

Death of Life in the Mind

by Ernest O'Neill

The sermon 'Death of Life in the Mind' by Ernest O'Neill explores how the lack of the Holy Spirit leads to the deterioration of the mind, resulting in impaired judgment, unbalanced emotions, and weakened physical bodies.

Duration: 26:32

Topics: "Mental Health"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses how the human mind has become more focused on defending itself and seeking harmony in the world rather than understanding God's will. This shift has led to a sense of inadequacy and uncertainty, causing hasty judgments and decisions. The deterioration of the mind's focus on God's will is described as resulting in sin and death entering the world. The speaker emphasizes the importance of accessing the uncreated life of the Holy Spirit, which is necessary for true life and is currently lacking in the world.

Transcript

Could you imagine going into an automobile showroom with your battered old VW and trading it in, in that great moment when you graduate, you know, or something happens like that, and you trade it in on a shiny bright new Thunderbird, and the salesman starts to explain to you the kind of oil and the kind of gas you should use in this kind of a high-powered engine, and you stop him and say, no, no, I've always run my VW on regular low-octane gas, I only use four spark plugs, I know the kind of oil, I'm just going to run it the way I always ran my VW. And he can't do anything with you, and you go out and you run the Thunderbird that way, and you come back in a month's time, if you're lucky maybe, and the thing is tanking on the hills, and it won't start in the winter, and it's just an absolute mess. And he says to you, well, that's to be expected, that whole system is different from your old VW system, and it only uses a certain kind of gas and a certain kind of oil, and you have to put eight spark plugs in, whether you like it or not, because it has eight cylinders, and it won't work right, unless you use the right power and the right fuel, and you're just going to destroy the whole system if you use the wrong power in it.

And you know that we've been saying week after week that that's what happened at the beginning of the world, that our personality was made to run on a certain power and a certain life that the Creator made at the beginning, and if it doesn't run on that power or that life, the whole system begins to break down and deteriorate. And you remember the power is very plainly stated there in Genesis 2 and 9, if you just flick the page over quickly to it, Genesis 2 and 9, it's page 2 there, and the power was made available out of

the ground, it's verse 9 of Genesis 2, out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but the tree of life. And God made available to us this supernatural uncreated dynamic life that is really like premium gas to a high-powered engine.

And God said plainly what the salesman said, you know, to us, Genesis 2 and 17, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die. In other words, if you decide to decide what is good for this engine and what is bad for it on your own according to your own knowledge of good and evil, you'll find that the whole system will break down. And in fact that is what Adam did, do you remember? He just decided to do it his own way, decided that he would run his personality with the ordinary natural psychological and physical life that he had received, and would do without this supernatural uncreated life.

And the same thing happened. The whole system began to deteriorate. It was gradual at first.

You can see that in Genesis 2 and 9, I'm sorry, Genesis 6 and 3. The deterioration was gradual. All of us die, 70, 80, maybe 90 at the most, you know, but that's about as old as we get. Now obviously the deterioration was gradual in the early days of the world, Genesis 6 and 3. Then the Lord said, My spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh, but his days shall be 120 years.

And so obviously even though the life was no longer present and flowing through the body, yet still the bodies lasted longer than they do today. So the deterioration has increased as the years have passed and the centuries have gone. And you can see it there in Genesis 4 and 22.

The deterioration in the mind was only gradual. You don't have to look only to the pyramids in Egypt or the Aztec or Inca civilizations or Chinese civilizations to realize that at an early time in life's history, men were able to do much greater things. They had minds that were much more alert and sharp.

422 there, you see, Zillabor Tubalcain, he was the forger of instruments of bronze and iron. And obviously they were able to do remarkable things in the early days. So though the deterioration was gradual, yet it was definite.

And you ended up in the situation described in Romans 5 and verse 12. Romans 5 and 12. That determination in Adam to do it his way rather than God's way resulted in this kind of atmosphere in the world.

Therefore, a sin came into the world in verse 12 of Romans 5, through one man and death through sin. And so death spread to all men because all men sinned. And all of us lack this power of the uncreated life of the Holy Spirit.

And so death spread to all of us. And that's what God says again, you know, in 14. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

And so that kind of death in our bodies, our minds, our emotions, our spirits reigned throughout the world. And that's the kind of situation into which we have arrived really. And you know that it was all because of God's word.

It was really all because of God's word. God said, Genesis 2 and 17, maybe you should look at it and then we'll talk about it a little. Genesis 2 and 17, it was God's word, really, that brought us into this situation.

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat. For in the day that you eat of it, you shall die. And God said that.

God said if you don't receive the life of my Holy Spirit into you, you're going to die. And God was bound by his own word, you see. He had to keep it.

And you see how he kept it in Genesis 3 and 24. Genesis 3 and 24, he drove out the man and at the east of the garden of Eden, he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life. So God said, you need this life? You really do? You can't live without this uncreated supernatural dynamic life.

And if you're determined to live without it, I have to withdraw it from you and you'll no longer have access to it. And that's what God did. And so we live in a world that does not really have access to that Holy Spirit.

And you know that anybody in North or South Vietnam will agree with you, death reigns. Death certainly reigns today in their world. And the little child you remember that had all the burns from Nha Trang? You remember it was the South Vietnamese, I think, dropped the bomb on the village.

And that little one, even though the pain is gone now after a month, but she'll certainly say, yeah, death reigns. Death reigns in our world. And go to India, Africa, any of the underdeveloped countries, and you'll find people will say, yeah, because the floods and the droughts, death certainly reigns in our country.

But even we, brothers and sisters, even we in our nation will say that the fear of death reigns. The fear of death reigns even among us. The fear of terrorism.

The fear of death reigns in other countries. The fear of the secret police. The alienation of death reigns.

Alienation of death certainly reigns in our society. Fifty percent of our marriages end up in divorce. Certainly our lives are filled with that sense of alienation from one another.

We find it even in the loneliness of death. The loneliness of death as far as singles living in apartments in the large cities. You know, that's what's killing many of us who live in apartments in the great metropolises that we have in the nation.

And death reigns in that we're lonely. We're cut off from each other. We're alienated.

And most of us would agree, yeah, death reigns. It certainly reigns. And do you see, brothers and sisters, it reigns because of God's Word.

God said, if you do not receive the life of my Holy Spirit, death will reign in your land and in your life. And that's the way it has to be. And the only way God could ever remove the flaming sword that guards the way to the Holy Spirit and make the Holy Spirit available to us is if somebody else died the death for us.

And you remember, that's what enabled God to take away the flaming sword from the Holy Spirit. And that's what happened. You see it in Romans 3 and verse 25 and 26.

It was this man, Jesus, who really stepped forward and paid this death penalty to God's justice so that God could keep his word and could punish our rebellion in an ordinary man and yet could replace the tree of life for us. Christ Jesus, Romans 3 and 25, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness.

His righteousness, you see, was in question. If he simply removed the flaming sword without anything happening, then we would have said, did you really mean that you are a righteous God at all? This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous.

In spite of the fact that he's let the Holy Spirit again come among us and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus. Now, dear ones, it's really the situation that results now among us that I'd like to talk about this morning. That the Holy Spirit is really alive among us today.

Adam, the first progenitor of the race, passed death on to you and me. He passed an impaired mind onto us, unbalanced emotions onto his weakened body. He passed onto us a world that was infested with evil spirits that was pro-self and anti-God that lacked the Holy Spirit.

He brought death to us. He passed death onto us. The second progenitor of the race started all over again, Jesus.

And he is starting a new race and he is passing life onto us. And this life makes a vital difference to every part of your personality and mind. I'd like just to talk a wee bit, you know, about the difference it makes.

You know, one of the problems that we have is our impaired minds. I mean, you have a mind that fails you at times, don't you? I mean, it makes mistakes. It makes wrong judgments.

At times the old memory falters. You have a mind that wanders away in wandering thoughts that at times you can't control, even keeps you awake at night when you want to get to sleep. The mind is churning over and over.

Now, that impaired mind is one of the parts of death that our forefathers passed on to us. As they lacked the Holy Spirit themselves, so their mind became impaired and weakened and they begot children whose minds were weakened and impaired. And you know the kind of way that death expresses itself in a mind that works without the Holy Spirit.

God's original plan was that the mind would be empowered by the life of his Holy Spirit and would simply be used to understand his plans for the universe and to work them out in deductive detail. He would give us his desire for the world through the intuition of our spirits and we would use our minds simply as a machine to work out and to understand what he had told us to do and work it out in deductive detail and apply it to particulars. Now, when we lacked the Holy Spirit, the mind realized that it had to work on its own and instead of the mind being used to understand God's will, the mind started to try to make sense of the plurality of factors in the world on its own by the scientific method.

And it started to look at all the many particulars in the world and to try to draw them into some kind of order and harmony. But the mind was working from a self-preserving kind of motive that in fact caused it to be unbalanced. And so as it looked at all these particulars and tried to harmonize them under principles by trial and error, it would at times make mistakes.

It would draw them together wrongly at times. This is why we ended up with many scientific theories that did not last. The mind was working independently on its own, saying yes, we draw together four and five together in the theorem of Pythagoras.

Yes, it'll work there. Then we draw together these in Archimedes' principle. Okay, it'll work there.

But at times they would draw them together in the wrong combination. And so we ended up with wrong scientific theories at times that have to be changed. And that's why science is all the time in a state of movement and development.

And it ended up in times like spills, oil spills in the ocean. Ended up in decisions that actually contorted the world. Now as the mind began to do that, so the mind began to come under adverse judgment from other human beings.

Because other people would look at the man who decided to drill an oil well off the California coast and he would say that was stupid. Stupid decision. And so men began to judge each other for the wrong judgments their own minds were making.

And gradually, brothers and sisters, our minds began to be preoccupied not with the discovery of truth, but with defending ourselves against other people's judgments. And we began to be more concerned with defending ourselves by our minds than with discovering the truth of how the universe works. And as this increased, you can see our mind began to be more and more paranoid and began to retreat more and more from the discovery of truth and be more and more concerned with justifying itself.

Now brothers and sisters, as that developed, you can see the situation that we have in many of our colleges. You know fine well that many faculties are preoccupied with proving that they're valuable to the university rather than preoccupied with discovering truth. Many members of faculties are more concerned with defending themselves against their fellow members in the faculty than they are with discovering truth.

And so, you know, instead of the mind being used to understand God's will, the mind began to be used to discover harmony in the world as best it could and then to defending its judgment and its harmonizing of the world's many particulars against other people. And the mind began to defend itself and justify itself against each other. Now as it went on, you can see that the mind discovered its own inadequacy and frustration and became more and more disappointed in itself and more and more uncertain of itself and unsure of itself.

And as that happened, more and more it became unbalanced. And so it began to make judgments that were quick and hasty, publish or perish. You had to bring a decision out early.

You didn't, you weren't sure whether the vaccine really worked. You weren't sure whether thalidomide really did the job, but you had to bring it out fast against your competitors. And so the mind was driven by the sheer pressures of other people's opinion upon it, driven into wrong decisions and wrong judgments.

It was driven into prejudiced judgments. The mind began to be unbalanced itself. It began to make mistakes.

It began to lack the ability to concentrate because it was thinking of what other people were thinking of it. It began to worry. It began to come into all kinds of tension.

Now, brothers and sisters, that's how the mind has come into the kind of death that you experience with it today, so that you know you and I have minds that don't seem part of us. We don't seem even able to control them. They at times run away with us.

Now, loved ones, it's because the mind started with the lack of the Holy Spirit. Now, what was God's plan? It was absolutely the other way. God's plan was that we would receive through the intuition of the Spirit God's own plans to develop his world and his universe, and that we would use our minds just to understand those principles and to apply them in detail in life.

And so, you know, the kind of wisdom that that produced was utterly different and utterly peaceful compared with the other kind of wisdom. You see, those two wisdoms, if you like, compared James 3 and 14 and 15 describes the kind of earthy wisdom that comes from what some of you philosophers will recognize as the inductive method, as opposed to what God's plan was, the deductive method. So, if you look at James 3 and 14 to 15, you find the kind of chaos that resulted from the mind working backwards, trying to harmonize the world according to its own judgments, and coming, of course, into mistakes and into tension.

James 3 and 14 and 15, and it's interesting how it describes to a great extent the academic world. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This wisdom is not such as comes down from above.

You see, it comes up from underneath in an inductive method, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. Some philosophers may be wondering, is there not a place for the inductive method? Yes, but we would have been guided to use the inductive method as God guided us to use it, you see.

He would have pointed out the possible harmony in the universe. You must admit that even the inductive method requires that men set up hypotheses that they proved. If we had our minds working the way God wanted us to, we would see those hypotheses revealed by God to us, and we would simply apply them.

The wisdom that comes from God is utterly different, James 3 and 17. But the wisdom from above is first pure, because it is only one single desire, you see, to find out truth and to discover God's plan. Then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty, you see, or insincerity.

And that's the kind of wisdom that God intended us to receive as we allowed the Holy Spirit to come down through our minds. Our minds then would have been taken up with discovering God's mind. That's it, brothers and sisters.

The top scientists among us, the top philosophers among us, would have been concerned with discovering God's mind and the principles that govern his mind. And when our mind is working the right way and the life of the Holy Spirit is flowing through it, that's what we're preoccupied with. We're preoccupied with discovering the plans for the universe from the very mind of the creator of the universe.

You get that kind of emphasis there in Psalm 139, Psalm 139 and verse 14. And it's about page 542, on page 542, Psalm 139 and 14. And this would have been the preoccupation, you see, with the mind that is governed by the Holy Spirit.

I praise thee, for thou art fearful and wonderful, wonderful are thy works. Thou knowest me right well. My frame was not hidden from thee, when I was being made in secret, intricately wrought in the depths of the earth.

You see, you knew everything. You had it all planned. So if I discover what is in your mind, I'll discover the meaning of the world itself.

Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance. In thy book were written every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. That's good too, brothers and sisters, incidentally, for those of us who don't like the way our nose goes, you know, or don't like the way our hair goes.

It's good to see, look, don't you look down on something that God has planned carefully. God designed you carefully before you were born. And so he's pleased with what he made, you know.

So don't disagree with God just because your nose has a bump in the middle. And 17, how precious to me, and this would be the attitude, you see, of a scholar whose mind is governed by the Holy Spirit, how precious to me are thy thoughts, O God. Not my own or my own guesses about whether light is rays or particles, but thy thoughts, how precious to me are thy thoughts, O God.

How vast is the sum of them. If I would count them, they are more than the sand. Of course, that presents to you too the shared difficulty that a mind working from the other direction has to try to harmonize the thoughts that are more than the sand on the seashore.

Now, brothers and sisters, when you begin to allow the Holy Spirit to come into your mind and to work through it the other way, and allow it to be preoccupied with God and his thoughts and his mind, and stop this business of using your mind to defend yourself against other people or defending your judgment against other people, then you'll find the Holy Spirit will begin slowly to bring that mind back under the control of God and begin to take away all the limitations, you know, and the frustrations that the mind has. A man called Simpson said this about his experience of the Holy Spirit working in his mind. I had a poor sort of a mind, heavy and cumbrous, that did not think or work quickly.

I wanted to write and speak and have a ready memory so as to have the little knowledge I had gained always under command. I went to Christ about it and asked if he had anything for me in this way. He replied, yes, my child, I am made unto your wisdom.

I was always making mistakes which I regretted and then thinking I would not make them again. But when he said that he would be my wisdom, that we may have the mind of Christ, that he could cast down imaginations and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, that he could make the brain and head right, then I took him for all that. And he actually received by faith, you see, the mind of Christ through the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit began to give him that mind.

And since then I have been kept free from this mental disability and work has been rest. I used to write two sermons a week and it took me three days to complete one. But now in connection with my literary work, I have numberless pages of matter to write constantly besides the conduct of very many meetings a week and all is delightfully easy to me.

The Lord has helped me mentally and I know he is the savior of our mind as well as our spirit. Now dear ones, I know that a lot of you who are involved in the old studies are troubled because the mind is just in bits and pieces. Now dear ones, do you see that the life of the Holy Spirit can integrate your mind? And if

you begin to trust him and ask him to give you light on the ways in which your mind is impure, in which it is double-minded, in which it's trying to manipulate other people and manipulate circumstances and defend itself against others and at the same time with the time that it has left discover truth.

If you allow the Holy Spirit to reveal that to you, he can expose to you why your mind is disintegrated and fragmented. And loved ones, I tell you the Holy Spirit is able to change and renew your memory. The Holy Spirit is able to bring you into such a place of rest that your judgment is unimpaired and balanced.

The Holy Spirit is able to clear your mind of those prejudices that are so deep that you don't even know they're there. The Holy Spirit is able to give you rest at night when you go to sleep. He is able to give you rest from vile imaginations and from wild thoughts.

He is able to bring you into rest in your mind. So, you know, that's only a little indication. I only got a third of the way through the sermon, so you can see that really there's a lot to talk about, you know, in regard to the emotions and the body.

But there's a lot more even to say about the mind. I'd ask you to begin, would you begin thinking about it? Would you begin praying about it? Above all, would you begin to see that if your mind is under the control of death, then your mind must be just a mess? You know, and I'm afraid that's true, isn't it? Most of our minds are just terrible messes that we manage to collect together long enough to do the examination, and then they go in bits again. And then we haul them together again for a great decision on which car we should buy, and then they go away.

But most of our minds are not really under our control. And it is the Holy Spirit's will that you should have your mind at once under the control of God and working in the right direction. So, maybe you'll begin to think about it.

And I think those of you who are interested in philosophy at all, you know that there's a lot more to work out there. That's only the brief outlines of a possible approach. But most important is that we let the Holy Spirit work it out in us personally.

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