

Baptism With the Spirit

by Ernest O'Neill

The central problem of mankind is the inability to do what we want to do, despite knowing what is right, and the solution is to see that our old self has been crucified with Christ and replaced by the new self in Jesus through faith.

Duration: 25:39

Scripture: John 14:26, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:4, Romans 7:15, Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 12:13, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:22-24, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Baptism Of The Holy Spirit", "Inner Transformation"

Description

Ernest O'Neill addresses the struggle of Christians who, despite knowing the right actions, often fail to live them out due to an internal conflict of desires. He emphasizes that the central problem is not a lack of knowledge but the inability to act according to one's true intentions, leading to frustration and hypocrisy. O'Neill explains that true victory over this internal struggle comes through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which cleanses the heart and transforms the believer from within. He encourages believers to seek the Holy Spirit's guidance and to understand that their old selves were crucified with Christ, allowing for a new identity in Him. The sermon concludes with a call to embrace this transformative power for a genuine Christian life.

Transcript

We've been talking the past two Sundays about the biggest problem that each one of us faces in our everyday life. And I think you'll agree when I tell you what it is. It's the problem expressed by Paul in that verse that we read.

I do not understand my own actions, for I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. And I would bet that it doesn't matter whether you are sitting beside your wife at this moment, or whether you're sitting beside a roommate, or whether you're sitting beside a friend, or a stranger. I would bet that every one of you has felt that as I have felt it.

You've been in situations where you knew your mother was desperately wanting your love, or you've been with a friend and you knew what that friend needed desperately was your understanding or your kindly patience. And you've had to say after the event was over, I don't understand my own actions, for I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. And many of us remember it when we were little guys or girls at home.

We remember well enough throwing a tantrum because somebody took our toy, or we didn't get the cookie that we wanted. But the tragedy for most of us is, it hasn't changed one bit. We just cover over the tantrum a little better, or we express it a little differently to our employees, or we express it as criticism if it's about our employer because you can't throw a tantrum with him, so you criticize him underneath by kind of whispering stuff.

But you know in your heart, it's still the same problem. I do not understand my own actions because I don't do what I want to do. There's something in me that wants to do the right thing.

I really don't want to hurt my mother like that. I really don't want to hurt my friend like that. Actually, even that professor, even though he isn't particularly kind, I don't even want to do him down the way I'm doing with this criticism talk and this backbiting.

And I really don't want to even hurt that woman in the office. But I don't understand my actions because I don't do what I want to do. I do the very thing I hate.

And I have to admit that often these are the very actions and attitudes that I'm criticizing in other people. And I find that I'm doing them myself. And maybe I see the well-known figures like Carter or Reagan or somebody else do these things, and I take it out on them, but I know that I'm doing the same things, just in smaller ways.

So loved ones, that's the central problem, I think, of mankind. I don't think the central problem is knowing what we ought to do. I think we all have enough information on that.

I think we know what we ought to do. The problem is we can't do it. And then, of course, the tragedy we were talking about is that though the whole world feels that, many of us who think that we've been born of God, many of us who think we have received His Spirit, we do know that Jesus has died for us.

Many of us are in that position. That's it. Many of us who say we believe in God and who say we believe Jesus is our Savior and who say we believe Jesus died for us and the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins, many of us are in that same spot.

You see, I don't know about you, if you're not what they call a Christian or whatever that word now means or whatever being born again means. If you're not that, well, in a way, you can hope that there's something that will help you. But those of us who do claim to be born of God and who do claim to know Jesus as our Savior and believe in God and all that stuff, we're in a hideous position because we've kind of taken the step that everybody says is the solution and we find ourselves still in this spot.

And I'd just like to remind those of you who were here last Sunday that it's not a business of actions, actually, that is the problem with most of us who are so-called Christians. Most of us who are so-called Christians feel we ought to have at least the outward control over our actions and words that people like Socrates and Plato had, who were just noble pagans. So we believe that we ought to be able to do that because of the Holy Spirit that has made us alive to God.

But of course, what gets to us is that even though on the outside we seem to live by all the Christian virtues, inside there is a seething, miserable, perverse strain of irrationalism that makes us feel utterly different from the way we're behaving outside. And that's, I think, what gets to us. On the outside, we're churchgoers.

On the outside, we're being patient like Jesus. We're loving people. We're being honest and generous.

But inside, often, often, often, we're smiling, sticking out the old hand, saying, how are you? And how's the family? And oh, I thought about you. And inside, we're thinking, what a creep you are. Or somebody sings and they sing beautifully and we go up and say, oh, that was a beautiful song.

You have a great voice. And inside, but really, I have a better voice. It's just people don't know it.

And loved ones, that's the problem, you know. That's the agony of it. It's simple little things.

You're going out to shop and she is not right there. So you want to close the door, you know, because you don't want the dog to get into the car, but you close it a little firmly. Are you really there? That's it.

And there isn't peace. There isn't peace in your heart towards your loved one. There isn't real love.

There's kind of irritability seething underneath. And we come home at night and you're supposed to be nice to each other, but you don't feel nice inside. You feel irritable and impatient.

And of course, from time to time, that breaks out into the life. And so that's the problem, loved ones. That's the central problem of mankind.

That even if some of us seem to gain some control outwardly of our actions, whether because we're involved in Christianity or because we're involved in Zen Buddhism or because we're involved in the positive thinking, though some of us gain some control outwardly over our actions and our words, yet most of us have incredible problems with inward sin, this attitude of self that we ought to get things our way and we have a right to have them our way. And if they don't go our way, we're impatient, we're irritable, we're resentful, we're critical, we're angry, we're jealous, we're selfish, we're self-pitying, we're resentful. Even though we keep all that stuff under wraps, it's inside us.

And that's of course what creates the ulcers, the adrenaline. That's what makes us old before our time. You know that? That's why at times we can't sleep at night.

There's a strain in our life. That's what disease is, you see. It's a lack of ease.

It's a lack of ease. We're meant, you know the way a swallow soars into the sky on the wind, effortlessly? That's the way we're meant to live. But because so many of us are hiding this garbage inside, we're always on guard, we're always uptight, we're always afraid of things.

And of course what we shared last Sunday was, so many of us who call ourselves Christians are resorting to the same hopeless, pointless, powerless techniques and weapons that the world resorts to to try to overcome this. That's the stupid part. Loved ones, I say this lovingly, and knowing there are some psychologists and psychiatrists in the body, I think psychology and psychiatrists are primarily of value for showing the person who doesn't believe in God, who doesn't believe in Jesus, what life is meant to be like.

And easing them along towards it, and in their way, expressing to them what the whole life is in Jesus. On an odd occasion, they can help, if they know the centrality of the cross, they can help a Christian. But loved ones, on the whole, Christians today are resorting to psychiatrists and psychologists, to the power of positive thinking, to how to improve your temperament, to how to win by intimidation, to sensitivity groups, to all kinds of methods and techniques which are the world's poor substitute for God's real answer to this perverted self inside us.

That's true. And loved ones, the dear ones in the New Testament, they didn't have the power of positive thinking, and they didn't have all the psychiatrists, and they didn't have all this other stuff that is primarily part of the common grace of God to lead those who don't believe in Him to Him. But God has made provision in Christ for the solution of this evil heart of darkness within us.

He has made provision in Christ. And the victory is by faith, and not by this endless reading of books, or this endless attendance at more and more conferences, or more and more sensitivity groups, or more and more counseling. Loved ones, the victory is by what God has done to us in Jesus.

Because there is a further work. There is a further work. See, so many of us think Jesus died for our sins, so that God could forgive us, so that if we sinned again we would not go to hell, but we could confess the sin, and God, of course, would forgive us because of Jesus.

And that is, that's the first way we enter into any relationship with God, and that's real, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. But each time you lose your temper, each time you get angry, each time you feel resentful, each time you feel irritable, each time you feel unclean inside, each time you feel proud, that's God, that's God tapping you on the shoulder and saying that there's a further reason why my son died. I want you to know that.

There's a further reason why my son died, and that's what's happening and God does not want you to go off and try to find some method of taming this lion inside by yourself, because you actually don't want them tamed. Do you know that? You don't realize it, but you don't actually want them tamed. At times you like self-pity, at times you like to be irritable, at times it gives you satisfaction to be angry, so actually you don't want them tamed, and God knows that.

And so it doesn't matter how many helps you get for taming them, you'll never, you'll never kill a little deer, you know, you never will. You'll appear to kill them, you know, oh you're a terrible self, I'll lash you with the power of positive thinking, I'll kick you, I'll hold you down, I'll suffocate you, oh I'm so holy I don't want anything to do with you. Actually, that's you in there, that self is you, and you haven't the heart to kill that self, and actually you can't.

And the miracle that the Holy Spirit showed me in the Bible was that the solution to that personality of yours and mine that is so intractable, and that we cannot control with books or with discipline, the miracle is that Jesus knows you intimately, and He knew you actually before you were born, and I know it baffles us, but through Einstein we can get a glimpse of it. Jesus was actually able to foresee what you would be like today, He was. And by a cosmic miracle, God, the Creator who made you, was able to take your present personality, that old self of yours, with its sneaking desire to be jealous and proud, and was able to put that self into a son.

And on Calvary, He expressed the cosmic miracle that He did in eternity. That's all, you know, Calvary is just a time, the expression and time and space of the great miracle that God wrought upon each one of us in His Son. God put your old self into a son and destroyed it.

And loved ones, that's the key to victory in our life. And the beginning of some hope of victory in your life and mine is when we see the solution to this problem inside me is not other people helping me, other books, my own discipline, thinking more positively about myself, trying to build up my own esteem. It's not that.

It is seeing that the solution to this is what God did to you in His Son on Calvary. And then you start talking to the Holy Spirit who is in you. If you're a Christian, the Holy Spirit is in you.

And you begin to ask Him to counsel you and show you, Holy Spirit, I believe this because God's Word says it, but I'll tell you, I have no idea how to bring it about in my own life. And that's right, you can't bring it about. So the first thing you say is, Holy Spirit, will you show me what is down here? I must admit, I've seen a little anger, little jealousy, little pride, but they're not very much to bother about.

But I have a feeling I'm not seeing things as my Father sees me. So Holy Spirit, will you show me myself as my God sees me? That's the first step, loved ones. And the Holy Spirit will show you.

And let Him sort you out, you know, let Him go down to the depths. Why are you angry? Why do you get angry? I mean, really, why do you get angry? Think of places where you've been angry. Think of people and situations that you've been angry in or at.

Now, why do you get angry? Now, you see, the amazing thing is you can give your answers, but the Holy Spirit will take you to the heart of yourself, where He'll show you that really, it's because you still live for yourself. However much you think you live for Jesus, you're living for yourself. Really, you get angry because you still think you are God.

And everything should go your way. And that's why you have such a burden in your life. You're trying to be God and you're not God.

You're trying to make things go the way God would make them go and you can't. And so it's frustrating. And the first thing is for the Holy Spirit to show you these things.

So, loved ones, first of all, speak to the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to show you these things. Secondly, see that it is by faith that that old self of yours that has been crucified is actually negated in your life and is replaced by the new self in Jesus.

That's it. I mean, it's not killing your old self. It's not with Luther beating your body and trying to crucify yourself.

It's not. The victory is it has been done. Already it has been done.

God has destroyed you. He has destroyed that old, selfish, evil heart inside you. It's destroyed in Jesus.

And this very moment it can be released in you and delivered. You can be delivered from it the moment you see that and believe it. That's why I say the victory is by faith.

The victory is not by trying. The victory is not by striving. The victory is not by fighting or oppressing or suppressing or believing or counseling.

The victory is by faith. By faith. And faith is twofold.

It's believing that it has been done in Jesus. That our old self was crucified with Christ. And secondly, it is a willingness to obey the Holy Spirit immediately and instantly.

That's it. That's what the victory is. And that's what faith is.

It's belief and obedience to the Holy Spirit. Now loved ones, that's what's called the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And every time that Christians were baptized with the Holy Spirit, they experienced a releasing of their true selves.

They did. You find if you read, if you read the Acts of the Apostles, there are six separate occasions when it's mentioned that people were baptized with the Holy Spirit. The first one was the day of Pentecost.

They were facing an international crowd who couldn't speak Aramaic. And the Holy Spirit gave them what they needed. He gave them an ability to speak in different languages.

The next time, it was at the end of Peter's sermon. And there were 3,000 people who were baptized with the Holy Spirit and they didn't speak in tongues. Their need was to enter into a close fellowship with each other and to begin to love each other.

And that's what happened. On the third occasion, you remember Paul was baptized with the Holy Spirit and he began to receive power from God to explain the faith to other people. On another occasion, you remember Cornelius was baptized with the Holy Spirit and he was at that time a Gentile, as were the people in his house.

And so God, in order to signify that they had actually been baptized with the Holy Spirit, enabled them to speak in tongues. And so at the end, Peter and Paul began to realize that the Holy Spirit was being poured out upon Jews and Gentiles, whatever they were. And it's interesting, looking back on the two occasions when people spoke in tongues, Peter didn't say, oh, you remember God made no distinction between them and us, but gave them the Holy Spirit and gave them the ability to speak in tongues.

He didn't. He said God made no distinction between them and us on the day of Pentecost or on Cornelius's house. He made no distinction between them and us, but he cleansed their hearts by faith.

And that's what was precious to the people who were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Not so much the outward thing that happened, which at times was a great love, at times was a power to preach, at times was a power to speak in a foreign language, but that the Holy Spirit cleansed their hearts by faith. Loved ones, that's the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

He can cleanse you inside. He can make you clean inside. He can make real in you the complete destruction of you as you are and the recreation of you as you truly are in Jesus.

The Holy Spirit can make that real in you this day, actually. But many of us, it does take some prayer and some searching because we have so much down there that's dirty. But really, as far as God is concerned, it can happen this moment by faith.

If you really grasp the fact that not only Ernest O'Neill was wiped out on Calvary and no longer is alive, but that you, John, Jim, Peter, Gene, you were wiped out on Calvary and you were made new in Jesus. And loved ones, that's what I'm living on. And boy, if I were you, I'd start living on that too.

Because then the Holy Spirit brings power in your life and replaces hatred with love and replaces impatience with patience and replaces jealousy with a love of people. And that's the miracle, loved ones. Baptism.

So, you know, over the rest of this year, we'll talk about it at different times, especially on Sunday evenings. That's all we talk about on Sunday evenings. The baptism of the Holy Spirit and the life that follows that.

So from next Sunday evening, we'll have communion. And then the following Sunday evenings will be just that, right through the winter. Here from time to time in morning service, we'll come back to it.

But loved ones, that's the key. That's the answer. There are plenty of books in the bookstore.

If you want to read that, you can just look up. I think it must be under Victorious Life, is it? If Tom is here, Victorious Life, maybe. But you can go down to the bookshop and you'll see it, you know.

And begin to read and begin to enter in. Because that's the answer. That's the key.

Any questions? Really, men. If you want to pray, you know, after service, then there's a prayer room in there and you can at least begin. Or you can just sit where you are and there are others of us who will be here and we can talk, you know.

Lord Jesus, we thank you that there is some answer. Thank you. Thank you, Lord.

Even if we don't understand it, at least there's some answer. Because the life that so many of us are living with these feelings and passions within us that we can't control is hardly life. So, Lord, thank you that there is an answer.

Thank you that there is some way in which we can be made over again completely, which we can receive a new heart from you. And, oh, dear God, don't think there's one of us here that doesn't want it. But we know, Lord, that there is a price.

And the price is to be willing to live our lives for you and not for ourselves. So, Lord, we know we need to count the cost and see what it's going to cost us. But, Lord, we would pray for each other and ask you to continue to bear in on our hearts and to prevent us from being satisfied with the life of hypocrisy and to make us dissatisfied until we're clean inside and out so that we can be what you made us to be.

Now, in 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 evermore. Amen.

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