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Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

All man made religions leave the ones following them fighting hopelessly against the great enemy of mankind on their own. The great enemy of mankind in your own home and my home, in our offices and at our work places and in international affairs. The great enemy of mankind is that perverse streak in human nature that fills it with selfishness and sin. And so in Islam, the only way they can tackle selfishness and sin is by the harsh civil laws that they enforce upon their people.

And it has been so inadequate in dealing with selfishness that even though they cut off the hands of thieves, yet they have been so unable to touch the central enemy of mankind selfishness and sin that dishonesty is a way of life in Mohammed, Imams. And Buddhism and Taoism has tried to encourage an annihilation of will in order to deal with selfishness and it has committed its people to a form of asceticism that does not touch or create anything different in life at all. Hinduism tries to encourage unselfishness by its karma, reincarnation and reward system. And it has produced simply a submission to faith and passivity that makes no change in human nature.

Do you see that, all other religions are groping after the Gospel and in that way, they have something of truth in them. But do you see that they destroy and kill because they substitute counterfeit answers for the miraculous power that God produced in His cosmic act in Jesus.

Loved ones, sometimes we don't see that, you know. We think, oh well there is some truth in them, there's some truth in them and so, they're good. Yeah, but do you see, though there is some truth because they lack the miraculous cosmic transformation of human nature that took place in Jesus. They constantly substituted other counterfeits. And, so they keep, the loved ones, in those countries from finding the truth because they limp along on these counterfeit methods and techniques. And the truth is that the Gospel is clear and simple.

There is a God, who made us, He loves us and we can be like Him and love Him. But the heart of the Gospel is that this God has done a miraculous cosmic act in His son that transforms us from selfish people into unselfish people and that has destroyed our selfish natures. Now that is the Gospel. Do you see that the central problem of mankind is not what we should do or how we should live our lives? That's not the central problem of mankind. Central problem of mankind is not what is good and what is bad.

And loved ones, if you any -- any doubt of that, look at this verse if you will, in Romans 1, which just show us very plainly, the central problem of mankind is not, what set of laws shall we obey or should we steal or not steal or should we kill or not kill. Roman 1:19, "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely has eternal power and deity has been clearly perceived than the things that have been made. So, they are without excuse." Every man and woman knows, what the nature of his creator is like, even through his conscience, even if his religion is a bundle of lies, he still has in his conscience, a guide that tells them I should be honest, I should love but not hate, I should be kind not cruel.

That is never been the problem, loved ones. The problem of mankind has always been the problem, that is outlined in verse 21 there, "For although, they knew God" that wasn't the problem, it wasn't that they didn't know God, or know His standards. Although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to Him. But they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened.

The central problem of mankind has been, that even though we knew what was truth we did not do it or the central problem is I've -- I'm more plainly if you like to look at Roman 7:14. "We know that the law is spiritual" We have no problem with that, we knew it was right, "But I'm carnal, sold under sin. I'm not like the law, I do not understand my own actions, for I do not do what I want but I do the very thing I hate.

Now, if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. So, then it is no longer I that do it but sin, which dwells within me for I know that nothing good dwells within me "that is in my flesh" I can will what is right but I can't do it. For I do not do the good I want but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now, if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it but sin, which dwells within me." Loved ones that's it. The central problem of mankind is that we know what is right to do but we can't do it. And the answer to that is the Gospel and maybe you would like to look at it because it's just a few verses later in verse 24.

Romans 7:24 "Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?" And then the Gospel "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So, then I of myself that is own my own I serve the law of God with my mind that is my mind agrees that all these things are right, left to myself." I can do nothing with this incorrigible selfish nature; I end up serving the law of God with my mind. I agree, "Oh that's the right thing to do" But with my flesh, with my will I serve the law of sin. And loved ones, the Gospel is that God has done a work that has changed your selfish nature and has made it unselfish and that you are therefore able to obey what He has shown you to be right.

And that is in Roman 6:6, you remember. "We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the sinful body might be destroyed and we might no longer be in slave to sin." There was a time when even know you knew a thing was right. You didn't want to say it because of what other people would think of you, either at work or at school or at home. And you were so preoccupied with their opinion that you didn't want to say what was right, even though you knew it was right. You felt they would laugh at you or they would oppose you.

Now, God has buried that old selfish personality that is in slave to people's opinion, has buried it with Jesus and has raised you up in His son so that there is a new unselfish you that is free from people's opinions and free from what people can do to you and that you is able to say what is right whether people respect you or whether they criticize you. That is the Gospel, loved ones. The Gospel is that God has done a mighty work that has made available to you and you, you that is able to obey him.

That's why the Bible always says, "Liveth, Believeth, Liveth; Liveth, Believeth: Believeth, Liveth." Those two words are always synonymous in the Bible. Jesus actually used the word 'obey'. He said, believe, you obey. The two words are synonymous because the work has been done that has changed you and all you have to do is be that. So, you remember he always spoke to people over cripple and he said, "Stand up" He didn't say, "Do you believe that I apar (ph) to make you stand up." He said, on one occasion do you want to be clean but normally he said, stand up because that's the only right response to the mighty work that has been done in your personality.

Now, that emphasis on believe and obey is in our verse that we'll study today, loved ones. So, would you like to look at it, its Romans 10:16, "But they have not all heeded the Gospel for Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?" Now, do you see that the two words are regarded as synonymous? "But they have not all heeded the Gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord who has believed what he has heard from us." So, they have not all heeded or obeyed the Gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord who has believed what he has heard from us. In other words, if they believed it, they would heed and if they heeded, it proves that they believe it but the two are synonymous. The two are the same.

A prisoner has been lying in a dungeon for years, shackle to the walls of his cell. While he's asleep, liberators come in and they cut the chains and they unlock the door and then they go outside into the passageway. And when the prisoner awakes, they shout into him and say, "The chains are cut, stand up. The door is unlocked, come out, you are free." Either the prisoner believes that and walks into freedom or the prisoner doesn't believe it and stays on the floor of the cell and thinks they are joking or he does believe it but doesn't want to leave the cell that he has got used to. But loved ones, those are the only three possibilities.

It is not possible for the prisoner to lie in the cell and say, "I believe you and I'm trying to escape." It isn't because the person outside the door says, "But the chains are broken, the door is unlocked, you just have to stand and walk and you'll be free." And the prisoner keeps crying, "I believe that and I'm trying to escape." The liberator says, "No, no, you are not trying to escape." The prisoner doesn't say, "I believe that you cut these chains so that I wouldn't have to escape or I wouldn't need to escape." The liberator scratches his head and says, "What!" "Well, I believe you cut the chains so that I don't need to escape." The liberator says, "No, no the very reason I cut the chains was so that you could be free."

Now, loved ones Jesus died and took your selfish perverted personality with him to death so that you could be free. You are free; you can walk in obedience that's why the Bible always identifies belief with obedience. If you believe that I died for you and you died with me then obey me. If you don't obey me, it's because you don't believe me or you don't want to be free and loved ones, that's the Gospel. The Gospel is that God has done a work in you that has freed you from

om slavery to people's opinions, from slavery to physical resources for your security and you are able to be free. The Bible often talks about the experience such conversion. 'Verbo vertragen' (ph) in Latin is 'to turn'. Convert is to turn around and the Bible talks of in those terms, it doesn't talk of in terms of belief and mental assent but talks of in terms of I'm walking, I'm walking towards all the things that people treasure in his life.

I'm walking towards financial security, I'm walking towards a guaranteed future, I'm walking towards popularity and respect among my peers and I'm walking towards satisfying myself as much as I can with all the thrills and circumstances that are available. I'm walking that way and then word comes to me that God has changed my personality that He destroyed me in a cosmic act in His son Jesus above time and space and He recreated me completely with a personality that doesn't need to depend on those things, doesn't need to depend on the bank account for security, doesn't need to depend on my appraisal and approval of my friends for a sense of significance, doesn't need to depend on outward circumstances for my happiness.

So, the Bible comes and says, "That has happened, convert" -- and I turn and I go the other way and I walk towards God and His satisfaction and His pleasure unerringly and relentlessly. That's what conversion is. That's why the Bible says, "If you believe it, you'll obey it." You don't sit in your own cell and say "I believe you freed me, so that I don't need to escape." Its dumb, its dumb -- or I believe you freed me and I'm trying to escape. The liberator says, "You don't believe it for a moment, because it's being done and I know full well that you are able to turn."

And loved ones, you can see that -- that's the emphasis in scripture. The emphasis in scripture is you've turned your attempt. The emphasis in scripture is not you give mental assent to this truth or you give an emotional assent to it. The emphasis in scripture is you change your life. Now, you can see that in one of the earliest ways the Gospel was ever preached is in Mark, and 1:15 "And saying" -- This is after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of God and this is the way Jesus put the Gospel, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel.

But do you see the order? If you don't repent, you don't believe in the Gospel. And indeed if you don't repent, you cannot believe in the Gospel. And loved ones, do you see that its popular today in our kind of soft society in which we've grown up. To say, repent and believe in the Gospel, "yeah, yeah, we'll repent and believe in the Gospel." Well, I know I can't repent, that's obvious, I can't repent, I can't stop living the way I am living. I see that all the books reinforced that idea in me. I can't repent. So, believe the Gospel and try to repent. That's it. And still that's what we say. We say, "I'll believe the Gospel and I'll try to repent." So, we call to the liberator in the passage way and we say, "Oh! I believe you freed me", Hmm boy, I'm trying to get free, I'm trying to get free.

And the liberator looks down with eyes of love and says, "Do you know the pain that I bore on Calvary? Do you know why I bore it? Do you know that it was because your miserable little temper was in me and I allowed it to be burned out by my Father, Father's wrath in a cosmic eternal act? Do you know that? Do you know that, that enslavement to people's opinion that works in your dear little heart? Do you know that I took it into mine in a miraculous eternal transaction and I allowed my Father's wrath to burn it out? Do you know that, that's why I suffered? I suffered to free you from that. I offer all people know you are free. I offer all people can call you to repent and believe the Gospel. I know, anybody else can pretend. They can philosophize, they can say no, no you've been -- you had the work done so that you could be forgiven. I know, I freed you, I destroyed your own-self and myself and I know you of the equipment to obey.

That's why I have told you, "Repent and believe the Gospel." Repentance, loved ones, is metanoia. You change your mind, you change your whole attitude, you change your way of thinking. Do you see, loved ones, how strongly Jesus put it? Unless you repent, you will never believe the Gospel, and why I'm saying this is warning is, I think, it's very easy for us as we philosophize here Sunday by Sunday. It's very easy for us to become preoccupied with believing and not repent in our own lives and as a result of that our original intellectual belief remains purely superficial and has no real faith in it at all and so we are constantly shaking.

Actually, the first step in saying you believe that you were crucified with Christ the first step is repentance. You stop doing the things that the Holy Spirit has convicted you often in your conscience. Now, this isn't popular stuff, do you know that? The popular thing today is to say, "God will give you all the pleasure you want, whatever your like, whatever your attitude to Him is." But, do you see that, that's a Mockery of Jesus death on Calvary, it's a mockery. The whole purpose of Jesus death was to free you, so that you could obey your God.

Forget the answers specifics, so that you could stop lusting after a woman in your heart, so that you could stop having critical thoughts of somebody at home, so that you could stop being dishonest in income tax reports so that you could stop

taking advantage of other people in an underhand way in your business, so that you could stop complaining and being negative, so that you could stop being cruel and sarcastic to your friends, so that you could stop being out for yourself, whatever else apart, so that you could stop living your life to make your own future secure, whatever effect it had on anyone else's, so that you could stop being unclean in your thoughts and in your mind, so that you could stop being jealous, stop being angry, stop being proud. That's why Jesus died, so that you could stop those things. That's why he lovingly says to us this morning "Repent". First of all repent. I know you can do it. I'm not talking to you as some psychiatrist trying to reinforce you. I know it, because I was destroyed, so that you could repent."

Now, repent and then, you can believe the Gospel. Loved ones, could I share with you that the only way to make your relationship real with God is to start with repentance, really. You start with the things that your conscience has been troubling you about. You start there. I don't know if I ever shared with you, but I came up in kind of a, academic atmosphere, where I believe that most things were solved up here and so I had this stuff, originally and I thought, well, that's mommy I don't need to stop being unclean in my thoughts, I don't need to stop being envious of other people in order to believe this, my mind can believe it, whatever my will does and at the beginning I thought, Oh! That's a kind of crude Gospel. It's okay for people who don't live a real life in their mind, but for people like me who live in their minds, then I got to think a thing through, that's what makes me a child of God or makes me a Christian.

Loved ones, I tried that for years and there was no difference, there was no change in my life, but most of all there was no dynamic power coming from above, nothing. Until eventually I got hold of the idea even I too have to do the crude act of stopping doing the things in my life that are wrong. And I just couldn't believe it, you know, your self is very plausible and I thought, "Oh! No God you can't be that cruel!" That means, when you looked down and see this miserable little Iris h guy and you see him stopping being jealous, so then you can give him the Holy Spirit now.

You were not like that, you are a sophisticated -- God, you don't play games like that and the Father was good and continually came in and said, "That's the game I play. I saved you from your selfish character and personality, so that you could repent and obey. You stop doing the things, when you sure you're serious with me, I'll be serious with you." And then loved ones, I got down to just confessing my sins, just confessing them one by one, because I committed them one by one and just agreeing with God, yes, this is wrong and I think some of us here don't get any further with God, because we won't even agree with him about the sins. We're still negotiating; we're still saying, well no, that's just a personality trait. I inherited it from my father, or well maybe it's a sin, but it's absolutely justifiable in my situation, you see I am an artistic kind of character.

And loved ones, we won't even agree and we so often think, all confession, confession is just the all-catholic idea of confessing with your lips. No, it's the good catholic truth that you have to agree with God about the things that he is pointing right or wrong in your life. Agree with Him, start there, start with honest confession and the second step is real repentance and real repentance is not putting a sword into Jesus' eye, because that's what happens. Really, in God's heart that's what happens every time your sin. It's not putting a sword into His heart and saying, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. That's not repentance.

Repentance is taking the sword out and leaving it down and abiding that I will never use that sword again, whatever it may cost me personally. I will never think an unclean thought again, whatever loss of pleasure it brings me. I will never criticize that person again; whatever way it leaves me open to people's destroying happens. I will not. Repentance is you stop doing it and only then. Are you able to believe the Gospel, you see? Only then are you able to say, Lord Jesus, I believe that as I was put into you, so you are in me at this moment. Here's the amazing thing. If you are honest in your confession and honest in your repentance, then there will be a super natural conviction wrought inside you by the Holy Spirit, that Jesus is in you and that you are in Him.

Now, that's a miracle, of course. The miracle is that God works a conviction of His presence in your heart if you are honest in your confession and repentance. If you are dishonest in those, it doesn't matter, how much you juggle your thoughts, you will never come to certainty about your relationship to God, because that is a mighty work that God does in your spirit. It's a new birth that he does in your spirit, when you are last honest about your confession and repentance. So, could I just say again to you that it is our dear savior, who knows better than anybody in the universe, because of what he has done for each one of us here?

It is our dear savior that says, "Repent and believe the Gospel" And who are we to say, "Lord, I believe you died for me so that I wouldn't have to repent or I believe you died for me and I'm trying to repent." Jesus says, "Repent. If you believe that you died with me and that I died for you, then you can repent this moment."

So, loved ones, God's word to you is, stand up and be free. Stand up this very day and be free and cast away all those past experiences where you've tried it before in your own. Stand up and be free and continue to stand up and be free until at last you are completely free. So, good you know -- I was so glad when I discovered that Christianity was a matter of action and life and not a matter of belief and feeling and it is good, loved ones. It is good. Let us pray.

Dear Father, we would pray for each other this morning and if there is one of us here, that is lying under a weight of habits and disobediences that we've been living with for years and that is lying absolutely on top of us so that we can't imagine being free from it. Father, we would pray for each other, that you will reveal to us that we have a new personality, not made with hands, eternal in heavens and if that personality is made to obey his Father and to depend on Him in full and absolute faith and confidence and that we can activate that new personality this very moment, by exercising our will to agree with what our mind believes.

So, Father we would pray for each other. Lord I pray for any one here that needs to make a definite move towards you this morning, needs to go to the prayer room and confess and repent and give their lives to you fully. When he is just to sit quietly after this service and pray Lord that they will have the confidence and the determination to do that. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that your word is always stand up and walk.

Re: CHRIST HAS SET YOU FREE - NOW OBEY, on: 2006/10/30 7:27

Gal. 5:1; "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

if you do these things, you shall never fall, on: 2006/10/30 18:53

2 Petter 1:3-10; "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: