

The End of the Beginning

by Ernest O'Neill

Jesus' death enabled us to be changed in our personalities, allowing us to live the way his Father originally intended.

Scripture: Matthew 6:25, John 14:6, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 2:20, Colossians 3:1

Topics: "Dying To Self", "Spiritual Transformation"

Description

Ernest O'Neill delves into the teachings of Jesus, emphasizing the importance of recognizing God as our Creator and Father, and understanding our purpose to align with His plans for us. Jesus' death is explained as a means to transform our personalities and enable us to live as intended by God, urging us to shift our dependence from worldly pursuits to trusting in our Father-creator. The sermon explores the concept of dying with Jesus, symbolizing a detachment from material possessions and a complete transformation of our personal identity to align with Christ's purposes.

Transcript

For generations we human beings have lived off the earth. We have kept alive through eating its produce and we have made homes for ourselves from its wood and stone. Nevertheless the earth hasn't been able to give us a sense of self-worth, and we have felt vaguely dissatisfied with the extent of the happiness it gives us. This consciousness of "something missing" was explained clearly by the unique historical figure called Jesus about two thousand years ago.

Jesus' Father

Differing from religious leaders like Buddha or Mohammed who claimed to be simply human prophets, Jesus explained that the Creator of the earth was his personal father and that they lived together before the earth was made. He said that the real purpose of our life here was to spend our days being and doing what his father planned for us personally. If we concentrated on that, our creator would ensure that the economy of the world-system would provide enough food, clothes, and shelter to keep us alive.

Meanwhile this inner trust in him would make us like him so that we would fit right into the new world that he would start after this one ended. We, of course, rejected the whole idea and got down to the business of getting from the world's economy what we needed through our own determination and energy. The result is that we are an up-tight bunch of little parasites who live off each other's attention and prey on each other's possessions. When this Jesus tells to "have no anxiety about what we shall eat or what we

shall drink or what we shall put on", we find it impossible to stop worrying about these things. Even when we do get some money or possessions together, we then get preoccupied with what others think of us because we now miss the approval of the creator himself.

Jesus' Death

This, Jesus then explained, was the reason for his coming to earth: to enable us to be changed in our personalities so that we could live the way his father originally intended. He said through his follower, Paul, that when he died outside Jerusalem we all died. In fact, his death in 29 a.d. was simply the manifestation in time-space of our death in him that took place "before the foundation of the world". This was God's way of enabling you and I to see the results of our living independent of him and yet have the chance to change and begin trusting him. The theory of relativity has now demonstrated how this kind of future event can already have taken place elsewhere in space (or, in this case, beyond space).

How Do You Change?

But how can this change occur in you- First, you have to want it. This means you have to believe in Jesus--believe that his explanation of this life is correct--believe that he is the creator's son and that his death included you. Then, you have to decide whether to continue to depend on the world and your ability to get what you want from it--or to depend on your Father-creator and give yourself to doing what he wants. When you've faced the consequences of that as truthfully as possible, you need to act. This means ending those attitudes and actions that spring from your selfish use of the world and other people; instead, you start to confer with Jesus and obey the inner impressions you receive from him. His father (and yours) will then begin to work out your circumstances to fulfil his plan for your life. So--your "other life" the new one--will begin!

Dying with Jesus - What does it Mean?

What actually took place when the Creator destroyed you in his Son outside time and space- He destroyed your inner tendency to persist in working angles and watching out for the main chance. That, of course, leaves you defenceless--unless he defends you. This was symbolized by Jesus hanging on the cross with nothing but a loin-cloth on: if God did not protect his life, he himself certainly wouldn't. For many of us, replacing God's will for that number one priority of ensuring we don't go down is a major motivation we have to settle in our heads.

Another is the simple one of material things. When Jesus died he owned nothing besides the robe he had on. Our cars, clothes, houses, vacations, stereos are not the problem--the feeling of false security we get from these things is the real problem. Though it is false, it's what our heart leans on for its sense of security: where our heart is, there is our treasure also. This subtle confidence in money and possessions prevents a sensitive trust in our Father and gives rise to all the worry and coveting that govern our behavior. Dying with Jesus cuts us off from material things and makes them immaterial to us. Indifference to them is the attitude of the new person we've been made in Christ's resurrection.

Perhaps the biggest implication of the fact that we have been crucified with Christ is that we ourselves no longer exist. Our body exists--and our minds and emotions--but our personal identity as it has been up to now--has died. We have a new personal identity wrapped up completely with Jesus-- guided by his ideas and thoughts--identified with his purposes. We--as our mothers knew us--have been utterly destroyed and changed into new creations.

As we think about these implications, we need to see that we are not considering what we should do--we are simply considering whether we will accept now what has already been done--or whether we will continue to live in the unreality that was destroyed in Jesus' death.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ernest-o'neill/the-end-of-the-beginning/>

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