

Romans 9:24b Made for Adversity

by Ernest O'Neill

God's people are not those who are part of a group or have privileges, but those who have a personal attitude of obedience to God through the Spirit of Jesus.

Scripture: Romans 6:5, Romans 9:24, Galatians 4:6, Galatians 5:22, 1 John 3:24

Topics: "Spiritual Transformation", "Personal Accountability"

Description

Ernest O'Neill delves into the question of 'Who are God's people?' by exploring the division between those who are merely creatures with deteriorating bodies and minds, and those who are spiritually alive to God and being transformed by His Spirit. He emphasizes the importance of individual accountability before God, highlighting that group affiliations or privileges do not determine one's status as a child of God. O'Neill draws attention to the need for a personal, intimate relationship with God's Spirit, which manifests in genuine obedience and submission to God's will.

Transcript

INTRODUCTION

1. Will you look up Romans 9:24? Let's talk about the question: "Who are God's people?" We've often shared together that though all of us seem to be in the same boat here as far as our futures are concerned, yet there is really a great division among us.

Some of us are just creatures-like little animals. We have our bodies and our minds and our feelings, but that's it-and all of these will deteriorate as we grow older, and when we die, they will have no ability but to go on thinking and feeling as they have always done--so, if we are proud and anxious, we will continue to be proud and anxious forever, except that sheer infinity of time-duration will make our pride and anxiety unbearable Hell-especially since we will exist in close proximity to millions of other people who are sarcastic and critical and also insist on having their own way by trying to exert their will over the rest. This is part of what Jesus means when he says: "shall go away into everlasting punishment": God has to let us have what our free wills want!

2. Then there are others of us, who have the same attributes physically and mentally as creatures but have become spiritually aware of God and are spiritually alive to Him as Our Father-His Son's Spirit is now making us like Him, so that we too will continue to be forever what we are except for the fact that His Spirit will continue too in infinite time to refine us so that we will develop from glory to glory, and will live in an

ever-expanding universe with billions of others who are experiencing the same eternal growth and share it with us forever in Our Father's presence-- what Jesus meant when He said "they shall inherit eternal life"!

3. Only one of our kind ever passed through death and lived again here on earth in a way that historians and scholars respect as true and actual-that's Jesus-this division is what He assured us is now taking place: it's therefore vital to know on which side of this San Andreas fault you are. Who are God's people?

NOT THOSE SO NAMED

1. I think many of us still honestly have a shallow notion of what a child of God or Christian is: we still believe it's the name that counts-the group you belong to, the people you spend time with, the crowd you run with, the Bible study or social group you spend your life with. Many husbands and wives and sons and daughters identify themselves with this kind of group-consciousness and are utterly convinced that God would never split up the group after they've stayed together week-after-week for decades.

So many Sunday School classes, Bible Study groups, church congregations, college associations, and Rotary Clubs are going to be shattered at death when they discover that we will all have to face God individually and will not ride through on the coat-tails of the group despite the power influence of NAME.

2. Why do we say this? Look what happened to THE GROUP - the group above all groups that has alone survived in the world a dozen civilisations: Romans 9:24: Hosea: not my people - Gentiles? Look at Hosea 1:6,8-9. The Jewish nation was divided into two kingdoms in the 8th century B.C., the northern one, Israel, which contained 10 of the 12 tribes-and the southern one, Judah, which contained the rest. Israel turned from God and began to worship idols, so God renamed those 10 tribes "NOT MY PEOPLE" and they were the ones He allowed the Assyrians to deport into exile in 722 B.C. as vessels of wrath. What happened to them? They were scattered among the Assyrians and the Gentile nations and were never heard of again-why they are known as "the 10 lost tribes of Israel": actually present day Israel does not consist of original Israel but of the remains of the kingdom of Judah.

3. So even the most elite and oldest grouping in the world's history had its group-consciousness utterly smashed by God as a basic of acceptance by Him: but you remember God explained this to us very plainly through Paul in Romans 9:6-8: the true people of God, the true Israel, does not include everyone who appears to belong by their flesh or outward appearance or long-time membership or family connections, because that kind of superficial family or friendship solidarity was exposed way back when God split the Jews into those who lived like Ishmael by self-direction and independent ambition and those who lived like Isaac by God's Spirit directing their lives.

NOT THE PRIVILEGED

1. Many of us see this: "what's in a name?" It's the kind of person you are that counts but somehow we feel that the kind of person you are depends on what you know, and then, by a twist of logic, we conclude that knowing the right thing is the same as being the right thing; so we have great privileges living in a society so moulded by Christian influences: we know we should be honest (which many societies don't accept) though we aren't, we know we should love each other (which many societies don't respect) though we don't really, we respect the rule of law (which many societies don't) though in our personal lives we are often lawless, we can't turn on a radio or eat in a restaurant or pay for anything without being reminded of God, though we personally have little one-to-one contact with Him. All of these privileges make us feel we are so much more Godly than heathen nations that we surely are God's people, if anyone is.

2. But greater privileges than these Israel enjoyed: Romans 9:4: but the individuals in the nation depended on other sources than God for the needs of their daily lives: their sense of safety came from their possessions and money-what they owned. Hebrew word: Baal -that's what an idol is-something you look to for what you are meant to get from God; others looked to their place in society, their daily ability to make other people do what they wanted them to-for their sense of importance and value and worth: Hebrew word for rule is Moloch-another of the idols they worshipped. So with us, with all our privileges, God will call us "NOT MY PEOPLE" if we depend in our everyday lives on powers other than Him for our preservation and sense of worth.

SPIRIT OF JESUS

1. Who are God's people? Romans 9:24 - same basis as everyone else: then tribes still alive but hidden throughout the world-will become God's people in the same way as the rest of us:

(i) Galatians 4:6 - If you sense inside you a Spirit that gives you the same attitude to God as Jesus then you are one of God's people. Not the general attitude that common grace gives every creature of God that respects their Creator as the general father of all that live, but the intimate, personal attitude that makes you spontaneously at home and unembarrassed as you look into His face in private prayer and call Him your own dear Father in the knowledge that He knows you.

(ii) Galatians 5:22-24 - If you have once-for-all turned your back on the flesh-your body, your emotions, your mind-as your French Connection with the happiness, security, significance drugs that you got from society and people and things, then you sense moving within you a sweet, effortless Spirit that loves and is gentle and naturally forbears and is patient-NATURALLY!

(iii) I John 3:24 - Real obedience comes from the Spirit of Jesus within us-we ourselves can only produce an external approximation in our behaviour to the expected ethical norms of our society, but in our personal, private life, our refusal to really submit our wills to God's becomes obvious to us in two ways: besetting sins that we can't seem to overcome, and private, personal things that we know God is asking only us to do. Real obedience is the outcome of God's Spirit in us.

CONCLUSION

1. How can we receive Jesus' Spirit? Romans 6:5: be willing to die to the comfort of another 5 minutes in bed and see that it is prayer or Hell yawning before you: be willing to trust your financial affairs in God's hands by obeying His directions to give one-tenth of your income to Him; be willing to die to whatever causes you to sin.

2. Jesus' Spirit produces a whole, spontaneous attitude of obedience which is far above the law and well clear of sin BUT you alone can submit to His Spirit by being willing to live as He lived and die as He died! Such are God's people!

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