

Humanity

by Ernest O'Neill

The sermon explores humanity's deep connection to Jesus and the implications of being part of his life and essence.

Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:11, John 1:1, Ephesians 2:10, Colossians 1:15

Topics: "Union With Christ", "Human Nature"

Description

Ernest O'Neill discusses the concept of being part of someone else, emphasizing how we often seek autonomy and independence in life but end up feeling inadequate and insecure. He highlights the unique claim of Jesus, who declares that we are part of Him and encourages us to abide in Him for true fulfillment. O'Neill explores the biblical truth that we are created in Christ Jesus, deriving our existence and purpose from Him, and delves into the eternal nature of Jesus as the first-born of all creation, emphasizing our timeless connection to Him.

Transcript

It's such a new thought -- the thought that you are actually part of someone else. In a way it's the first thought that is real for you -- because you entered this world as part of your mother. But somehow once we've been born we begin to regard ourselves as absolutely "our own" and "on our own". Much of our mother's pain as we grow up comes from our desire for our own way and our own subsistence independent of her. And yet, as life continues, this very autonomy produces depressing feelings of inadequacy and angst. Despite many temporary experiences of self-sufficiency, these feelings of insecurity are eventually justified when we succumb to the final disease or senility -- and die. Then others carry us to our final resting place because we cannot walk ourselves!

So it's a very reasonable thought that we so often feel we need something or someone else to complete us (and think we've found it in marriage or children or friends). All the great religious leaders like Buddha, Mohammed, and Confucius try to lead us into participation in a spirit greater than ourselves. But somehow there's a vagueness and distance about it all -- even though we feel it speaks somewhat to our deep feelings.

But none of them ever says "you're part of me". They don't seem to have the stature to say that convincingly to us. But -- more than that -- they don't claim it. They don't say it because they don't think of themselves like that -- they know they're only human beings like the rest of us. However, this is exactly what that unique man Jesus does say -- He says "you're part of me" -- abide in me and I in you -- without

me you can do nothing -- I am the life".

An Encouraging Metaphor

Un-naturally we think "what a lovely metaphor -- that we're part of that wonderful human being known on earth in the first century as Jesus Christ!" It's so uplifting -- to think that we are part of the one perfect human being that ever lived.

But the problem is that the Bible doesn't seem to see this as a metaphor -- it keeps on repeating it as actual fact. Paul writes in his letter to the people in Ephesus (Ephesians 2:10) "for we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which He has prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them". John says the same kind of thing about our origin: in the first chapter of his gospel, he writes "in the beginning was the Word (one of the words he uses for Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made. What has been made was life in him."

This means that you came out of Jesus' life -- that the feelings you have at times that you'll live forever are because it's his life and energy that pulses through your brain. Even the partial insight of reincarnation or a past life is a misunderstanding of the inner sense we have that we are part of another -- that we come from someone else -- that the life that is in us is bigger than we are -- and will continue after us. But the truth is even deeper than this!

The Eternal Man

There's a book in the Bible called Colossians: in chapter 1, verse 15ff., we read "He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities -- all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together." In other words, Adam was not the first-born of all creation -- he was just the first human being created here on planet earth. Jesus was the first-born of all creation -- our Creator "begot" him as his "only-begotten son": and he was the beginning of all creation.

So when we say we were "created in him", this means we were part of him -- part of his own being and life. Moreover, we "are" part of him -- because he not only "was", but "is" and "will be": his life is timeless -- he existed before the world -- and will continue after it disappears. And we are part of him -- unless we choose finally to live in deception. This is why we have feelings of eternity at times -- feelings that we are part of something or someone greater: it's also why good desires sometimes rise within us. Before Jesus lived on earth, the writer of Ecclesiastes wrote "He has made everything beautiful in its time: also he has put eternity into man's mind, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end".

But we are even more closely related to Jesus and our Creator than this: let's talk about it in the next article.

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