

The Triumph of Man

by Ernest O'Neill

Jesus' resurrection demonstrates that human life is more than physical needs and that we can exist apart from them.

Scripture: Matthew 17:9

Topics: "Eternal Life", "Resurrection Power"

Description

Ernest O'Neill preaches about the eternal existence of Jesus as 'THE MAN', emphasizing his resurrection after three days in the tomb and his continued life beyond physical death. He highlights the concept that humanity can survive apart from breath and material needs, urging listeners to focus on the reality of life beyond transient earthly things. O'Neill encourages withdrawing from immediate circumstances through prayer to experience the depth of life in Christ and the stability it brings to existence.

Transcript

Can a man live without air? Can you survive without breath? That's what man has done! The man Jesus, who made his physical body visible in the first century, explained what was going to happen to him in these words: "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:40); then "as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, 'Tell no one the vision, until the Son of man is raised from the dead.'" (Matthew 17:9). Finally, he made it plain where he now is (even though we can no longer see his physical body) -- "You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matthew 26:64)

Jesus is "THE MAN". NOT "he was the man" - and has now ceased to be a human! He is always the "Son of God", but he makes it plain to us that he has become a man also forever: he now sits at the right hand of God AS A MAN -- as THE MAN. Because all of us men and women "were created in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:10) and are part of his body (1 Corinthians 12:27). What he is -- that is what we are. And the historical fact is that he ceased to breathe air in 29 a.d. -- guaranteed dead by the spear of an experienced Roman soldier -- observed by hundreds of eye-witnesses, yet he lived and breathed again for another month. He then made it clear that -- even though we couldn't see him physically -- he is still alive!

Existence Apart from This World

When this man Jesus lay in his tomb from Friday night to Sunday morning he did not breathe. Yet he obviously continued to live -- because on Sunday morning he got up, shook off the grave-clothes, and spoke to Mary in the garden outside the grave. So humanity can survive apart from breath and food -- and all the so-called "life-support systems" of this current world. This means that we need have no fear when our breath stops. Nor need we be preoccupied with this visible world and the things it can give us. While we have food -- and water -- and air -- and friends -- and relatives -- and outward happiness and favourable circumstances -- we should accept them. But let's not GRAB them or covet them or treasure them or be reluctant to let go of them! Let's relax in the reality that we humans continue to exist apart from these transient things. Our life is more than "food and clothes" and air and water.

The simple fact is that Jesus appeared more alive than ever during the month between his crucifixion and his ascent off the earth. He was able to eat fish and drink water, yet he found matter or space no barrier. He passed through walls and covered distances with ease and speed. His appearance was so transformed that at first his friends didn't recognize him. So let's not be slow to close our eyes and enter into his breath and life -- even while we're still here in physical bodies. In the apparent darkness of prayer, his vital life stirs inside us and energizes our mental and emotional activity far more deeply and livingly than mere animal life does.

The Advantages of Withdrawing a Little

Just as you can often recreate a past experience by closing your eyes and shutting out the circumstances around you, so you can often experience more of the reality of human "breathless" life by closing your eyes in prayer. Although you still have breath -- and drink water and eat food, you can withdraw a little from the immediacy (and the distraction) of your present circumstances by thinking yourself into Christ himself (in whom you live and move and have your being). It's His life that maintains your consciousness -- not your breathing or eating (though these maintain your life on earth). So the closer you are to him in your thinking and feeling, the more solid and stable is your own grip on existence and life. The truth of the matter is -- consciousness of THE MAN of whom you're a part -- makes life more real than all the sea-breezes and parties and lively conversations you've ever experienced. This Jesus in his tomb holds all the mountains and oceans that he has made in his heart: when your heart beats with his, boundless life surges up inside you!

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