

The Cosmic Death

by Ernest O'Neill

The sermon explores the concept of cosmic death through Jesus' sacrifice, emphasizing the need for spiritual transformation and reliance on God rather than earthly dependencies.

Scripture: Psalm 90:4, John 8:36, Romans 6:6, Romans 8:6, 1 Corinthians 15:22, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 4:22, 2 Peter 3:8

Topics: "Addiction Freedom", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

Ernest O'Neill discusses the enslavement that various substances and behaviors bring, such as heroin, marijuana, alcohol, and sex, which promise freedom but ultimately trap us in dependency on earthly things. He delves into the reality behind drugs, emphasizing Jesus of Nazareth's teachings on dependence on the creator for true fulfillment and transformation of our nature. O'Neill explores the cosmic death and resurrection as explained by Jesus, highlighting the need for a complete overhaul of our selves by the creator to break free from self-dependence and selfishness. He touches on the theory of relativity to illustrate the concept of eternity and the possibility of bringing that eternal transformation into our present lives.

Transcript

Drugs

Heroin enables us to pretend that we are transcending this narrow little physical sphere in which we live, but it ties us fatally to the earth. Marijuana gives us a sense of "flying" but it enslaves our inner aspiration to the body. Alcohol seems to relieve us of what Shakespeare called the "heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world", but it squeezes our mind in a vice-like grip that imprisons us in our circumstances. Sex seems to release us from the boring conventions of earth-bound relationships but it finally bores itself. We could go on listing thousands of other enslavements that we use to satisfy our inner longing to soar free like the eagles, but we would have to admit that all of them trap us in slavery to the earth or people or things. That's the paradox of our lives here: we sense within us a longing to transcend and fly high, but our dependence on the world of things, people, and circumstances has enslaved us ever more continuously to this earth.

The Reality Behind Drugs

The explanation that we have been studying was given by the unique human being who lived in the first century of our era and was known as Jesus of Nazareth. After transcending the ordinary physical and mental powers of humanity by a life that could control the powers of nature and heal diseased bodies, he was executed by the Romans and came back to life after a few days. He explained that his father was the creator of the universe and that he had put us here to learn to depend on him. If we were to do that, he would fill us with his own superhuman life that makes cashflows work, bodies live free from strain, and maintain hearts at peace. He painted out that flesh and blood could never "inherit the kingdom of heaven" by using or abusing any weed or herb of the earth. He explained that our dependence on physical stimulation via our five senses over the years and centuries had permanently perverted our natures so that we couldn't trust the creator for our livelihood even if we wanted to. What was needed was a complete destruction of all that we have become and a total re-creation of us by the creator himself.

The Cosmic Death

This was what his father did in his death at Calvary just outside Jerusalem in the first century of our era. His crucifixion was simply the space-time manifestation of a cosmic death of the human race that had taken place 'before the foundation of the world'. Through followers like Paul of Tarsus, he elaborated on this 'cosmic death', pointing out that when he died, we all died and at that moment in spaceless-timelessness the old creation passed away and a new creation took its place. In a sense it's what Plato said in "The Republic" there is in heaven a perfect, ideal form of everything here on the earth. Jesus, however, said that this destruction of the old and creation of the new was achieved by his father because he was able to foresee the way we would act and behave and deteriorate. Thus he was able to provide the solution even before we were born here on earth. We therefore have a real intelligible choice which we can make: we are in that enviable position of being able to see what our lives become if we depend on the earth and people and things. Yet we can reject that as we've seen it working out here on earth and be willing for the creator's Spirit to replace this old creation with the new one he has made in Jesus' resurrection.

Transplant

The possibility of a total replacement of our old selves is like an impossible dream. Yet it's what all of us know is necessary. We've all tampered with our habits and our incorrigibilities, but we realize that our fear of what people think of us and anxiety about our futures and the dissipation of our vices all come from one unitary attitude -- self-dependence. Because we ourselves are incapable of supplying all our needs, self-dependence really means dependence on other things and other people in the world. It is this basic slavery and untamable selfishness that cannot be turned around by our "tampering" with this habit or that temper. We sense that a complete overhaul of the system is needed. The product really needs to be sent back to the manufacturer to be retuned and reset according to the original specifications. This, Jesus explained, is what happened in his cosmic death in eternity which was manifested in history in Palestine for humanity to see.

The Theory of Relativity

The plausibility of the creator foreseeing how you would turn out and replacing that with his original version of you before you were even born is clearer as scientists begin to touch the borders of time and eternity. We ourselves can see the relativity of time in the fact that we can now fly the Concord to New York from London and arrive several hours before we left. But cosmologists like Stephen Hawking are

demonstrating mathematically that time passes more slowly at the top of a tower than at the bottom. The famous twins illustration has enabled even lay-people to understand that if one twin were to travel in outer space for several years, he would arrive back on earth younger than his brother who remained earth-bound. In other words, the theory of relativity is showing scientifically that there is a place out in space where time stands still compared with earth. An infinite creator can see past and future as one great eternal present where everything happens at once.

The real achievement or miracle is to bring eternity into time. How do you break through to eternity? How does the new version of you that exists in Christ actually penetrate your present self? Let's talk about that in the next article.

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