

# The Holy Spirit Brings a Clean Heart

by Ernest O'Neill

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*The Holy Spirit brings a clean heart by revealing and overcoming our sinful nature, making it natural for us to obey God.*

**Duration:** 33:17

**Scripture:** Jeremiah 31:33, Matthew 21:12-13, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 13:4-5, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 4:26, 1 John 3:9

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Christian Identity"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the struggle many people face in showing their true selves at work and in their personal lives. They emphasize the need for authenticity and the desire to live a victorious Christian life. The speaker reminds the audience that they have been crucified with Christ and have a new, pure, and perfect identity in Him. The sermon concludes with a call to consecration, urging listeners to be willing to do whatever the Holy Spirit asks of them, even if it means facing rejection or hardship. The overall message is that living according to God's will is the purpose of life and brings fulfillment.

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## Transcript

If you ask a little child who has been at Sunday school what the purpose of life is, every little child will answer, well, the purpose of life is to live according to God's will. That appeals to common sense. It's just common sense that the creator of the world who made it and made us knows how best we will be fulfilled.

So it appeals to common sense to say that we should live our lives according to God's will. It appeals also to the truth revealed in this book which contains the clearest expression of our creator that we have in our earth. Because this book, from the very first chapter to the very last chapter, urges us to obey God.

That's right. From the very first chapter to the very last chapter you'll find we are urged to obey God, to live according to His will. And indeed, that's the mark and the great privilege of any of us who are born again.

Any of us who claim to have a real relationship that is personal with our God through the experience of the new birth. Our great privilege is that described in 1 John 3 and 9. Whosoever, anybody, born of God does not commit sin. And of course, sin is explained and defined clearly in James chapter 4 and 17 where it says, Anybody who knows what is right to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

So, outward sin is conscious disobedience to God's will. And the great mark and privilege of those of us who are born of God is that we do not commit sin. The Greek word is poio, and the emphasis is do.

We do not do any act or speak any word that is disobedient to God's will and that we know is disobedient to Him. And so, many of us who are born of God have experienced that. When we first met Jesus, we saw that certain things that we did were wrong.

We stopped swearing. We stopped having adulterous thoughts. We stopped being sarcastic.

We stopped boasting. We stopped drinking. We stopped gambling.

We stopped certain outward actions that we knew displeased God. And many of us who have been born of God have come to that place. And so, we have been freed from outward sin.

However, great numbers of us have been troubled not so much by outward sin, which we managed to keep away from for the first few months or years of our relationship with God. But most of us are troubled about the subject we talked about last Sunday. We are troubled about inward sin, about stuff that nobody sees, and indeed, few people know about but ourselves.

And that, loved ones, is what I'd love us to talk about together this morning. Because inward sin is what causes many of us heartache and defeat. Many of us, in other words, are really not unlike good Jews.

Many of us are not very unlike good humanists. We outwardly conform to what we know is true. That's not surprising, because even the Greek and Roman philosophers did that.

They expected in themselves outward conformity to known precepts. So, many of us who are born of God are in that position. Outwardly, we conform our lives to the things that people expect and that the Bible describes of children of God.

And in that way, we're like all good Jews and all good humanists and all pagan philosophers and all noble pagans. But many of us are like them in another way, that we do that at the expense of an unbelievable inner conflict. In other words, many of us do what is right outwardly, but we do it only because we manage to keep down incredibly monstrous and savage urges inside us that want to break out and that are constantly contradicting what we're doing outwardly.

In other words, many of us have been in the position where a friend has got a good job or a friend has been promoted instead of us, or a friend has come into a lot of money. And we've stuck out our hand and we've said, Congratulations! And inside in our hearts is rising envy of their good fortune and jealousy and indeed a creeping sort of suspicion that really we ought to have experienced that. We deserve it as much as they do.

Many of us in job situations have been in the position where in the midst of some duty that we've been doing, we've suddenly had adulterous and unclean thoughts that are so utterly removed from the outward expression of what we're doing that we cannot believe it's coming from us. And of course, it utterly spoils the particular interaction that we're having with the person or the colleague that we're working with at that moment. Or in the midst of some philanthropic action or some religious service where we're wholly taken up apparently with helping somebody else or with loving God, we suddenly find within us a desire for self-glory and prominence and praise that almost bursts out of us.

And we see that we're actually vying for attention from people with the very Godhead Himself. And so that's the realm where many of us have our troubles. And it's really the realm of the motive life.

You can see that. It's the realm of the motive life. It isn't normally the realm of the outward actions or the outward words.

It's the area of motives, the area of responses and reactions. It's those responses that come up from within us when our conscious guard is down. Of course, what troubles many of us is the sneaking suspicion that if this stuff seems to come up so naturally from within us and seems to come so freely and spontaneously as a reaction to what people do to us, which is the real us? Is the real us the calm, civilized, self-controlled exterior that everybody sees? Or is the real us this savage lion inside that seems to want to paw and beat everybody down in order that it should be prominent and preeminent? And that's what troubles us, I think, isn't it? The Mr. Hyde used to break out just a little and spoil the Dr. Jekyll civilized exterior.

But it seems the longer we've gone on with God or the longer we've gone on coming to religious services, the more that Mr. Hyde seems to be breaking out and the stronger he seems to be becoming. And that's what concerns us. We're troubled because we see resentment coming up inside us more than it seemed to when we were younger.

And we see jealousy occupying more of our internal thinking than it used to. And we see irritability spoiling our relationship with more people because that's what's happening. The inward sin isn't staying in now.

It's beginning to break out at times. And we can't keep it down. At the beginning, it was kind of schizophrenia.

And we just thought, Oh, well, there's part of me who wants to do that. There's part of me who wants to do that. But now it seems to be sheer hypocrisy.

And more and more, the people that we live with, they see our irritability. They see our impatience. However much we try to hold it down, more and more, the people at work are realizing the kind of people we are deep down as we lose our temper or as we get angry over something.

And more and more, we can only witness far from home and far from work where nobody really knows us. And loved ones, there are thousands of us who live that kind of defeated, carnal life. And many of us have come to that place where we've just used the words of that old hymn, Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord? Where is that soul-refreshing view of Jesus and His Word? And you begin to wonder, is this all there is? Of course, we've taken various methods of trying to live with it.

Some of us try to justify it. And so there are great numbers of we're just silly people. That's all.

We're just ostriches. A great number of silly ostriches who try to justify sinning Christianity. Dear help us, all the dear, happy, sensible, non-Christians outside, they don't dream of justifying sinning Christianity.

They have no doubt in their minds that Christians are supposed to be people like Jesus. But there are huge numbers of us inside Christendom who try to justify sinning Christianity. And we try to say, Oh, well, you remember Jesus.

I mean, He really lost His temper in the temple there, you know. Well, that's just what I do, you know. I just lose my temper a few times.

And we try to compare His unselfish, controlled expression of God's wrath against hypocrisy in the temple. We try to compare that with our selfish, uncontrolled bursts of temper which we let out when somebody is not opposing God but somebody is opposing us. So thousands of us try to justify sinning Christianity.

And we say, Oh, that's what it's about. And whosoever is born of God does not commit sin. Oh, well, the Greek probably means something else.

And so we try to justify ourselves sinning and being disobedient. There are others of us who try to rationalize our sins. And we say, Oh, yeah, yeah.

Well, you know, all artistic types. They are fairly highly strung, you know. I'm kind of artistic.

I'm fairly highly strung. I lose my temper at any moment, you know. But possibly of great evil, possibly of great good, you know.

So it's just my temperament. And so we try to rationalize this stuff and make it not traits of the self-life but traits of our artistic temperament. A loved one says, Is this all that's possible? Is this what God has called us to? To try to force a rebellious heart to obey precepts that do not come naturally to it.

To try to constantly get a rebellious heart by sheer willpower to obey certain things that it's utterly opposed to. My loved ones, the whole Bible says that's not true. Right from the days of Jeremiah, God said, Look, I'm going to make a new covenant with you.

Not like the covenant that I made with your fathers. I'm going to make a new covenant with you and I'm going to write my laws not on tablets of stone. I'm going to write my laws on your hearts so that you'll have no need for anyone to tell you do this or do that.

But you'll all do it naturally from within. In other words, God said, I will do a work in you that will make it more natural for you to obey than to sin. I think that's what concerns many of us.

We feel it's become more natural to elude our temper than to keep it. It's become more natural to criticize than to love. It's become more natural to be sarcastic than to praise.

And what God promised us back in the time of Jeremiah was that He would write His laws on our inward hearts. In other words, our hearts would want to do what was right. It's not natural to be angry.

It's carnal to be angry. It's natural to be kind. It's not natural to hate.

It's carnal to hate. It's natural to love. It's not natural to be selfish.

It's carnal to be selfish. It's natural to be unselfish. That's right, loved ones.

It really is. What God has done for us in Jesus makes it natural for us to obey Him. And that's what Ezekiel said.

Ezekiel said, God is going to take away your heart of stone. And He's going to give you a new heart, a soft heart. And He's going to put a new spirit within you.

And He's going to take away from you this evil spirit. And that's the whole purpose of the New Covenant, loved ones. I don't know if you've ever wondered what's the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

What's the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant? Well, it's not just Jesus. It's that the Old Covenant could simply offer forgiveness. The New Covenant offers a deliverance from sin.

That's what Jesus did on Calvary. That's what happened. That's what Romans 6 and 6 means.

Our old self was crucified with Christ so that the body of sin might be destroyed and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. It's a change inside in our hearts. That's what Peter said, do you remember? In Acts 15 and 9, God made no distinction between the Gentiles and us, but He gave them the Holy Spirit and He cleansed their hearts by faith.

Loved ones, it is possible to have your heart cleansed. It is, honestly. And indeed, it is not only possible, but it is the whole purpose of Jesus coming to earth.

And it is the whole purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit. That's why they call Him a Holy Spirit. You see, not to make Him spooky and make us afraid of Him, but to make us realize this is a dear Holy Spirit.

He makes you, and not holy in the sense of different and far out, but holy in the sense of like Jesus. Kind, loving, pure, understanding, gentle, tender. The Holy Spirit has come to this earth to make us like that.

Now, He can do that in you. He can do that in you. There are thousands of us who will testify to the fact that years after we were born of God, we became aware of a need for a deeper work in our hearts, and we began to seek it.

Now, I'd like simply to tell you how to do it, and then it's really up to you what you do. The first step is to acknowledge the Holy Spirit in your life. That's the first thing.

Now, the reason for that, loved ones, is that you, with all your introspection, and me with all my self-examination, cannot get to the heart of our evil being. We can't. Now, you've tried it.

And you go as deep as doesn't matter, and so do I. In the process, anyway, we all get depressed, and we all get discouraged. Now, the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, is a counselor. He knows you.

In other words, why you're surprised by the anger that pops up inside you, why you're surprised about the irritability and the bad temper, is you don't know yourself. You don't. You don't know yourself.

And you know, at least in this span of life, you should at least get to know yourself. And the only way you'll get to know yourself is if you have this dear counselor beginning to reveal yourself to you. And honestly, you need him.

Because you don't want to look at certain things. You don't. You're in the grip of a selfish heart.

And you don't want to look at certain things inside yourself. You don't. You know those of us who have even tried counseling and tried to the analyst's office.

Well, there are certain things we don't want to see. Only the Holy Spirit can take you to the depth of your heart. But loved ones, if you're not prepared to see that depth, God can never save you from it.

Do you see that? He cannot save you by default, loved ones. He will not put you on an operating table and put you to sleep and do the operation without you knowing. He won't.

You have to know what you are. And the first step is to acknowledge the Holy Spirit as your counselor. I'm not going to argue about whether you pray to Him or not.

I talk to Him. But I think He's the Spirit of Jesus. I think He's a dear person of the Trinity.

I don't exalt the Holy Spirit. But He always glorifies Jesus. That's what Jesus said.

The Holy Spirit will not bear witness to Himself. He'll always bear witness to me. So you're safe in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

So the first thing is believe that the Holy Spirit is a person in your life and ask Him, Holy Spirit, will you begin to counsel me about this? And will you begin to take me down to the depths of my inner self so that I at last know myself? Now, loved ones, it will take a long time because do you know what you've done? We've all done the same thing. We've come to a time when we knew we should do something. We didn't do it.

We quietly disobeyed God. That piece of ice bedded down in our hearts. That resistance to God's will hardened inside our hearts.

A few weeks later, we came to another little thing. Dirty joke told in the office. We snigger so that we'll be thought like the rest.

We know we disobeyed Him. We know we sidestepped the issue. That beds down in our hearts.

Another piece of ice hardens. Now, loved ones, you have layers and layers of that stuff. Of past resistances to God's will that have built up a hard, hard heart.

And it's from that mess that all this stuff comes. So it takes a while. And you'll often think you've got to the bottom of your heart and the Holy Spirit will show you the next day.

No, there's something more. So the first step is acknowledge the Holy Spirit as your counselor. Second step is see how sinful that old self of yours is.

Really. Here's the way the Bible talks about it. The Bible says in Romans 8 and 7, the mind of the flesh is enmity against God.

It is not subject to God's law. Neither indeed can it be. Now, loved ones, you need to see that.

Stop this business. I don't know if you know, but in many countries, when loved ones find out they have a sickness, they don't go back to the hospital. Because they're afraid.

They're afraid. Usually, especially if it's an incurable sickness, they just pretend it isn't there. Now, do you see, you and I haven't that excuse.

We have been crucified with Christ. Our forgiveness is assured because of God's attitude to us. We don't need to hide this evil self.

We don't need to defend it and think that unless we prove that we haven't this inside us, we won't get into heaven. We will get into heaven because of what God has done for us in Jesus and what God has done to us in Jesus. And I urge you, this disease, the antidote for it is a present in Jesus' death.

So, look at self and see the sinfulness of self. Here's the mistake we make. We see a little bit of impatience.

A person doesn't get into the car fast enough. We say, hurry up, get in. Just a little bit of impatience.

So we're dumb. We bluff ourselves. We say, ha ha, just a little bit of impatience.

Must pray about that a little sometime. Or they deserve that. But we say, just a little impatience.

And we don't realize that it's like an iceberg. And do you know what you see of an iceberg? You see a tenth of the iceberg above the water. And then if you go down underneath, you find the iceberg goes out like that.

And that's what it is with your impatience. That's what it is with your irritability or your bad temper. You and I need to see that that old self wants to be God.

That's why it gets impatient. I know exactly the number of seconds it should take you to close that car door. That's really.

I know exactly the number of minutes it should take you to get ready for us to go out shopping. I know it. I have it built in in my heart deep down.

I am God. I know the way these things should happen. But we think, oh no, just a little impatience.

It's not loved ones. Underneath that little iceberg tip, there is a self that wants to be God and that is determined to have its own way and determined to stand up for its own rights. And it's that carnal heart that spews up those raging tempers.

You must admit you are amazed at times, aren't you, how strong they are? I mean, we are amazed. We almost think, oh, it's an evil spirit or something in me. It can't be me.

But loved ones, it is you. And the second step is to see the sinfulness of that old self and see that there is no possibility of improving it or taming it or training it or auto-suggesting to it that it ought to be a better self. There is only one thing to do and that's the remedy that God brought on Calvary.

He destroyed that self. But loved ones, you need to see how sinful that self is. And I know, I know we are all fighting this healthy-minded stuff.

I know that. I know we are all having whispers given to us. Oh, you are really good.

You are really good. You are really bad. But you can be good.

You can be good. And God has done a work in Jesus that will make you good. But first of all, you have to see how bad you are.

And don't be afraid of that. Don't pretend. Don't think that it's something you can get rid of by a little auto-suggestion.

It isn't, loved ones. See the sinfulness of self. See that it is enmity against God, that it is not subject to God's law and indeed it cannot be whatever you do with it.

That's the second step. The third step is to see that our old self was crucified with Christ. To see that you actually have been crucified with Jesus.

That all that internal personality that depends on people and therefore gets irritable with them when they don't give you what you want, all that internal self that depends on things for its security and therefore gets worried when the things aren't there, all that internal self that depends on other people's opinion and other people's fellowship and friendship for its enjoyment and gets mad when it doesn't get the enjoyment it wants, that that has been crucified with Christ. That that's a fact. And don't get caught in this business, oh, but it's not my experience.

Don't look at the experience of this case. Look at the fact. There's a time to look at your inner self, but then there's a time to look at the fact that your old self was crucified with Christ and to hold on to that fact.

And that has happened whatever you feel like or whatever you've experienced. You, the Bible says, were crucified with Christ. If Christ died for all, then all died.

Colossians says, you are dead with Christ. We have been crucified with Jesus and there is a resurrected you that is new and clean and pure and perfect. See that.

And the fourth and last step is consecration. Are you willing for whatever the Holy Spirit asks you to do in your life? That's it. Are you willing, if the Holy Spirit asks you to be crucified with Jesus, are you willing for that? If the Holy Spirit asks you to have the only friends in your life jeer at you and jibe at you or turn away in disappointment as happened with Jesus, are you ready for that? If the Holy Spirit asks you to have only one friend and that one friend was God only and no other friends that you could depend on, would you be willing for that? If the Holy Spirit asks you to be a failure, as Jesus appeared to be a failure to everybody, if the Holy Spirit asked you to be a failure in your life, in your career, in your profession, forget about arguing whether He would or not.

Obviously, He is kind and He wants the best for you, but would you be willing to do whatever the Holy Spirit asks you to do in this life? Now, loved ones, when at last you come to the ground of your heart and you say, I would, you'll have no trouble with believing for the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Faith will spring up in your heart to receive the Holy Spirit in to cleanse your heart by faith and to fill you with the fruit of the Spirit with love and joy and peace. But that can only happen in a person who is willing to be Jesus.

That's it. The Holy Spirit will only come in and cleanse your heart if you are willing to face the things that Jesus faced. You can see how it works out.

You can see so many instances. You get irritable because you want that thing finished to give to the boss. What if you were willing for the boss to think you are useless, full? You can see how the Holy Spirit then could bear in you patience with the loved one who had to give you the paper.

But the Holy Spirit cannot do that. He cannot express the beauty and the love of Jesus through you unless you are willing to face the same consequences as He Himself faced. And that's the secret, loved ones.

Are you willing to consecrate yourself fully to Jesus for His glory only and to die with Him to all that people and things can give you? And when that moment comes, you'll know it. Many of you have said, how will I know? How will I know I've come to the place where He can cleanse my heart? How will I know where I've come to the place where I can be baptized with the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit will witness it. You'll know.

A dozen times I thought I was there. The Holy Spirit is good. The next day there was something in my life that showed me very plainly I wasn't there.

But the Holy Spirit will witness when you come to the ground of your heart and when you've totted up all that you're worth and you've given it to God for whatever He wants. Loved ones, the Holy Spirit then will cleanse your heart and your heart will become a delight to you. It'll be a garden of spices and of fragrant smells.

It'll be a place of beauty and of love. It'll be a heart that you are glad to look at. And it'll take away all fear of responding the wrong way to somebody or reacting the wrong way.

And suddenly you'll be a child of God because you feel like a child of God. And you'll smile outwardly because you're smiling inwardly. And you'll love because you're loving right from the inside right out the whole way.

That's God's plan. Now, you know, that's the way we're meant to live. That's the way we're meant to live.

And that's what the Holy Spirit can do for you. And I should say, you know, to the loved ones on television that He can do that for you too. Let's pray.

Dear Father, I would pray that You would help my brothers and sisters who want to come to the grace of a clean heart whatever the cost. I pray, Father, that You will enable them to begin this pilgrimage this very day with You, dear Holy Spirit, as their guide. And that You will lead them on through to the place where they are prepared to side with You against self.

And then where they see step by step the things that they are to be willing for in their life if You are going to give them this great grace. So, Holy Spirit, I trust You to make saints among us in these days. Men and women who will be consistent the whole way through.

So that if we cut each other open at any place we'd see exactly the same beauty and the same love the whole way through. Father, we know that that's what heaven will be like. And we know that's what You want for us here on earth and for our loved ones.

We give ourselves to You, Holy Spirit, for this definite work of grace for Jesus' glory. And now the grace of our Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and evermore. Amen.

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