And we sensed tremendously our insignificance and our unimportance to everyone else. And so of course that resulted in us trying to get significance and so that resulted in us trying to be better than our brother, and better than our sister, and we tried to cut trees down not simply to get the wood but cut them down to be better than other people, to get more wood than everybody else.

And so there became about a tremendous competition for importance and significance which of course finds its highlight in our present scramble for fame among performers and the desire inside many of us to be as successful and as famous as they are. And of course without the love of our Creator at all we had a tremendous sense of just unhappiness. We just felt lonely, we felt that nobody loved us and we felt no sense of enjoyment in life and so we started to try to get enjoyment. And so we thought, "Well, we'll cut the trees down and we'll make a canoe and we'll jump in and shoot the rapids. And maybe if we shoot them faster and faster we'll get some happiness." And so we began to race for happiness and that's the present state of the world, loved ones.

And here is the way our personalities operate now: from the outside-in. [pointing to a diagram of Body, Soul and Spirit] We try to get from the world (the green arrows show the whole reversal of the personality that has taken place) -- we try to get from the world the joy that we used to get from the Father's love. Instead of using our minds to understand what God is telling us to do we use our minds to manipulate the resources of this world and the people of this world so that we will be secure. And our will, instead of obeying our consciences, is utterly dominated by our mind and emotions and usually is not operative at all. Or, if it is at all operative it's absolutely under the pressure and direction of our bodies.

Now loved ones, immediately that happened, our spirits died and our whole relationship with God was finished. Now, that's the state of fallen man and that's the position that most people are in. Their spirits are dead. They have souls and bodies that are still alive, but most of us live dictated by the needs of our body to try to get security because we feel so insecure in this massive world. Some of us, who are a little better than that, (though how you can describe it as better is difficult to see), but we think we're a little better and above the level of food, shelter, and clothing -- so we concentrate on trying to be more important to everybody else. So we have all these problems with our status, and with peer pressure, and what our friends think of us and whether they're praising us or criticizing us. And some others of us are maybe beyond that and we're concentrating on the happiness game and we're trying to get happiness. And we've dedicated our

lives to getting happiness whatever it costs anybody else in the world.

Now, that's our fallen state. And do you see the real problem? The real problem is that your personality is so turned around and reversed and perverted like that now that you can't actually operate the other way. Have you noticed that? I mean, when you try to operate like that [from the inside-out], you find that there's something gone wrong with the personality and it keeps operating the other way. So you go into the office and you say to yourself, "Lord, you love me. What does it matter whether the boss thinks a lot of me or not? You love me." But the boss comes through and he looks at the other guy or girl and he says nothing to you and your dear little personality, your heart stops because your whole personality is built on concentrating on the approval of your peers for your sense of importance and significance.

And isn't that why so many of us cry, "The good that I would I cannot do." Probably all of us here want desperately to be satisfied with God's love, we do. We want to be satisfied with God's love but there's something in our personalities that makes us almost pad like a little cat up to anybody who will pat us at all or stroke us. And we'll almost do anything for somebody who will smile at us or will praise us. Now loved ones, that's the problem. Our personality is now fallen and it's running the wrong way and working the wrong way and it's perverted. And we cannot get it to work the right way even though we want to.

Now, what God did was to destroy that personality in his Son. Now maybe you'd just look at the verse, loved ones, that says that, it's 2 Corinthians 5:14. "For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died." Now that was an actual cosmic miracle. The death of Jesus on Calvary was only the world expression of that cosmic death that has taken place for all of us. And I'd just point that out to you again, that that verse says, "Christ died for all; therefore all died." Everybody that has ever lived died in Christ.

If you have a problem with that look to people like Einstein who have showed us so often that time does not exist. Time doesn't exist; it is one great eternal moment. It was no problem to the mighty Creator who made us to look at the whole line of history and see where it was going and where it would go and then to put it all in his son and to deal with it there. And that's what he did. He put us all into Christ and he destroyed our personalities there, and then he said, "Now you can experience the death of this old personality that is perverted and you can have recreated by my Holy Spirit the personality that I originally gave you if you want."

Now the way this came over in the first century was first of all as a continuation of what the Jews themselves had preached because the Jews said, "We don't know what God has done exactly but we know he's willing to forgive you and we know he's willing to deal with you. We don't understand why." Because of course Jesus had not yet died so they couldn't understand why but they said, "For some reason our Creator is willing to forgive us." And so the Jews you remember preached that people should believe in the name of the One who was to come for the remission of their sins.

And at the very beginning of the early Christian gospel, you remember, that's where the apostles started. They started by saying, "We preach remission of sins in the name of Jesus." I suspect that it was on the day that everybody was to be baptized when Peter and Paul would begin to explain why God was willing to forgive and he would explain it as he did in Romans 6, you remember. He would get everybody around as they came to the river to be baptized as he had preached to them on the day of Pentecost and then he would say in Romans 6:3, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?" Peter, and John, and James, all of

us -- we've been baptized into his death. "We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."

And the people that listened to them had no problem saying what they meant because they saw that these people could not call their lives their own. They saw that James, and Peter had still some of the stripes upon them that they had received from the whips of the government and the soldiers so they saw that these men couldn't even depend on tomorrow and that they had effectively died with Jesus to anything that this world could give them. And so they understood when they said that. And then Paul would go on or Peter, "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin."

And I'm sure since Peter or Paul didn't have an overhead projector, he wouldn't describe it like this, but he would explain that the problem at the moment is you can't obey. You can't do what you know you should. Now, that old self of yours has been crucified with Christ so that you don't any longer need to be enslaved to this sin. And so if you've been united with Jesus in a death like his you'll be united with him in a resurrection like his and anyone who is in Christ is a new creation. And they would preach that to the people and the people would see that that's what it meant to enter into Jesus.

It meant that you were dead to receiving security, and significance, and happiness from the world and as far as you were concerned the world was crucified to you and you were crucified to it and from this moment on you would receive everything you needed from God's own love and from his Holy Spirit. And the moment they agreed to do that then Peter and Paul would put them into the water and as the water closed over their head they realized they were cut off from the world. As they were under that water they were cut off from the world.

No longer will man's approval mean anything to them, no longer will they depend on man, or on money for their security. No longer will they depend on friends for their happiness; they are buried now and as they came up out of the water they believed that what had happened to Jesus was happening to them. The Holy Spirit was descending upon them like a dove and they were regenerated and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. And that for them was conversion.

And then of course, the whole purpose of God's work in Jesus would begin because the whole purpose was that the Holy Spirit would come again, regenerate their spirits and then -- praise God -- would begin to work out through their spirits, through their souls and begin to share the security, and the significance, and the happiness that they had with the Father with all the world and that they would begin to be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and bring it into God's order. And then the beginning of the redemption of the world would take place. And so the Christian life for them simply began when they had been crucified with Christ and raised with him and given themselves completely over to the Holy Spirit using them to fill the world with God's love.

Now loved ones, I would just gently point out to you what has happened to many of us and it happened to me. I heard the preaching that God was willing to forgive me my sins. And of course my heart just rejoiced because I sensed that I was going to hell because I was disobeying my God and I was going to be condemned to outer darkness forever. And so my heart rejoiced and lifted to that and I believe that many of your hearts have done the same. And you've said, as I said, "Lord, I'm willing

to do whatever. I'm willing to turn from my sin and to repent of it, and to have done with it if only you will put the spirit of Jesus into my heart. And I will give my life wholly to Jesus."

Now loved ones, nobody had explained why Jesus had died, they just explained that because he had died God was willing to forgive me my sins and I lived up to the light that was given me as I believe many of you have done. You walked into the light that you'd received. You didn't know why Jesus had died exactly but you knew that because he had died God was willing to forgive you your sins and so we entered into what we had received through God's messengers. And it was according to our faith; it was unto us according to our faith. And I don't know about you but I had immediately a sense of relationship with my Father in heaven. I sensed immediately that my sins were forgiven. I sensed immediately that I was going to heaven. I sensed immediately that God was going to be with me and was going to aid me through his Spirit and I began to even sense some of God's love coming through my heart and my life.

But I still didn't know this business about all dying and my dying with Christ. But the Holy Spirit was faithful to me because he was within me and he wanted to lead me on to the full reason why Jesus had died. And so soon after I was converted, I remember the Holy Spirit whispering inside me, "What would it be like to give everything to Jesus? To live only for him, to die to what the world can give you in the way of career and success, and happiness, and to live only for Jesus?" And I don't know about you all, but I looked around at my friends in church and nobody else was doing that. And I said, "This must not be real that I'm receiving. I'm getting fanatical. My job is to get on, become a school teacher, and be successful, and be happy, and do a bit for God on the side." And so I decided that quietly.

Now the Holy Spirit was faithful, he began to allow troubles to come in. Because I was not willing for the old self to be crucified and was not willing to die to self, I began to have trouble. At times I would obey Jesus' Spirit and at times I would operate the other way. So at times I would obey God as he told me to do certain things and at other times I would depend on what people were telling me. I can give an easy instance. Many of us have been caught in this same position -- we can either sing, or we can speak, or we can testify. And so you did that for God's sake. You felt that God wanted you to sing, or he wanted you to speak, or he wanted you to testify. And then after you've done it people came up and, dear love them, they wanted to encourage you and so they praised you and then you found something ugly and gruesome rising inside you and just enjoying that praise. And I soon began to see that self was alive inside. And I was trying to obey Jesus' spirit but I was also under the domination of a huge self that wanted to share the glory with Jesus but didn't want to give it all to him. And loved ones, that's the position many of us have found ourselves in.

In other words, there are many children of God today who are born of the Spirit, they are. But they are not even willing for their personalities to operate that way because that's what I found. I found a willfulness in me. It wasn't just that I wasn't letting God's Spirit pour out through me, I didn't want to. I had many easy instances like Peter, many easy examples. You're in the situation, there's an opportunity for you to say, "I'm one of the Nazarenes." An opportunity to speak up for God and then somebody says, "Aren't you one of the Nazarenes? Didn't I see you? Don't you speak with his accent?" And the same as Peter at that moment of reality I would step back and be quiet.

So again and again I've found that at times I would obey God but most of the time and increasingly I would be dominated by a personality that was reversed and living the wrong way around. And so I don't know about you but I got into real conflict and I'll tell you where the conflict was, it was

just at that point. The Spirit was trying to get out through me, but this part of the personality was still operating inwards and the conflict was right there between the conflict and the will. And the reason was that I was not really willing for my whole personality to be turned around. I was not willing to die to what people could give me of love, and security, and significance, and happiness and to depend only on Jesus.

And I would just gently say that Christendom is filled with carnal Christians. That is, dear loved ones who are born of the Spirit but who are not willing for the Spirit to come out through their personalities and direct their wills, and their minds, and their emotions, and their bodies, and they're carnal, you see. Carnal is "sarx", it means they work from the flesh in instead of from the spirit out. They're not spiritual Christians they're carnal Christians. And of course you can see that that is the first act – well, really the second act in a sense of Satan.

Satan first of all wants to prevent people being born of the Spirit. He wants to keep as many people under the domination of Hinduism, and Mohammedism, and Buddhism, and just secular atheism as possible. He wants to keep as many people as possible dead in their spirits to God. But then if any come alive in their spirits he wants to get them to imprison their spirits within so that they never are allowed to get out and to express themselves through people's souls and through their bodies. He wants to maintain as many carnal Christians as he possibly can.

And loved ones, while you're a carnal Christian you can be sure of one thing: you are no earthly use to God at all. And actually, it's more serious than that and those of you who have experienced it know it is because the truth is, God's Spirit wants out. That's always the move of the Holy Spirit, have you noticed that? When the Holy Spirit comes into Jesus he moves out, he goes into the highways and the byways and he compels people to come in. The Holy Spirit is one who will not be contained. His movement is always outwards, he's always going out to bring the will of God into effect in circumstances. So if you won't let him you grieve him and you can only grieve him for so long.

And many of us would testify to the fact that though in some way we believe we are children of God, we haven't heard his voice very recently. And we do sense a certain deadness within us. And the truth is loved ones, that you cannot continue to imprison the Holy Spirit without eventually grieving him. I would say grieving him out of your life. But even those of you who would believe in eternal security would say, as Watchman Nee would say -- you become as one who is dead even though you may be alive. I myself, wonder if you're alive and if you can be alive while you continue to crucify Jesus within.

Now loved ones, that's Satan's second act in warfare. Then maybe I could tell you what his third act is. First of all, to keep your spirits dead. Secondly, to keep your wills selfish so that you will not live only for Jesus but you continue to live for yourself as you did before you ever met Jesus. Thirdly, he tries to keep your soul independent of your spirit. He tries to keep your soul absolutely independent of your spirit. So there are many brothers and sisters who have died with Christ, who have said, "We know we were crucified with Christ and we're willing for that to be made real in us and we're willing to be treated as nothing if necessary." And they have been freed from bad temper, they've been freed from anger, they've been freed from selfishness, and jealousy, and envy, and inward sin. But now they come to the point of the Spirit trying to reroute their wills, and their minds, and their emotions. And they come into that deception and lie that I shared with you earlier on.

The deception and lie loved ones is found in Philippians if you'd like to look at it. Philippians 2:13, and this is the warfare that Satan wages against children of God who are even baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit and are beginning to try to walk after the Spirit. "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." And many children of God look at that verse and they say, "You see, God wills for me and he works for me so I don't need to. I can actually just relax -- not use my will -- and God will just will for me." Now, the Bible doesn't say that.

The Bible says that God himself works in us both to will -- that is, for us to will -- and to work for his good pleasure. And the emphasis is clear if you look at the verse above: you work out, for God is at work in. But you have to work out what God is working in. So God works in your spirit and he gives you a sense of his love, and his presence, and he gives you a sense of direction, but then you have to do the vital job of interpreting that at this point into terms that your soul will be able to express to the world.

Now what has happened to thousands of children of God is they come to the place where they're willing to be used for Jesus but they enter into Satan's deception that they don't need to exercise their wills but God will will for them and they come into passivity of will, passivity of mind, and passivity of emotions. And you would not believe it but once they give over this citadel of the soul to passivity, there is absolutely no guard against the evil spirits that will take advantage of that passivity.

It's interesting, God does not demand that any person be passive. Did you know that? God wants us to use all the abilities that he has given us as we're directed by the Spirit within us. But Satan wants passivity. He wants men and women who are passive, who are passive either because they can't be bothered to be active or because they believe a great lie, and a great deception that they don't need to exercise their wills. And we just see it of course so clearly in a situation like Fish Enterprises [a Christian business]. One of the reasons that God guided us to start a Christian business was not that you can't witness in an ordinary business -- because many of us have done that in schools and in businesses. We've witnessed as individual Christians.

But we saw that often in individual businesses as individual Christians you were hampered somewhat by what people would permit you to do, or you were often facing a great deal of warfare in the situation just in order to express what God wanted. And God showed us that there would be tremendous power if just some of us -- not all of us ought to do it, otherwise God is not going to be able to save the people in your businesses -- but if some of us to get together and have businesses that were existing not for profit, power, or success but for his glory and to express his life.

And once Satan saw that, he began to try to bring the deception of passivity into many of the brothers and sisters that would come in to Fish Enterprises. And I think some of them would testify to that. That where they used their minds and exercised their wills in ordinary secular businesses because that's the way everybody else was doing it they thought when they came into a business that God owned they were just to kind of let the Lord guide them and let the Lord do it. And so many of them kind of relaxed and they stopped using their minds, and they stopped using their wills to get things done.

And why I use that instance is, I wonder how many of you have come into that in your own lives? Because I'll tell you what then began to happen: their own jobs became insurmountable problems. Really, it was very interesting. Waitresses who were excellent waitresses in a secular business

because there wasn't that deception or that lie about passivity -- when they came into our restaurants they began to have insurmountable difficulties and insurmountable problems. And sometimes the service area got chaotic because nobody would clear things or put things in order.

And so if you live in passivity it isn't long before life just seems too great. It just does. It just is too much. And so many loved ones in Fish Enterprises of course found themselves in the grip of passivity, found themselves therefore in the grip of an environment that was becoming increasingly chaotic and they've thought, "The only thing I can do is get out, get out." So they got out, got back into a secular business where of course everything was active because people used their souls. They used them for wrong motives and they used them because of external pressure but they used them, and so they came into some kind of order again.

Now that is Satan's desire for your lives, it is. Satan knows if he can get your soul to be active as the rest of fallen mankind have active souls -- that is, if he can get your mind to manipulate other people and circumstances primarily for your own sake and your own security -- he's happy with that. If he can get your emotions sopping up all the love, and all the affection, and all the praise and adulation that it possibly can from everybody else he's happy with that. If he can get your will in a state of passivity, or if not in a state of passivity, domineering and dominating other people in order to make yourself of some importance and significance, he's happy with that.

But what he hates with a vengeance is a soul that is directed by a spirit that is filled with God's light and God's love. And so wherever that occurs he'll use all kind of deception to try and bring your life into chaos. So for many of you, your bedrooms are chaos because you've kind of relaxed. You know, "Let the Lord do it." And many of you have done the same with your finances, "I don't have to worry now the Lord will take care of my finances. So other people have to work out the checkbook stubs, and add it up and subtract but not me, no."

In fact, it's subtle because Satan persuades us that it might be better if you didn't know how bad it was. Maybe you could have faith easier if you didn't know how bad it was. And so we get into all kinds of chaos in our financial affairs. I've seen it with cars; guys and girls who've kept their cars beautiful when they were serving Satan. "Now, what do material things matter? It's not important." And so the old car is a rusted out heap and it brings no glory to Jesus. It simply convinces the world, "Don't get caught up with Christianity because it will make life miserable for you."

And so, loved ones, many of us have experienced this in an individual sense and certainly in Fish Enterprises we've experienced it in a corporate sense, that Satan is determined to somehow bring passivity into people's souls so that the Spirit of God will never be able to get out through the soul. Because, here's the amazing thing -- the only way, and this is shattering -- the only way Jesus' dear Spirit has to get out into the world is through your soul and your body. That's right.

It's a lie of Satan that God will somehow work apart from you and above you and despite you. It's a lie of Satan. God has committed himself to pouring his life and the Spirit of his son through your spirit -- to express it through your soul in absolute detail, and to express it to the world through your body. And if you once hand over to Satan that vital connection between your spirit and your body, Jesus has no way of getting out to the world through you and not only are you useless to God but eventually you will be experiencing none of his life within at all.

So loved ones, what I wanted to begin to share tonight was some of the deception that I do believe that Satan is practicing certainly with some of us in our own businesses and I suspect with some of you in your own individual lives. Now, what I'd just mention is that, faced with what I've just said, Christendom has been as dumb as it often is and has said, "That's right -- a rusted out old hulk won't glorify Jesus so every Christian has to have clean shiny automobiles. That's it. And everybody must be dressed sharply, and everybody must have beautiful houses, and everybody must have plenty of money." And so Christendom brings in its own soulish directions.

And so you get many Christians who seem to have their life all together but you know how it's done? It's not by the direction of their spirits, it's by the direction of the world; this time it's the Christian world and it administers no life to people. It turns people off. We've all met the Christian business man who is really on top there with the profits and has a beautiful business but there's a hardness in him, there's a hardness. I mean, he's saving souls for Christ in his words, but his workers don't sense a love and gentleness that comes from his heart.

So do you see that Satan loves to bring you into deception and then if he can, to bring you into a purely soulish activity. And of course, what Jesus wants is for you to realize what Satan is doing in your life and to begin to spend some real time with Jesus in communion in prayer, and to begin to allow his Spirit to give you revelation about the ways in which you have come into passivity, and the ways in which you have let your mind go limp. And then of course, to begin to exercise your mind, and your emotions, and your will in the way the Holy Spirit is guiding you.

So loved ones, I'd just ask you to go to God about these things. Next Sunday I would like to talk about successful spiritual warfare but I think there's maybe a lot for you to think about there. Are there any questions on that?

Question from Audience:

I'm at a point of decision and I don't know which way to go. Is it better to make a decision even if it's a soulish decision than to be passive?

Answer from Pastor O'Neill:

Here's what I think we should do, brother. You go to Jesus, you say, "Lord is there anything in my present relationship with you that isn't right? Is there anything that I need to die to? Anything that I need to repent of? Anything that I need to change in my life?" And then brother I think we have to see that if you don't respond to that then I don't think you can expect any guidance from God. But settle that, do whatever needs to be done. If an apology needs to be made, money needs to be given back, if a change needs to be made in your way of life, if you need to step back from some practice that you're engaged in, then do it. And then, go forward with the decision.

And trust that the nature that God has given to you will bring about the decision that he wants and then simply ask him, "Lord, if you see me moving in the wrong direction remember your promise when you turn to the right or the left you will hear a voice behind you saying, 'This is the way walk in it.' Lord, will you tell me? Will you check me?" I think that's it, brother. In other words, no, don't just go forward and make a soulish decision but do everything possible to bring your own nature under the control of God and then make a decision.

Anything else? I would say the mind passivity is the worst. It's the one that seems most prevalent

among us who call ourselves children of God. And then the will passivity is next. John?

Question from Audience:

Can you not say that the mind in some sense has to understand what the conscience is saying in order for the will to execute it?

Answer from Pastor O'Neill:

John, I'm sure that there is a debatable point there. I just do see that the command of God is to bring everything, every thought into captivity of Christ Jesus. And it seems to me that the will has to direct the mind to concentrate on a certain issue that the conscience is somehow bringing forth. And so the will has to direct the mind to do it.

[Question inaudible]

Answer from Pastor O'Neill:

No, because it's the mystery that Jesus doesn't touch. I mean, the will remains a mystery in the Bible. Have you noticed that? It's interesting, Jesus never explains the will. He simply says, "If a man wants to come after me let him deny himself." And it is incredible that the will seems to be the one pivotal point of the whole personality that God doesn't do a lot of explaining about. And the will is that mystery that either goes with God or goes against him.

I think I have real trouble explaining it. I know so well when my will was dominated by my mind and my emotions. I know so well when that happened. I know when the will hardly existed because the mind talked me out of everything that God had told me to do. I know also how some loved ones get into real trouble because the conscience constrains them to do something and they don't direct their minds to think about it and work it out and they try somehow to get that thing to go straight through the personalities without any use of their minds at all. And they come into real trouble because they don't use their judgment or their reasoning abilities at all. And so of course, usually nothing happens that brings any glory to God.

So I do know how the will can be influenced by the mind and the emotions and how it can fail at times to direct the mind to work things out. But the will itself seems to be the mystery. But I did notice this loved ones, that you remember an illustration that I shared some Sundays ago -- that you couldn't swim unless you believed that the water would keep you up. And you remember, we shared that you had to believe that you were crucified with Christ otherwise you couldn't possibly obey God. And then somebody shared after the service, "Isn't it interesting to see that even though the water will keep you up, yet you at times have to work pretty hard." And it is interesting, isn't it?

That even though you have been crucified with Christ you have to exercise the will strongly at times. But, if you do, the water will keep you up, the Holy Spirit will keep you up. But the fact that we have been crucified with Christ does not open the way for us simply to lay back and do nothing. And I know some of you have come into real deception there because somebody like myself would testify to the effortlessness of the life and the Holy Spirit. And it is effortless compared to the struggle that I had before where I was struggling to try and obey and could not.

Now, I exercise my will and I can. So it seems to me effortless. But, I can testify that it requires strong exercise of the will in many different situations as we share next day when you begin to war against Satan. And of course, I would share both with people in Fish Enterprises and people who are in their own jobs, once you begin to try to bring your soul under the control of your spirit, you'll begin to know what satanic warfare is because Satan will fight you every inch of the way.

And that is what has happened to some loved ones. They've decided, "I will, I will bring this service area into order. I will bring this building into order." And they find their mind cannot work, it seems incapable of working. It seems that when they were out in the world it could work and now inside it can't work. And you'll find that -- that your mind will work brilliantly as long as it's working by direction of the outside and of the same rivalry and the same competition that everyone else has at school and at work. But as soon as your soul begins to try to execute the directions of your spirit you'll find tremendous passivity.

And of course you can see what Satan is after. He's out to persuade you that your soul shouldn't work that way. That's why it is such trouble. Your soul shouldn't be directed by your spirit. It should be directed by the external world, and by the desires for security, and for happiness, and for significance that everybody else has. And that is Satan's desire for you.

So loved ones, hold steady on it and don't give up. Never, never, never, never, never give up -- because that mind is your mind and that will is your will, and though you are no longer your own and they belong to Jesus, you are his steward and it is your job and responsibility to bring that will, and that mind, and those emotions under control and you can do it. You can do it. You can do it because of the miracle that has taken place in Jesus on Calvary. You can bring that mind into order.

And loved ones, I would say to you however often you have to clear that desk, however often you have to clean up that bedroom, however often you have to try to think through the actions that God wants you to do in your work, do it, do it. However much of a struggle it is, do it. It is vital for your own salvation and it is vital for Jesus' glory in your ministry. And of course, those of us in Fish Enterprises know so well the truth of these words. You know that this is God's word to us at this time and to all of us really who want to be used in our jobs and our businesses.

So I'd pray that -- and that's what I have to do, we have to pray for each other that the Holy Spirit will give us revelation and then that we'll respond immediately to the revelation. You know most of you could admit at this moment you don't need any more revelation than you've got. This will do you for a while. You know there are several things you have to act on this night. So act on those, don't wait for more revelation written in the sky, act on what you know now. And then you'll see that God will give you more light and Satan will fight you every inch of the way, but what beauty comes about when you see an integrated personality working harmoniously under the direction of Jesus' spirit. Loved ones, there is nothing can oppose that. Nothing.

Let us pray. Lord, thank you for your good clean light to us. And thank you Holy Spirit, that you will be the guardian of our spirits and you will keep our spirits in the right position in Jesus. But thank you for showing us that our wills are the guardian of our souls and they have to exercise themselves as our consciences direct them. And thank you for showing us in your good word that we are to bring every thought into captivity of Christ Jesus. And thank you for showing us by the

commission you've given us that we are to bring the world into submission to you and possess our souls in patience. Thank you Lord. 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 week. Amen.