

# Starting to Live

by Ernest O'Neill

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*The sermon emphasizes the need for a radical change in our personalities and a sensitivity of spirit to trust God as our dear Father.*

**Scripture:** John 3:3, John 8:36, Romans 6:6, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20

**Topics:** "Spiritual Renewal", "Free Will"

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## Description

Ernest O'Neill preaches about how human beings have lived as parasites on each other and the earth, enslaved by their environment and heredity. Jesus introduced a new concept of reality, emphasizing the need for free will to experience true love and trust in God. He explained the necessity of being born from above, undergoing a complete renewal to trust and love God above all dependencies. Jesus' death symbolized a cosmic destruction of our old selves, offering us the choice to believe in him and receive a spirit-life that sets us free from worldly dominations.

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## Transcript

### A World of Parasites

For thousands of years we human beings lived off each other. We depended on each other for the food and money we needed to stay alive. We depended on each other for whatever emotional satisfaction or thrills lifted life a little above the ordinary. We were enslaved to each other for any sense of self-esteem or self-worth we could stir up.

But we were parasites not only on each other but on the earth itself. We lived by the smiles of Mother Nature: sunny days made us feel sunny. We collapsed in depression and gloom when her skies glowered at us or when her mountains erupted in fire.

So, through the centuries, millions of us were thus dominated by our environment -- and, as we multiplied, by our heredity. Around two thousand years ago, we human beings had developed minds and emotions that were so perverted that we couldn't live above our heredity and environment if we tried.

### A Free Man

Into this conformist, dominated world entered the unique human being whom we have come to know as Jesus. He presented a wholly new, fresh concept of reality. He said he and his father made the universe as a home for his children. They made us so that we could live together with them as a family. But the only

way we could experience real love from each other was if we wanted to be with them of our own free will. This is why they endowed us with the ability to trust them or not Jesus explained that thousands of birds and animals are born and fed--and no one seems to do it. Somehow they get what they need. Similarly he pointed out that the richest king is not dressed in the fine delicate colors that clothe an ordinary flower. Yet neither the birds of the air nor the flowers of the field sow seed or toil or reap -- they are in fact fed and clothed by his father. It was obvious that if God did that for birds and flowers, he would do much more for the creatures he had made to be his own friends and relatives. But the only way he could do it is if we trusted him. Otherwise we would end up as forced, overwhelmed slaves, not friends.

However, for years we had known a little about the Creator through the Jewish people. And many of us had tried to trust God for our everyday lives, but we had grown so accustomed to thinking that our continued existence depended on our own ability to wring what we needed from the earth by the sweat of our brows--that a habit of distrust had gripped our mental apparatus. We found ourselves in the iron grip of self-trust that prevented us relaxing into the arms of a creator. Besides we liked doing what we wanted when we wanted!

There was, however, a more sinister side to our condition. We found that we persisted in insisting on our own way even when it was to our disadvantage. So there seemed to have developed in mankind a force that made us want to destroy ourselves just as long as we could eat and drink what we wanted. This is why Jesus said that flesh and blood could never inherit the kingdom of God--man's enslavement to his physical senses--the total orientation of his whole personality to physical smiles and materialistic things has coarsened our personalities to the point where we cannot sense our Maker's sentiments. Jesus said we had become incapable of perceiving or understanding our Creator's spirit He said that a radical change would have to be wrought in our personalities and a sensitivity of spirit introduced to our lives if we were ever to be able to trust God as our dear Father.

#### A Birth from Above

Jesus explained that we really had to be created all over again. He said we had to be born from above--from his Father rather than from our earthly mothers. Only a complete renewal of our whole being would enable us to live in the intimate and deep trust of God that we were intended for. In fact, all that we have been up to now would have to be wiped out -- utterly destroyed if we were to have any possibility of trusting and loving God above all the dependencies we had become enslaved to.

This was the most startling part of his whole preaching -- this need for our destruction. He tied it up with the whole purpose of his own life -- which was to die. He said this was why he had come to the earth: not simply to set us an example which we could not follow anyway. But his death was just an outward expression in time and space of a cosmic destruction of all of us that God had wrought in eternity. Jesus explained it to Paul in this way: he said that when he died, we all died. In eternity -- which is actually timelessness or an eternal present moment -- his father had utterly, wiped out all that you and I have become. Then he brought us to life again in Jesus.

#### The Choice

The choice is ours--whether to believe him and what he has said--or to reject him and what he has said. If we believe Jesus and this explanation of reality, he assures us that the spirit-life that enables him to live in vital and restful trust of God will fill our lives also. We will find within us a life-power that sets us free from the domination of things and people and circumstances.

What does this choice mean for you? Let's talk about that in the next article.

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