

# Can We Experience It?

by Ernest O'Neill

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*The sermon explores the possibility of experiencing a transcendent life through faith, as demonstrated by the lives of Jesus and Abraham.*

**Scripture:** Hebrews 11:1

**Topics:** "Supernatural Life", "Faith Unlocked"

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## Description

Ernest O'Neill discusses the innate human desire to transcend our earthly limitations and experience a life beyond our physical and mental constraints. He highlights the extraordinary life of Jesus of Nazareth in the first century, showcasing his power over natural forces, diseases, death, and his unparalleled mental and emotional superiority. O'Neill explores the concept of a supernatural life that goes beyond ordinary human existence, emphasizing the importance of faith in unlocking this transcendent life, as seen in the examples of Abraham and Sarah who believed against all odds.

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## Transcript

Many of us human beings have tried to fly. This is true not only of the early aviation attempts where men strapped themselves into all kinds of winged contraptions and jumped off cliffs. It is true of people like you and me, who feel the frustrations of our earth-bound existence and long to be able to fly above the limitations of both our physical and our mental life. So we are always interested in magazine articles that talk about the possibility of expanded mental powers or emotional experiences that take us beyond ourselves. It is a simple fact that most of us feel intuitively we were made for some kind of life that is superior to this present one we possess. Ponce de Leon was only one of many explorers that discovered new islands because of his search for the elixir of life that would liberate us from the limitations of this present temporal life.

Does such a life exist? We have been discussing evidence that it does. In the first century of our era there lived a remarkable individual who not only demonstrated power over the natural forces of storms but also power over diseases and death itself. In fact, some of the best documented history that exists shows that he was able to stay alive and cover substantial distances in a short time even though he had open mortal wounds out of which all his blood should have poured. In other words, he demonstrated a superhuman life that sustained a complete physical existence even though the normal vital signs of blood circulation and breathing were absent.

However, what is more significant than these physical signs of superiority were the mental and emotional signs of a superior kind of life. When his enemies hurled gibes at him as he died, he expressed verbally a heart-felt love and forgiveness towards them which indicated a freedom from the normal resentment that we would feel was justified. Moreover, his own life of unquestioned rectitude carried with it a mercifulness and magnanimity that refused to condemn a woman caught in the act of adultery. In hideous situations of confusion and chaos he exhibited an indifference to his own safety and to the intense hatred and danger around him that is utterly contrary to what we ourselves experience in such contingency.

This supernatural life that was lived in the first century supersedes everything that we have learned to expect from ordinary human beings. It seems to transcend the earth-bound existence that we all possess and appears to be filled with an attitude that is as spacious as the skies, as exciting as the steepest ski slopes, and as fresh and stimulating as the whitest water in the cleanest mountain torrent. It's the life lived by the man called Jesus of Nazareth.

Is it possible for us to experience such a transcendent life ourselves? He said it is. Actually he stated that this was the reason he came to earth in the first place--he used these precise words-- "that you might have life and that you might have it more abundantly". How is this possible?

Jesus repeatedly used a special word to answer this question. It occurs again and again in his conversations with others. It's the word "faith." It's the word that is used repeatedly by others who expressed partially the supernatural life that he exhibited so completely. Because there have been other human beings who exhibited a life that appears to break through the physical and mental limitations that we all know. For instance, about four thousand years ago there was a man called Abraham who was about a hundred years old. His wife was about ninety. He sensed the Creator behind the universe telling him that he would have as many descendants as the sand on the seashore, yet his old wife had not yet borne even one child. He believed the Creator's reassurance and the explanation that was given was that the Creator "counted his faith as righteousness."

Against all the odds--and all the human possibilities let alone probabilities--this man's wife, Sarah, had a son--and his consequent children became the many of the most important nations on the earth. "Faith" in this case was a willingness to believe what God said he would do. However, many of us think that such faith is just a train of ideas in the head or a notion that we try to entertain when possible. But this man's faith was a "tried faith." In other words, the Creator allowed him to go through experiences of danger because of his wife that forced him to come to trust God's promise completely even where, his own life was at stake. So the faith that releases supernatural life into us human beings is not just a mental belief that God will infuse this kind of life into us. Faith is a belief that is tried by circumstances that force us to put our actions where our belief is. This supernatural life does not manifest itself in a vacuum of armchair positive thinking. It occurs only where the faith expresses itself in action that is appropriate to the belief.

Are there other instances of this supernatural life expressing itself besides this remarkable one of a ninety-year-old having children? Many. Let's look at some more in the next article to see what is needed in order to rise above the limitations of our present existence.

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