

Reconciled (Romans 5.7b)

by Ernest O'Neill

The sermon highlights the importance of recognizing God as our loving Father to overcome feelings of insignificance and find true purpose in life.

Duration: 17:50

Scripture: Genesis 2:15-17, Genesis 4:8-12, Psalm 50:10-11, Matthew 6:33, John 14:6, Romans 6:23, Romans 8:15

Topics: "Human Dignity", "Gods Love"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the issue of overpopulation and genetic engineering as a proposed solution. He reflects on how humanity has strayed from God's original plan for the world and the significance of human life. The speaker highlights the common feeling of insignificance and the constant striving for validation and value in society. He emphasizes the importance of recognizing God as our loving father who knows and cares for each individual personally.

Transcript

That's really what it was like on the first morning, you know. It really was beautiful. And really we knew our Maker just as our dear Father.

And old Adam had no trouble. You remember I shared with you before, God showed him where to get the old orange juice. He went over and got it.

He had breakfast. Then the Father showed him what he wanted him to do that day, and Adam obeyed him. He dammed up this river, he pruned that tree, or he plowed this field.

And God therefore provided everything that Adam needed. And Adam received all his enjoyment from just working hand and glove with the Father. And that's what it was really like.

It really was a beautiful place. And that's the Father's plan. And that's really his plan for us.

It is possible to live that way, you know. You know it's all gone miserable. We were watching TV in London, oh, about two weeks ago.

And Jacques Mouneau was on, you know, the geneticist. And talking about genetic engineering. The only solution to the overpopulation problem.

You know what their solution is. You select the ones who can reproduce, and you eliminate the ones who can't reproduce. You know, that's the miserable mess we men and women have got ourselves into.

It really was a beautiful place. And God would have governed it. If we had listened to him, he'd have governed it so that there wasn't this overpopulation problem.

But you know that it's all just gone down the drain. And really, at the very beginning, men knew their position in the world. They knew what it was like.

They knew why they were here. They knew how important they were to their Maker. But you know one of the things you and I fight now is just the sheer insignificance of our lives.

You know it's come to such a point that we all feel that terrible insignificance. It's so hard even to gather together like this, however loving and concerned we are with each other, without feeling, you know, oh, I'm insignificant. I really am not important to anybody.

And you know the way that has led you into trying to make yourself significant. You know how from we were teenagers, we've been trying to get ourselves noticed by somebody. You know, we feel so much the insignificance.

We want somebody notice us. Let us be significant to somebody. And we tried all kinds of, oh, just corny things when we were teenagers and we've just got a little more subtle in them now, you know.

We think, well, maybe if you do a doctorate, maybe there aren't so many doctorates as there are bachelors, so we'll go for a doctorate. But we're all struggling to get some kind of significance. You know it's very difficult to get that without eventually beginning at least to discourage, let's say, to discourage others from getting significance.

It's very hard to try to go for significance in your own life without ending up discouraging others from catching the limelight. And you know, bit by bit, you begin to manipulate and to domineer other people in order to get yourself into a position of significance. You know how that leads just to the old alienation.

You begin to feel, well, if I'm doing this with my roommate, if I'm doing this with the people in my family, if I'm doing this with my girlfriend, they must all be doing it to me. And it just leads us into that old alienation. And we begin to suspect each other.

And we begin to suspect everybody else is trying to manipulate me and domineer me. And so in trying to establish our significance, we're all becoming fearful of each other establishing their significance. You know, it just goes on and on like that.

And really we try to get over it in different ways. Some of us begin to get so distraught about it that we settle, well, we have to get safe in some way. If everybody's alienated to me and everybody's trying to get one over on me, then I'd better band together with some others.

And we'll band against the rest of the world. And so you know that we love to join things. We love to join clubs for the wrong reason.

We love to be part of a political party for the wrong reason. It's good to be, you know, former governor, for Nixon, but so many of us are just using that to feel we're with a herd, we're with a group of some kind that will be safe because it's a bundle of people who are grouping together to get their own significance in the

world. You know that that whole herd instinct business doesn't do us any good at all.

It begins to destroy the individuality of us ourselves. We begin to cease to be individuals ourselves, those of us inside the group, and it further intimidates the people outside the group. And they feel more and more threatened.

And brothers and sisters, that's something really of the mess that we men and women have made of what was a beautiful situation at the beginning. You know, as we try to tackle all these problems, we get to feel more and more inadequate. And because we feel inadequate, we feel, boy, we have to do something about our inadequacy.

And so we try to prove ourselves adequate. And so we set goals for ourselves in this life, and we try to hit those goals. And we call the people, you know, who hit them, they're achievers.

And the people who fail to hit them, they're overachievers. And we try to achieve in order to declare ourselves adequate and significant in some way. And it all brings strain and striving.

And we're all straining and striving for the A, when we know, actually, the poor soul by the university administration is committed only to four A's per class. But we're all hitting for the A. And there's strain and striving, because we're all trying to get to that point where we prove that we're of some value in the world. And yet you know if you're like me, you know, you just never get to feel you're valuable enough.

You know? You feel nobody really estimates your personal value high enough. The more indiscriminate bombing that takes place in Vietnam, the more violence that takes place in the city streets, the more mass classes, 500 people watching a TV set there are, the more we feel that we have very little value to anybody. And so we try to establish our value, you know.

You know how we do it. Try to get into a position where we prove that we're indispensable. And so this is what makes so many wives and so many children pout when they're not given attention, you know.

Because they feel, no, I'm of value. I'm of value. Or it's what causes so many husbands, you know, to seek alliances elsewhere outside their homes.

Because they want somebody that gives them some value, and that respects them, and sets some value upon them. It's really what makes so many business people and so many church people just pains. They're always trying to get into a position where they think they're indispensable.

And brothers and sisters, you know that we're not talking about everybody else. We're talking about us poor people, you know. That's very much us, you know.

In all kinds of different ways, we're trying to justify our being here. We're trying to prove that we have a right to be here. Now, brothers and sisters, don't you see where it leads you? It really leads you into constant frustration.

Your mind and emotions get utterly disturbed and destroyed, and you have to do something to quiet them down just in order to keep going. Nobody is giving you the notice that you need. Nobody is giving the significance that you need.

Nobody is setting the personal value upon you that you need. And so you get frustrated inside and resentful, and you get worried and troubled and anxious. And all you can do is deal with those symptoms.

And so you know the way we deal with it. We try to calm the old emotions, first of all with the tranquilizers, then with the alcohol, then we go a bit further into the drugs, and now you know the latest thing is what some of you mentioned in prayer this morning. We try to hypnotize the soulish powers, the mind and emotions, into a place of passivity through chanting Hare Krishna or through practicing the negation of self and Zen Buddhism, and you try to just blot it out.

And that's about the point that many of us are at today, even in America. In Europe it's worse, you know. The old story, Europe, yeah, Europe is ahead of us in thinking, and they're ahead of us in the decline.

And there is a great sense of hopelessness, you know, people feel, if I can just blot out the whole mess, I can't find a solution to it, if I can just blot it out, I'll last through. And that's what Sister was talking about with the girl concerned with suicide, you know. I don't think there's one of us who live in this chaotic world, with all its alienation, and with all its self-seeking, and with all its desire for significance, that have not come to the point of times that old Eagleton says he came to, you know, where there was a real heavy depression just setting over you.

Now, brothers and sisters, do you know that there is a sensible, planned solution, that the maker of the world does have a way out of that? Now, all of you, you know, won't accept it this morning, I understand that. If you've come in this morning with a whole lot of atheism inside you, and a whole lot of agnosticism, you're not going to accept just what I explain this moment. But I'm asking you to begin to consider that there is a way other than the drugs, a way other than the alcohol, a way other than the occult, that there is a real solution.

There was a man in the first century, and you know who he was, Jesus. He said, listen, you're all seeking significance from the wrong people. You're all trying to get it from each other.

And the reason you're trying to get it is that you have lived your life without the maker of the world. Things were beautiful at the beginning, but you no longer treat him as your father. You treat him as an it.

You call him an élan vital, or a vital force of some kind that started the world. You call him an explosion in the middle of nowhere. You call him two atoms coming together.

You call him a single cell amoeba. You've ignored this creator. You've ignored him and lived your own life in your own way for your own purposes.

Now because of that, my father has turned his face away from you also. And he has ceased to make his power available in your life. And in fact, he has released his wrath upon you, and what you feel now of loneliness and of insignificance is a result of God's reaction to your rebellion against him.

And Jesus explained, you know, that there was a man at the beginning called Cain who killed his brother, and from then on he became a fugitive and stranger upon the earth. And Jesus explained, look, that's what you become. When you live your life without the maker of the world with you, you sense this rejection.

And what you're doing is attributing it to everyone else and trying to live with it by getting other people to accept you. And Jesus said, that's not what is needed. My father has condemned you to go into infinite darkness after this physical life is over.

And it's the fear of that and the awareness of that in your conscience that makes you so desperate. And then Jesus said, but listen, my father loves you. And he has allowed me to go into that infinite darkness in your place.

So that he is able to keep his antagonism and his condemnation against people who rebel against him. He is able to remain a just God and to keep his promise about those who forsake him will die. He's able to keep his promise by working that out on me.

But he himself wants no longer to work it out on you. And because I have died for you, my father actually is ready to give you another chance. And he's willing to accept you as his children.

And he wants you to start all over again. And this time to start with him as your loving father. And to start treating him as a real person.

And brothers and sisters, all I can share this morning is that those of us who have believed this and have begun to deal seriously with this man Jesus as someone who was above time and above space and is alive today, we have found a nutterly new spirit coming into our lives. And we've found a freedom from the depression and a freedom from the worry and a freedom from the frustration and a freedom from always pulling somebody's coattails, you know, and saying, look at me, look at me, look at me. And so many of us have never got beyond that childish stage, you know.

Daddy, look at me, look what I'm doing. And we've found a new spirit coming inside us that makes us realize that the maker of the world knows us and notices us and loves us personally as one of his sons and daughters. And we've found that he makes things available to us that we need.

But the real reason, you know, we started to treat him in this way was not because he did these things for others but because, brothers and sisters, God is real. God is really the loving Father of Jesus. That's why I'm asking you to start believing that.

Not because he'd do all those things for you, but because God is real. God is a loving Father and he knows you this morning. And he knows your name and he notices you.

And he knows how you dressed this morning. And he knows what you ate or didn't eat this morning. And he knows what you'll do this evening.

And he knows you by name. And even though you've ignored him for years and treated him as a kind of religious principle for generations, it seems, yet he's willing for you to start all over again with him and to start believing that he really does love you. And he really is a Father.

And, brothers and sisters, that for many of us in this theater has just changed everything. And as this Father has begun to give us his life, we've sensed a freedom from all those frustrations that I shared with you at the beginning. Now, really, you know, you have to think the whole thing over.

Don't you see that? You have to think it all over. You have to read some of the books that you'll find in the lobby or in the fish bookshop. And you have to start talking with some of the people here.

And then decide, is this true? And then, if it's true, take the step of saying to Jesus, Lord, I believe you were real. I believe you did not die as a political criminal, but you did die so that my Father would be free to forgive me. Lord, I'm going to believe that now.

And I commit my life to you. And I ask you to give me your Spirit and drive away this darkness and desperation and frustration and insignificance and enable me to be what I was created to be. So, will you, you know, think about it? And if you want to, if you want to pray sometime about it, you know, set up a time and come and see me or see some of the brothers and sisters.

Or just stay behind the theater or talk to some of them in the fellowships. But really just move forward in it as God guides you. And, loved ones, let's begin, some of us, to live in the way that we were planned to live.

You know? Let's begin to really live with God as our Father. Really pray, you know, that Jesus will enable some of you today to see it and to come to Him. Dear Father, I thank you for my brothers and sisters here this morning.

And I trust you, Father, by your Holy Spirit, to make it real to somebody for the first time today. Father, I know that men's voices are of no value and men's intellects achieve nothing. But I know you, by your Holy Spirit, can make all this and you yourself real to all of us today.

I trust you, Father, to do that. And now we would commit ourselves to you, to living this week with a loving Father who knows us, who owns the cattle on a thousand hills, who set out the galaxies, who planned the seas and the rivers. And we thank you that we can call you our Father and we can trust you and love you because of Jesus.

Amen.

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