

Romans 9:14 Questioning God

by Ernest O'Neill

The sermon explores the importance of trusting God's plan and design for our lives, and the dangers of questioning Him from a place of doubt or self-pity.

Scripture: John 3:6, Romans 8:28, Romans 9:11, Romans 9:14, Ephesians 1:11

Topics: "Gods Sovereignty", "Trusting Faith"

Description

Ernest O'Neill delves into the concept of questioning God's choices and plans, emphasizing the importance of trusting in God's sovereignty even when His ways seem unconventional or unfair to human understanding. He highlights the danger of questioning God's nature, which can lead to practical atheism and a lack of true faith in His wisdom and love. O'Neill encourages believers to have a trusting heart that seeks to understand God's works and ways, rather than challenging His decisions based on human standards of fairness or justice.

Transcript

INTRODUCTION

1. Prince Charles of England will come King of the United Kingdom because he is the oldest son of Queen Elizabeth. That's what normally happens - the authority of the father or mother is passed on to the elder son. And that is what we would have expected with the leadership of the nation of Israel-that the elder son, Esau, would become the third patriarch after Abraham and Isaac. But, in fact, God chose the younger son, Jacob, to inherit the position. Today's study is the question: Romans 9:14

2. There is a kind of questioning which is legitimate and which we'll spend the greater part of our time this morning discussing, but this kind of questioning is illegitimate for anyone who claims to believe in God. It is, in fact, the question of a "practical atheist" because it comes from a person who really makes himself equal with God and leans across and says: "Now, look here, do you think that's fair?" "Do you think you did the right thing in choosing the younger son to inherit the title?" And underneath that kind of questioning of God's nature is the assumption that there is some other absolute standard than His nature by which we can examine His actions and declare them just or unjust, fair or unfair, righteous or unrighteous. And, of course, if there is -or if we believe there is-then that absolute standard is our god-NOT God Himself!

3. So let us, right at the beginning of our discussion, see that we do not believe that the Father of Jesus Christ is God because we have examined and understood every detail of His Mind and compared it with

every other possible standard of right and wrong and found that they agree. We have rather looked at the existence of the world, its order and design, our own personalities and our consciences, the actions of God in the history of the Israelites, and the life and death of Jesus Christ, and on the basis of this reasonable evidence we have taken an attitude in faith towards God as if He is the Father of Jesus Christ and we have found that He responds to us like that in love. Therefore we regard Him as God and the one Absolute with whom the buck stops. If we question any individual action or judgement of His in the spirit of this question then either:

i. We do not really and practically treat and trust Him as God and therefore are really philosophical agnostics.

OR

ii. We regard our judgement as equal to His and therefore treat ourselves as our own god and are in fact practical atheists.

4. So let us examine carefully the attitude that lies behind our questions about babies dying of cancer, or famine in Ethiopia, or the problem of suffering. There, in our practical atheism and social religiosity may lie the real cause of the insecurity in our lives.

VOCATION

1. But is there a legitimate questioning in a situation like this for one who really believes God is our Loving Father? The answer is in John 3:6-10. Obviously Jesus wanted us to understand more and more why our Father acts in certain ways, e.g. not servants but friends, understanding His works and ways, but the question then comes from a trusting heart prepared to continue to trust even where it cannot see, but wanting to understand-NOT to establish its belief in God, but to understand and know Him better.

2. So, many of us here who have realised that God placed us in the world to do specific jobs and recognise His absolute right to plan a vocation for us, may legitimately ask: "Lord, can you help us to understand why we are doing the jobs we have at present?"

3. The first reason is, at the end of the day, the only reason that matters: Romans 9:11. The Creator, who planned carefully the only right distance between the earth and the sun, who arranged the boiling point of water and the chart of the elements, who set the planets in their orbits and the swallows on their way south in winter, called you to your present vocation. His call or will-NOT your works or effort-resulted in your being in your present job. In many ways, you're not fit for it and in many other ways you're fitter for a much better job-- but God wants to rescue us from society's enslavement to the merit-system which steals all joy from the use of our abilities and prostitutes our efforts to the lesser purpose of getting more money or promotion.

God has given us this present job independent of our works or abilities so that we would do it fully with all our hearts just to please Him with a single eye instead of one half-fixed on earning our way out of it into something better. One reason, therefore, is that where God's will is accepted as the rule of our lives, contentment and peace and joy result. Where the merit-system of works is the rule of our lives, perpetual discontent and envy and resentment result.

4. The second reason is in Romans 8:28-29. God is after something deeper than your ability to paint a house perfectly or type a flawless letter or complete a perfect quarter at college. He is primarily in the

business of "conforming you to the image of His Son", and your present job is exactly right for that deeper work that no one else can see being done in you. Countless other jobs might give you more money, more success, more mental satisfaction, more friends, but this is the right one for you at this time to prepare you for God's spiritual ministry. We always think we're ready; often God's greatest task is to allow us enough trials to drive us out of our independence and deeper into His arms.

5. The third reason is one we mentioned before in connection with Acts 18:1-4: tent-making was Paul's secular vocation - his expression of God's preserving grace to the world BUT that did not for a moment dictate where he lived. That was dictated absolutely by his primary reason for being alive-the expression of the redeeming grace of God through his ministry and membership in the Body of Christ. God plans your secular vocation in connection with His plan for your ministry in His Church, NOT the other way around. Many of us never make any sense of our vocation because we keep seeing it as an end in itself instead of simply a way for God to get us to the geographical location where His Body needs us. This is our primary purpose and function.

PERSONALITY

1. It is vital therefore that all of us who believe that God is the Loving Father of Jesus come free from all questioning of Him as this always introduces doubt into our own approach to life and "whatever is not of faith is sin" - and doubt is certainly not of faith. Questioning God usually expresses some doubt about His faithfulness or love, e.g. Genesis 3:1

2. And this kind of questioning leads many of us into self-pity when we question why we have the noses we have or the voices we have or the legs we have or the personalities we have. Many of us like to look at ourselves and think what a raw deal we got when faces were being distributed or brains or memories-we usually expect others to commiserate with us for the poor equipment we have. Thus we revel in that famous phrase "a poor self-image", and we expect the world to feel sorry for us and to understand why it mustn't expect too much of us.

3. But let's look at what we're ashamed of or disappointed with: Job 31:15: that's it-we're ashamed of God's handiwork. This face is His gift to me. The Bible states that "God looked on all that He had made and behold it was very good". If He regards it as just right for the purpose He has in mind for me than I'd better repent of my sin of ingratitude, stop questioning His design, and set about gladly and confidently putting this unique personality to work. Your Barbra Streisand nose can turn you into an ugly duckling or a beautiful swan-depending on whether you question God's wisdom and love or whether you trust His perfect design.

CIRCUMSTANCES

1. But many of us agree with all of this in regard to our vocations and our own personalities BUT we say: "The only thing I question is-NOT my planned vocation or my personality that will be just right-but my PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES!" This is, of course, the most basic questioning of God we could engage in.

2. Look at two verses: Ephesians 1:11: Your present circumstances are God's best for you right now-either through His permissive or His ideal will HE has brought you to this place and this time in your life and is at this moment bringing about His plan for you. Therefore see I Thessalonians 5:18. Don't for a moment question God at the most important point of all-your present situation.

CONCLUSION

1. Are you at rest at this moment about your life? Or do you notice an underlying strain about certain circumstances-this is not faith! "God is working ALL things according to the counsel of His Will" - rest in faith and free Him to lead you to the next step.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ernest-o'neill/romans-914-questioning-god/>

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