

Original Sin and Death (Romans 5:12)

by Ernest O'Neill

The sermon explains that the original sin was disobeying God's command, and the consequences of sin are physical death, spiritual death, and emotional death, resulting from the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit.

Duration: 32:00

Scripture: Genesis 2:16, Romans 5:12

Topics: "Original Sin", "Spiritual Renewal"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the mess and chaos that exists in the world today. He attributes this mess to our failure to follow Jesus and his teachings. The speaker mentions that Jesus explained why we got into this mess 1900 years ago and many people believed him. By believing in Jesus, individuals can experience a new kind of life that brings order and harmony to the mess around them. The speaker also highlights the issues of greed and lack of self-control as contributing factors to the mess in society.

Transcript

Still maybe it's unfair to tempt you with this question, but have you ever been to the Caribbean? Or the Caribbean, you say. That's where some of, you know, about 10 or 15 of us were this past summer in Puerto Rico. And all the islands there are just beautiful, you know.

I remember being there about three or four years ago, and remember going to an island called Buck Island, just a little kind of desert island, and spending the whole day snorkeling. And it really is just like the ads say, you know. It is beautiful.

The blue sky, you know, and deep blue clear water, and all just long white beaches, and the hot sun, and the sea breezes, and really it's beautiful. All this is a point, I'm not just trying to make you feel uncomfortable, you know, or discontented. But it is a magnificent place, you know.

And yet, this last summer, eight people were playing golf, and several blacks came in, shot them dead, and ran away. And you wonder what has turned what is really a heaven, you know, into really what is a hell. Time magazine had something on this past week, you know, and one of the residents says, this place has become like New York, or worse.

I won't even drive home alone at night. I can't leave the island without someone backing a truck up to my house and filling it up. We've all been robbed several times.

That's standard. Now, what has made the islanders there hate the wealthy Americans so much? Really, it ties up with the reason we want to go down into the Caribbean and into Latin America. One of the reasons is that we wealthy Americans move in and buy up all the luxurious houses and build beautiful houses in the hills.

And the islanders live in tar paper shacks. And it's as Time magazine says, you know, they've begun to feel that we want a piece of the action. And so they see what look to them like greedy Americans taking their land and using it for themselves.

And yet it's that same greed, for instance, among us today, that is driving even a Republican administration into price controls. I mean, it's incredible to think that Richard Nixon, but that any Republican administration would move towards price controls, and yet it's the old greed that is running through us that is doing it. We will not control ourselves.

We will not regulate our own salaries. We want more and more and more until eventually, in a democratic society, the only way to keep any kind of semblance of balance in it is to take away some freedom of some kind. And it's the old greed that is at the bottom, you know.

And you know that it's the greed and of balance in our streets that is really turning what is really a paradise from a natural point of view into, oh, a hell of Harlem's and slums and ghettos. And you wonder, really, where does it all end? And you jump over, you know, to the Olympic Games. Great picture of international friendship and international peace.

And it was the scenario, you know, for that shootout where eleven athletes were killed and murdered. And the same Black September group, you know, had promised ten or eleven more operations in the Middle East and in Europe, similar to that one. And it's come to the point where we're afraid, really, afraid almost to get on certain planes, afraid to walk out on certain streets.

And really, when you think of Ireland, it's ironic now to think that one of the titles of Ireland used to be the land of saints and scholars. Now we don't think of it as that at all. We think of it as just another heaven that has been turned into hell.

Now, brothers and sisters, why the mess? Why all this mess? Why has it all come about? How have we men and women taken what every astronomer admits seems to be the most beautiful planet in the universe, and we have polluted it and dirtied it and destroyed it and brought it to the point where we're hardly, we wonder if we'll see out this decade. 1900 years ago, a man called Jesus explained why we got into this mess. And he did it so authoritatively and so realistically that many of us here in this theater believed him.

And when we believed him, we began to experience a new kind of life in ourselves that not only was able to face the mess, but was able to bring it into order and harmony. See, all of us had part of this mess in our own families and in our own schools. But since we have begun to deal with this man, Jesus, and deal with his answer to the reason for the mess, we've begun to find that the mess came into order and harmony under this man's life in us.

Now, this man explained it just very clearly, you know. And he really wrote the thing down through disciples of his. That's one of the reasons why for almost six years now, some of us have been studying the letter one of these disciples of Jesus wrote to the Christians in Rome in 57 AD.

Because there, this disciple elaborated Jesus' explanation of how we got into this mess. Just made it very, very clear. And what we have managed to do over six years now is reach chapter five of that letter.

So maybe you'd look at that. Chapter five. The incredible thing is that as we've been plowing through it, the mess has been gradually clearing in our own lives.

That's a miracle. But if you look, brothers and sisters, at five of that book, the letter to the Romans, there is page 980 in that black RSV Bible. 980.

And in verse 12, what is designated anyway by the man who invented verses in the Bible, that verse describes and summarizes the reason Jesus gave for the mess we're in today. And it's verse 12. Therefore, as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all men sinned.

I think a lot of us have tried to laugh each other out of the only realistic account that we have of the beginning of the world through making jokes about, you know, oh, the first original sin, oh yeah, that was eating an apple, eating an apple, you know. Well, apple isn't mentioned, it had nothing to do with eating an apple, that isn't the first original sin. And some of us say, oh no, well it was intercourse, sexual intercourse.

It was those old puritanical Bible writers that thought intercourse was wrong. Intercourse was the first original sin. Brothers and sisters, it wasn't.

Jesus said neither of those things started the whole mess. But he does tell us, and you can see what the beginning of the world was like, if you look back to Genesis 2 and 16 and 17. The purpose of the trees is really that mankind was in his childhood, thousands of years ago.

And God presented the complex choice to him in terms of trees. Maybe he would do it differently with us today, you know, as bright sophisticates. He might present it in some other way.

But to them he presented it in terms of trees. But the trees have meanings. Now maybe it's good to look at what God did at the very beginning.

Genesis 2 and 16 and 17. It's page 2 in the Bible. And the Lord God commanded the man saying, you may freely eat of every tree of the garden.

In other words, God obviously made full provision for men and women at the very beginning when he made the world. And said, look you can eat of all these trees. I'll give you whatever you need.

And he just made one command. He said, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat. But God made provision, complete provision for us.

He even made us like himself. A lot of us wonder, you know, why we're really here in the world at all. Well you see that the reason is given in 1 John 1 and verse 3. It might be good just to look at that.

Because some of us are very superficial in trying to find out why we ended up in this mess. Because we really don't see why we're here in the first place. And that's page 1065.

1065 and it's 1 John 1 and verse 3. This is the real reason God made full provision for us in every way when he put us on the earth. In fact, this is why he put us on the earth. That which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you.

So that you may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. Now the reason God put us here was so that he'd enjoy our company forever.

That's it. That's really it. He didn't put you here just to make money or to be successful.

But so that you could live with him forever and love him and be part of his family. Now because of that God made full provision for us and made us in his own image. Made us like himself.

That's why it says let us make man in our own image. And God made us like himself. And if you like to look at the details you can see them there in Genesis 2 and verse 7. There you get where he gave us psychological and spiritual capacities like his own.

And physical capacities. Genesis 2 and 7. Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground. And that is he made our bodies.

Physical material bodies. And breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. Gave us spiritual capacity so that we would understand the kind of thing he understood.

And man as a result of that became a living being. And you remember the Hebrew word is the word for soul. Nefesh.

And it means man became a living soul. And soul, the Greek word is psuche. You remember the psychological part of man resulted from that.

God breathed into this physical body his spirit so that we had a spiritual and physical capacity. And as a result of those two joining together we ended up with minds and emotions and wills like God's himself. So in every way we were made with capacities that would enable us to really fellowship with the creator of the universe.

One other thing God gave us, you remember, is there in Genesis 2 and 16 and 17. It is important for those of us who tend towards determinism and the Gallup polls to see it. Genesis 2, 16 and 17.

And the Lord God commanded the man saying, you may freely, freely, well we have free will, well you may freely, well we have free will, well you may freely. Sooner or later you have to admit that God knows how to put the things so that we will understand. You may freely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.

From the day that you eat of it you shall die. And God wanted to make us utterly like himself and he gave us free wills. And he said really, look it is up to you.

I have given you everything you need. I have given you a body. As I have a spiritual body I have given you a physical body.

I have given you a spiritual capacity to communicate with me. I have given you mind, emotions and will. Now you can do whatever you want with all that.

The key to it all is in a certain tree that I have put in this garden. No doubt God would have put it differently to us. But the tree is mentioned in Genesis 2 and 9 there.

And 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 God. And God said really all you need to do to make the whole thing work beautifully is to eat of the tree of life. And the tree of life is the tree of my own life.

It's the thing that makes me God. It's the thing that makes me loving and kind and gentle and forgiving. It's the thing that enables the Trinity family to enjoy such peace.

This spirit of life that I have made available to you will make you absolutely like me. It'll make you like the Trinity family but I want you to opt into it freely. I'm not making you part of the Trinity family.

I don't want robots who are with us just because you can't be anything else. I make you free. You can choose to come into us and to receive the spirit of my life into you or just to ignore it.

And brothers and sisters that was the setup. And if the first man or the first man or the first woman had just been prepared to receive the one thing that was needed and to hunger after the Creator until they received the spirit of his life into them, that spirit of life would have molded their minds and emotions and their wills so that they would have had lives with direction in them and with purpose. That spirit would have told them what to do, what God wanted them to do.

That spirit would have given them enjoyment so that they didn't need to get a faster boat or a faster car to get some kind of thrill. But that spirit would have created an exhilaration in them that was beyond anything that they've ever experienced sexually or any other way. And that was God's plan.

That we'd receive this spirit, this Holy Spirit into us that would make the whole thing just go like clockwork. It would be really like premium gas, you know, in just a 289 V8. It would just make it go beautifully.

And really that was God's plan. And all we had to do was receive that spirit. And if we did that then we'd receive God's approval on our lives and God meanwhile would enable us to meet all our physical needs as we began to bring his world into submission to his will.

That was God's plan. We wouldn't have been straining and scrapping in the dirt to get our needs fulfilled. And that was man's choice.

And God warned man, he said, listen, I want you to take it my way. Receive my life into you. Don't eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Don't start trying to decide what is good and evil for yourself. Don't start trying to find out what is good and evil by trial and error and by hard experience. Trust my life.

Receive my life and let my life do in you what I want to do. And really the reason, the thing that got us into the mess was man didn't do that. He decided, no, I'm going to live it my own way with my own resources, all this beautiful world of nature that you've given me.

I'm going to use it myself. I want to be independent of you. I want to ignore you.

I don't want to live depending on the little bit of life that you're prepared to give me every day. And that's the sin, you know. It isn't sexual intercourse.

It isn't eating an apple. It isn't getting drunk. It isn't shooting drugs.

It isn't. The basic sin is saying, I'm going to live independent of you, God. I do not need your spirit.

And you see, loved ones, we apparently don't need his spirit, you know. Apparently we can walk with the power that is resident in our own bodies. It seems that when we tackle the old Pythagorean theorem, we can manage it with the power resident in our own minds.

It seems when we want to decide whether light contains particles or rays, we can think about that on our own without depending on this person's spirit in us. And you see, that's the kind of thing that we've been doing for years and years. And that's sin, and that's what God means when he says, sin came into the world.

People started to live independent of me. Now you see, along with sin, death came in as well. Sin came into the world, and through sin, death.

And you can see the kind of death, really, if you look at it there. First in Genesis 3 and 22. Genesis 3 and 22.

It's page 3. Then the Lord God said, Behold, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. And now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also up a tree of life, and eat, and live forever. The first death was physical death.

We were made to live forever. We were really made to live forever. The first thing God did when he saw men going their own way was to decide, I can't give them infinity, so that they can spread the poison and the destruction throughout my infinite universe.

I have to withdraw infinity from them. And so God withdrew the Holy Spirit that enabled them to live forever, and we began to live just for 70 or 80 years at the most. So the first thing we entered into was physical death.

That's where a lot of the sadness in life comes from, isn't it? A lot of our sadness comes from the feeling that our dad will not be always there, or our mom will not be always there, or we will not always be here. And yet that was a death that came in because we wouldn't go God's way. And he withdrew that spirit of eternal life from us.

There were other deaths, I think, that in some ways are more serious. Do you see 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." In other words, really God withdrew the Holy Spirit from the world.

He withdrew the Holy Spirit from our accessibility. And through that dynamic pulsating eternal spiritual life that makes the whole thing go like a 289 V8 on premium gas, that whole power was withdrawn from us. And it was spiritual death.

We really came into spiritual death. We no longer had communication with the creator of the universe. And we always felt, you know, that we were made for something better because we are.

But yet we couldn't reach it. We always felt we were made to fly high. That's why we go on to drugs.

Do you see? That's why many of us go into sexual intercourse outside marriage. Because we want eternity. We want that feeling of soaring high and flying high.

That's why at times we go for any emotional kind of experience with a loxinger that will take us beyond the world. Because really we are made to fly higher than these petty little pedestrian things that we have on earth. But do you see that it was God's plan that we go that way with that spirit of life? And he withdrew that once we refused to go his way.

Once we declared ourselves independent. And that had certain effects, you know, on us. It resulted really in the beginning of psychological death.

You see that in Genesis 3 and 19. Everything, you know, up to this point is just good. God saw everything and it was very good.

There was plenty of everything for us. Then 19, in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread. That sweat symbolizes all the worry that sat upon us.

When the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from us it was like trying to run that 289 V8 on just regular gas, you know, low octane gas. Began to hear the knocks. The thing wouldn't go fast enough.

The mind began to be inefficient. Our minds became impaired. You can see that because in the early days, you know, you only have to study the Aztec Indians to see the amazing things or the Egyptian pyramids to see the amazing things that we were able to do at the beginning of the world.

And gradually the mind became more and more impaired as we lacked this power of the Holy Spirit flowing through us. Until now our mind makes mistakes, you know. It makes all kinds of misjudgments.

It is passive at times. At times we can't control it. Then we fell into emotional death too.

The Holy Spirit was no longer present to give our emotions joy and peace. And our emotions became frustrated and irritable. And our emotions became unbalanced.

And we began to enter into emotional death. And then our bodies, you know, began to feel the effects of the worry and the ulcers and the hypertension. And the bodies of men gradually became weaker and weaker as they lacked this Holy Spirit in them to bring them the life of God.

Because we were all made to work with this life pulsing through us, you see. And when it was withdrawn, everything began to fall into deterioration. And that's part of what we mean, you know, when we say death came into the world.

Men began to find their minds impaired, their emotions unbalanced, their bodies weakened. And it was this weak, sick group of people that began to try to tackle the superhuman task that their Creator had given them. And then, you know, the world itself experienced the same thing.

When the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the world, there was a death that took place in nature. You can see it in Genesis 3.18. And it helps those of us who have had trouble, you know, with things like earthquakes and floods, this kind of thing. Genesis 3.18. Thorns and thistles that shall bring forth to you.

And the world itself, the world of nature, when the Holy Spirit was withdrawn, fell into disorder and strain and trauma developed in the earth's crust, so that earthquakes and volcanoes resulted. And the whole earth just shared the same degradation that we ourselves shared. Now, that's what we mean when we say that death came into the world.

When the Holy Spirit was withdrawn, the elemental spirits of the universe were released. And they began to have power to dominate men and to bring men dreams, evil dreams, and nightmares, and to insert demons into people's lives. And it was into that world that you and I have been born.

And that's why, that's why the thing has ended up on the messenger. Because all this stemmed from us declaring our independence of God. And that's the kind of world we've been born into.

Now, brothers and sisters, here's what's important. It's important to see why you and I still experience death today. A lot of people will try to persuade us by saying, you were all in Adam when he sinned.

So you're all facing the effects of his sin. You're all paying for that man's first sin. You're paying for the original sin that that man sinned.

Brothers and sisters, the Bible does not say that. The Bible emphasizes again and again in the 18th century prophets B.C. that every man is responsible for his own sin. And no longer will it be said, the father's eat grapes and the son's teeth are set on edge.

No longer is that true. The Bible says that, and God says, that we are responsible for our own sin. We don't experience death today because Adam sinned back then.

God says plainly why we experience it. It's that verse that we're studying today, Romans 5 and 12. And it's there very plainly in black and white.

And you should really be honest about it and not try to lay this off on Adam and Eve or somebody else. Put the blame on someone else. Romans 5 and 12.

Therefore, as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men. Why? Because all men sinned. In other words, you and I experience death today insofar as we ourselves sin today.

Is your memory poor? Is the old mind weak and passive at times? Do you find your emotions doing things that you don't really want them to do? You get mad when you don't really want to get mad. You lose your temper when you don't really want to lose your temper. You get all depressed when there's no reason in the world why you should be depressed.

You find the old body, you know, as it gets into the winter, it believes the lie that winter works its toll on every physical body in Minnesota. And so as you get into the winter, the old body, you know, believes the lie, backs down, and just, you know, can't quite make it. Brothers and sisters, do you see that that is all death? And we experience that death insofar as we ourselves sin and live independent of God's life.

And loved ones, that's really why many of us meet together here every Sunday, because we found that this man Jesus didn't only give us the explanation of the reason for the mess we're in, but he actually himself has brought the solution. And in Jesus, the tree of life has been replaced in the world, and the Holy Spirit is again accessible to us. And many of us have begun to receive this Holy Spirit.

Now, if you're sitting there today and you're saying, oh, well, it sounds good, but I don't know the first thing about how to receive. All you can do is to begin to set out on the pilgrimage, isn't it? All you can do is to begin to read some of the books and come to some of the fellowships and begin to share. But loved ones, it is possible to turn that clock back.

It is possible to stop the death working in yourself. If you say to me, even so that you wouldn't experience physical death yet, so that physical death would present no fear for you or no threat at all, so that it would be what was out usually, you know, a cemetery is a coimetarium in Greek, a sleeping chamber, so that it's just a sleeping and a going into a next room. Yes, it can be like that.

If you say to me, so that we don't experience death in our bodies, this dying, this weakening, this sickening, this disease that I feel, yes, the Holy Spirit is able to come in and turn all that back. And it is possible for us again to live in a garden of Eden experience. And many of us are doing it today, you know.

Old Scott that prayed, the mind was shot with the drugs, you know, that he had. He'll excuse me just saying this because I don't think we should give each other's testimonies. But his mind was shot with drugs, you know, just for years.

And the Holy Spirit just has been beginning to work and just transform. So you see that the clock can be turned back. And we need not experience death, either psychological or emotional death or physical death or spiritual death.

It is possible to receive this Spirit of Jesus and to be transformed. The Americans in the Caribbean, why are they greedy? The poor souls don't enjoy life. They don't enjoy it.

Why? Because they lack the Holy Spirit. Because the Holy Spirit is the only one who will give you real exhilaration and satisfaction deep down. And they keep on buying more things and building bigger houses and ignoring the tar paper shacks more and more, hoping that they'll get something that will give them a thrill.

What about the tar paper shacks? What about the islanders? They're in the same boat. They're really no more right than the wealthy Americans. They're grabbing what they need because they're not trusting.

They're not depending on this God to work his will and to bring it about enough. And it's the same if you run right through the Olympic debacle, if you work through Ireland, if you work through the mess that we have in our own society economically. Brothers and sisters, it gets back to this, that the life of the Holy Spirit will enable us to work free from the death that has worked in our minds and emotions and our bodies and will bring about a society filled with life.

Now, loved ones, if you sit there and say it's theory, then begin to come to some of our houses. Begin to come to the Fish Center. Begin to come to the offices.

Begin to come to some of the classes. Or if you're in London, go and visit the eight brothers and sisters who are there, and you'll sense that there is a coming again of life among us and a banishing of death. So it is possible.

Why the mess? Because we've run our lives independent of God, thinking that the Holy Spirit was something Pentecostal for other people who were emotional, but not for us. Loved ones, what we most need is God's Spirit. And he can give you his Spirit.

And it's not just an emotional experience. It's a deep life of God that contains his own genes, that reproduces his character inside you. And it is for each of us.

So will you begin to think about it and talk about it and begin to come, you know, and ask about it. And I'll be glad to talk with you during the week, you know, if you just call the office or any of us. I think it would be really good here on Sunday mornings, if you want to talk, why not come down front? And there'll be a number of us here, you know, and I'll be here, and my wife and Scott and some others will be here, and you could just talk.

And that might be a good idea, because a lot of you, I know, can't get back to the offices or the classes during the week. So if you really would like to talk about some of these things, I'd just come down and mill around, and eventually, you know, the ones that want to talk will be here and we can discuss. Because really, we need to help each other into this miracle.

Dear Father, we thank you that there is an answer. We thank you, Father, that we don't need to keep wandering in this world of relativism, hopeless, going down the hill more and more, always talking about the tragedies. But we thank you, Father, that we can see the basic reason why we got into this mess in the first place, and that it is the lack of your Holy Spirit in our own lives, and that this is what sin is, rejecting your offer of the life of your Holy Spirit.

Father, we would say to you today, we're tired of the bodies that are sick and weary. We're tired of the minds and emotions that are unbalanced and impaired. Father, we're tired of the loneliness.

We're tired of getting irritable when we don't get our own way. Father, we tell you we want your Holy Spirit. We don't know every way how to get it, but we ask you now to take this desire in our hearts, and show us how to receive this life of the Holy Spirit from your Son, Jesus.

Father, we commit ourselves to this, so that our lives will be transformed, and the garden of Eden will blossom again inside us, and among the people with whom we're friends. We commit ourselves to you for this purpose, in Jesus' name.

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