

Jesus in You (Romans 5:19)

by Ernest O'Neill

The sermon emphasizes the historical evidence for Jesus' existence while exploring the deeper, relational aspect of faith that requires personal surrender and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 30:47

Scripture: John 3:16, John 18:31

Topics: "Inner Transformation", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of allowing Jesus to come alive inside our spirits. He explains that we cannot produce this reality on our own, but rather, it is a work that only God can do. The speaker references Luke 1:38, where Mary declares herself as the handmaid of the Lord, willing to do whatever God wants in order to have Jesus alive within her. The speaker also highlights the need to give Jesus room and time in our lives, as many of us fail to experience his presence due to being crowded out by other concerns. The sermon concludes by drawing a parallel between the hindrances faced by Jesus in coming alive in our world and the hindrances we face in allowing him to come alive within us.

Transcript

Tomorrow is Jesus' birthday. It's very hard to believe that he's a myth. Every time you try to dismiss him as a myth, you kind of bark your shins on Christmas.

And the human race is pretty stupid at times, but it's unlikely that for two thousand years we'll observe the birthday of a man who never existed. And so Christmas is great proof that Jesus really did live. Yet this morning, dear ones, I'd really like to ask you the question and try to answer it.

Why is it easy to believe in him and yet very hard to believe in him? Why is it easy for us to believe in him in our heads and yet very hard for us to really believe in him in our hearts? It's easy to believe in him in our heads because of the historical evidence. Here is a piece of it. I have a picture here.

This is Bruce's Books and the Parchments, it's called. And I have a picture here of a manuscript that is in the museum in Manchester, England. And it's dated both on the basis of its writing style and on the basis of the content of the papyrus itself.

It's dated 125 A.D. And this is part of the Gospel of John. This is the way it reads. It's these few verses, John 18 and 31 through 33.

Pilate said to them, take him yourselves and judge him by your own law. The Jews said to him, it is not lawful for us to put any man to death. This was to fulfill the word which Jesus had spoken to show by what death he was to die.

Pilate entered the praetorium again and called Jesus and said to him, are you the king of the Jews? And that piece of manuscript is dated 125 A.D. Now John wrote his gospel not earlier probably than 90 A.D. and not later than 100. So that manuscript is just 30 years, 30 years later than when John wrote the gospel. Now you can see how difficult it is for anybody to change that manuscript over a period of just 30 years.

Because there were people alive who read it when it was first written. Now that's good evidence for Jesus' existence. Is it as reliable evidence as we have for Julius Caesar's existence? Well, I'll tell you how good it is.

Caesar wrote his Gallic Wars about 50 B.C. It's about 50 years before Jesus was born. Now the oldest manuscript we have of Caesar's Gallic Wars is 30 years later? No. 50? No.

90? No. 200? 300? No. 400? No.

500? 900 years later we have the oldest manuscript of Caesar's Gallic Wars. Now you can see how much better is the historical manuscript evidence for Jesus' existence than for Caesar. It's really much easier to believe that Jesus really did live than to believe that Caesar lived.

It's the same wherever you go in the ancient history. It doesn't matter whether you take Homer's poetry, whether you take Plato's Republic, whether you take Libby's histories. All of them have a gap of about 1300 years between the time they were written and the first and the oldest manuscript we have of them.

Whereas with Jesus the manuscript is only 30 years later than when it was first written. You can see that classical scholars would need to give up belief in the classics before they would refuse to believe that Jesus really did live in the first century. You may say, well, do we just depend for our knowledge of Jesus on one manuscript dated 125 AD? Well, that's what you do with Homer's poetry.

We believe Homer's poetry as it was written on the basis of one manuscript that is dated about 1100 AD. With Caesar's Gallic Wars we have ten manuscripts. With Tacitus' histories we have two manuscripts.

Yet we accept them without any question. How many manuscripts are there for Jesus' existence and for the history of his life? 10, 20, 40, 60, 100, 200, 400, 4,000. Between the year 1 and the year 1100 AD there are 4,000 different Greek manuscripts that reinforce the documented history of Jesus' life.

And they each confirm one another, however old or young the manuscripts are. Now brothers and sisters, that's why it's really difficult to refuse to believe in Jesus as a historical figure. You can see that.

Because the evidence for his existence is far beyond the existence of any figure in ancient history like him. He is so certain and sure compared with Muhammad or Buddha, with Caesar, with Homer, with any of them. And that's why it's easy to believe in Jesus.

Especially, when you take into consideration the archaeological evidence for the New Testament events. When you begin to take into consideration the sufferings and the reliability of the eyewitnesses. When you begin to take into consideration lectures like Karlos Kovmanis' on the Bethlehem star, which proves

scientifically that the star must have been at that particular year when Jesus was born.

When you begin to go into the reinforcing evidence, it's impossible to refuse the fact that Jesus really did live. That's why it's easy to believe in him. That's why most of us here in the theater probably do believe in Jesus.

It's easy to believe in Jesus in your head as a historical figure. And most of us do. I think that's why most of us regard ourselves as Christians here this morning.

We say, I believe in Jesus. Isn't that what you're asked to do? And you know where we get it from. John 3 and 16, if you look at it, it says it plainly.

John 3 and 16, it's page 924. John 3 and 16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. And most of us feel, well there it says it.

No, I believe in Jesus. I believe in him as a historical figure. I believe he really existed.

I believe in some sense he exists today. Yes, I believe in Jesus. And so most of us feel therefore we're Christians.

But brothers and sisters, if you go into the original Greek of that verse, you'll find that the word that we have translated in is the Greek word *eis*, and it means into. And the verse really means, for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes into him should not perish but have eternal life. And so God really says, I have sent my son so that you can believe into him.

Now that's something that you can't do with Caesar. You can't believe into Caesar. He's dead now.

You can't believe into Plato. You can believe in Caesar. You can believe in Plato.

But you can't believe into them. They aren't real living people now that you can believe yourself into. And that's what God says we are to do with Jesus.

You can see that that's why it begins to be hard to believe in Jesus in that sense. Do you believe in Archimedes' principle? Do you believe in Pythagoras' theory? Do you believe in Einstein's theory of relativity? Most of us, if we examine and are competent to examine some of these, will say, oh yeah, yeah, I believe in them. Because they don't affect our lives.

We're not being asked to believe into them. But you see that part of the problem we have with Jesus is we're being asked to have a relationship with him that is not simply the mental ascent of our minds to his existence. It actually involves something about believing into him.

And brothers and sisters, that's why God sent his son Jesus. So that we would psychologically and spiritually enter into his son Jesus. And so that his son would psychologically and spiritually enter into us.

And that's what it means really to be a Christian. It means to believe into Jesus. If you take the first value of his words, abide in me and I in you, that's what it means.

And when you talk about believing in Jesus, you really mean entering into him spiritually and psychologically and allowing him to enter spiritually and psychologically into us. Why? Because he's still alive. Caesar isn't still alive.

Plato isn't still alive. Homer isn't still alive. Einstein isn't still alive.

But this person, Jesus, is alive today. And God sent him to us so that he would enter into us spiritually. That's the importance of the birth with Mary, you see.

You may have wondered why did God make such a great deal of him being born inside an ordinary woman? That's it. Because God was illustrating physically and graphically what is to happen with each one of us. His son is to be born again inside us.

And to come up fully and grow in us until suddenly the world will begin to see him instead of us. And all eyes will turn upon him and not us. And that's what really becoming Christian is.

It's in that sense that it's hard to believe in Jesus, you see. To enter into him that way and to allow him to enter into you, that's difficult. For Jesus to be born in you, he begins to meet a whole lot of obstacles and difficulties.

You may say, oh, what are they? I have no obstacles to him being born in me. Well, dear ones, they're the same obstacles that he met when he was going to be born into our world. Just the same obstacles.

Would you look with me at the Christmas story and you'll see them. God is so good, you know, in making it so plain and obvious to us. See Luke 2 and verse 7 there.

Luke chapter 2 and verse 7, it's about page 889. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no place for them in the inn. And Jesus found one of the obstacles to him being born into our world was there wasn't room.

The inn was crowded with other people. There was no room for this baby to be born. And that's the same difficulty.

A lot of us wonder why this spirit of Jesus has not come alive inside us. A lot of us, I think, in the theater this morning believe all the things that I said. You've examined the historical evidence.

You believe Jesus is really alive. And yet he hasn't come alive inside you. That's why.

There's no room in your life for him. You know, your heart and your mind is like an inn or a house. And it's crowded with all kinds of things.

And you just have never given him room. You know, it's crowded with, first of all, yourself and your own happiness. Most of our lives are filled with a desire for our own happiness.

And then it's next, it's crowded with your job and the success of your job. And you're always thinking of your job. Or you're crowded next with your family and with their happiness.

And your mind is always preoccupied with those things. Your mind never has enough room in it to give Jesus the quietness that is necessary for his spirit to come alive inside you. And then you go after that and your mind is crowded with your future.

And with ensuring financial success and ensuring security. Now that's why, brothers and sisters, many of us really never experience the reality of this spirit of Jesus coming alive inside us. We look at other people who seem to experience it more vividly than we do.

And we don't understand why. Loved ones, it's because we never have enough room to give any time or place to dealing with Jesus. Old Blaise Pascal was a scientist, do you remember? Oh, a leading scientist in the 17th century in France.

And he took that passage in Isaiah. And he put it in Latin, you know, God is a deus absconditus. God is a hidden God.

And those who want to find him must want to find him. And we're so unused to that attitude. We kind of feel, no, no, it's up to God.

He ought to hit us over the head, strike us with lightning, or show us himself plainly. But, dear ones, God is a hidden God. And some of us never are prepared to take half the trouble for Jesus to be born in us that any mother takes before the baby comes out of her own body.

But that's part of the problem. We don't have enough room. Pascal puts it strongly, you know.

He talks about such people. And he's talking, of course, from the point of view of a Catholic. And he says this, they believe they have made great efforts for their instruction when they have spent a few hours in reading some book of Scripture and have questioned some priests on the truths of the faith.

After that they boast of having made vain search in books and among men. But verily, I will tell them what I have often said, that this negligence is insufferable. We are not here concerned with the trifling interests of some stranger that we should treat it in this fashion.

The matter concerns ourselves and our all. That's a scientist, you know, of 17th century speaking. But, brothers and sisters, many of us fail to experience Jesus coming alive inside us because we don't give him room or time.

We really don't give any time to thinking about him or dealing with him. And yet it's the most important thing in the whole world because we're crowded out with a lot of other concerns. If you look at the Christmas story, you can see something else.

It's in Matthew 2 and verses 1 through 3. And you will see, really, what I've mentioned, that the reason Jesus has not come alive inside many of us is exactly the same reasons that almost prevented him coming alive in our world. It's Matthew 2 and verses 1 through 3. Now, when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen a star in the east and have come to worship him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And you remember, Herod was so troubled that he killed all the one and two year old babies to make sure that this Jesus was not born. Because this Jesus was reckoned to be the King of the Jews. And there wasn't room in Jerusalem for two kings.

And that's it with us. Jesus will not come in to be a subject. He will not come in to be your servant.

He will only come in to be your king. And the reason why he hasn't come into many of our spirits is that we want to be king and to remain king. And we will not give up the kingship of our own lives.

Brothers and sisters, every time we have a problem with finding Jesus real inside us, it ends up being a problem of kingship. Not of intellectual difficulty, but of kingship. It's amazing that even the most

intellectual of the agnostics among us confess that that's the real reason why they refuse to believe in Jesus himself.

There's a revealing piece in one of Huxley's books, Aldous Huxley, who talks about his own philosophy. And talks about why he's rejecting Christianity. And brothers and sisters, this is finally the real reason why Jesus does not come alive inside us.

He says, the philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics. He's not concerned with just an intellectual problem. He is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do.

That's amazing, you know, coming from someone like Huxley, whom we regard as being so honest intellectually. He says that really, a philosopher who pleads that the world is meaningless is doing it because in a meaningless world he can do what he wants. For myself, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation, sexual and political.

And he says the reason why I believe that the world is meaningless is it enables me to do just whatever I want, sexually and politically. And brothers and sisters, that's the real reason why Jesus cannot be born in many spirits today. Because he demands that we obey him.

He demands that he be crowned king in the life in which he comes to dwell. And we refuse to do that. So we keep on often pleading intellectual difficulties with people like Huxley.

But the real reason is that we don't want this man to rule over us. And brothers and sisters, the spirit of Jesus will not come to be your prisoner or to be your subject. But you see, so often we will not allow him to be king over our marriage desires.

We will not submit our career plans to him. We will not submit our bank accounts to him. We will not submit our futures to him.

We say we are kings of those things. And we intend to remain so. And that really is why Jesus is not born in many of us.

If you are having difficulty allowing Jesus to be real in you, loved ones, deal with some of those issues that you're arguing with him about. And you'll probably find them beginning to be real inside you. Just the last difficulty that I'd like us to look at this morning is in the Christmas story as it's told in Luke 1. Luke chapter 1. It's really part of the lesson that we read.

And it's Luke 1 and 31 through 34. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son. And you shall call his name Jesus.

He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever.

And of his kingdom there will be no end. And Mary said to the angel, how can this be since I have no husband? And Mary became immediately caught up with just the sheer human difficulties because she was looking at it in a human way. And she said, I'm not even married.

I couldn't have a baby. There is no man that could put the sperm into my body so that the baby could be born. So this could not be.

And many of us fail to experience Jesus coming alive inside us because we're always looking at it from a human angle. We're always wondering, now, surely you just mean, when you talk about Jesus being born inside me, surely you just mean I experience more intensely the concept of his teachings. Or I experience more completely the reality of his existence.

And many of us fail to allow Jesus to be born in us because we think that him being born in us is just a metaphorical way of saying that you're more intensely related to his ideas or to his existence in your mind or in your emotions. And so we tackle it the way Mary does. We try to produce it humanly.

We think, we read, we pray, we meditate, we introspect, we do anything to try to produce the reality of Jesus' existence somewhere in our psychological beings. And brothers and sisters, we will fail continually because we're thinking all the time in terms of human experience. And we're thinking of a greater intensity of a human experience that we've already had in regard to some other person or some other thing.

And so many of us are still thinking in terms of relating to the principles of Jesus. Brothers and sisters, do you not see that it is a miracle? That it is something that is deeper than your mind or emotions? And that there is only one answer to every how question, you see. Mary says, how can this be? And the answer is a supernatural answer in 35.

And the angel said to her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you. And every time you ask how in Christian experience, the answer God gives is the Holy Spirit. How can this take place? The Holy Spirit.

Brothers and sisters, don't you see, it's a supernatural experience. It's a supernatural work that God does in your spirits. Don't you see, that's why when Jesus comes into your spirit, it's a more comprehensive experience than the latest philosophical notion.

That's why when Jesus comes into your spirit, it's a deeper peace than the withdrawal from the world that Eastern meditation produces inside you. That's why when Jesus comes into your spirit, it's a more permanent exaltation and exhilaration than you get from drugs. It's because it's a spirit of Christ coming into your spirits, deeper than your mind and your emotions.

It's a work that God's spirit does inside you. That's why it's such a miracle. And loved ones, Jesus will never become real in you unless you really do come to the point where you see that it's God doing something inside you that is supernatural.

And it's something deeper than you or I can produce inside ourselves. All we can do really is fulfill the conditions for it. A mother has to fulfill certain conditions for the baby to be born, but the baby being born is a miracle.

Do you see that? That there was no man to put the sperm inside Mary's womb. Do you see that the Holy Spirit did it? That out of nothing, he put something inside her. Now that's what he'll do in you.

Inside in your spirit, there's a place where God can work a miracle. You cannot touch that place. Mary couldn't touch her womb.

She couldn't govern what went on in the womb, really. The thing had to happen almost apart from her. She fulfilled certain conditions, but then it was the miracle work inside.

Now it is so with you and me. You can't touch your spirits. You can touch your mind by meditation.

You can touch your emotions by feeling. You can touch your body, but you can't touch your spirit. In that place, only God can do the work, and it's there that he creates Jesus inside you.

All you and I can do is fulfill the conditions, really. The conditions, you know, are plain there if you like to look at them. In Luke chapter 1 and verse 38, and Mary said, Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.

Let it be to me according to your word. And all we can do, really, is say what she said. Behold, Lord, I am your servant.

I'm your subject. I want Jesus so badly that I will do whatever you want me to do in my life or with my life, if you will only bring him alive inside my spirit. Behold, I'm the handmaid of the Lord.

Behold, I'm your servant. Whatever you want me to do, I'll do. I'll stop the things that you want me to stop.

Brothers and sisters, a lot of us will miss Jesus' birth this Christmas because we're still wanting certain things that we want, and we won't give them up. We need to fulfill the conditions. Lord, I'll do whatever you tell me to do.

And then you see what she says, Be it unto me according to your word. We need to believe what God has promised, that he will send the spirit of his Son into your heart if you really submit yourself to the Father. And you need to believe that.

And then you need to behave as if you carry the Christ child inside you. But that's really it, everyone. So you know all the excitement of the today and tomorrow.

And you know all the preoccupation with the tree and with the food. But do you see that it'll only be a mental, emotional experience of happiness that we transmit to one another that will end on Tuesday morning? Unless we really begin to come before God and say, Lord, I want your Son alive inside me. I don't want any of this historical society stuff.

I don't want any of this looking back to a figure in history and worshiping a myth. I want your Son alive inside me. Now, what do you want me to do in my life to make that possible? I believe you can do it by your Holy Spirit.

Now, will you show me? Really, brothers and sisters, that's what we need to do. You know, that's what I need to do in my home, and that's what you need to do in yours. And then you'll find a beautiful experience takes place.

Just like Mary comes in so quietly, the baby is suddenly inside you, and you're hardly aware yourself, but other people see, and other people can tell that there is somebody different inside you. And Jesus comes as quietly as that into anyone who is prepared to fulfill the conditions. So will you look into your own heart and see really if you do believe in Jesus, or if you just believe in Jesus.

Whether you really believe in Him, or whether you just believe in Him. Dear Father, we would trust you to give us revelation about this this morning. Father, we know that there is gruffness and harshness in our voices.

We know that there is often impatience and irritability in our actions. We know that there is often selfishness dominating our thoughts. And all of these things show plainly that we are not only kings in our own world, but that Jesus has little or nothing in us.

No, Father, we trust you this Christmas to lead each one of us into such a knowledge of our own kingship, that we will at last be willing to give it up, and to submit our lives completely to you, so that you can work this miracle inside us as you worked it in Mary. So that on Tuesday morning we can be different people. People in whom the Son of the Most High God lives, and works, and speaks, and thinks.

Lord Jesus, we trust you to come into each one of us this time, and to stay with us. We ask this for your glory in our lives, and for our experience of the purpose for which you made us, Lord God. Amen.

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