

THE KEYS TO LIVING ABUNDANTLY

Part 2-Service

Sunday, October 22, 2023

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Wooo! So following that [the musical solo, "I Was Here], I have a very deep spiritual question. [Congregation laughs] How many people like apples? Anybody like apples? I love apples! I eat apples every single day. I have three favorite apples: the Gala apple; the Honeycrisp; and Fuji apples. I love apples! How many people ... I only eat three kinds of apples. How many people know all the different types of apples there are ... how many? Seven-thousand five-hundred different apples! I eat three! How 'bout them apples? [Congregation laughs] Any rate ...

We went to the Butterfly Wonderland the other day and discovered that there are 334 species of butterflies just in Arizona. You know how many species there are all together? Twenty-eight thousand species of butterflies!

The average person speaks; their full vocabulary is about 20,000 to 35,000 words. And the number of words actually in the English language are well over 200,000. We use about 10% of the words available.

And finally, we all love looking at stars. Do you know how many stars are up in our galaxy? It is 100 billion stars in the sky!

So what is the point that I'm trying to make? The point is: We live in an abundant universe. We live in a universe of infinite and abundant possibilities. And the Bible reaffirms the level of abundance. In Jeremiah it says, *"God has a plan to prosper us."* The 23rd Psalm says, *"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."* Jesus said he came that we may have life and have it more abundantly. He said, *"It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom."* He said, *"Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours."* And he said, *"With God, all things are possible."*

We live in an abundant universe! We live in abundance! That is the truth; that is the reality. And yet, most of the time we think in lack and limitation. Most of the time we believe that scarcity is the norm and abundance is the rare thing. And it is the opposite. We often find ourselves reaffirming things like, *"There's just not enough! There's not enough money; there's not enough time; there's not enough jobs; there's not enough success; there's not enough love; there's not enough energy. There's not enough answers; not enough happiness."* We think there's not enough and never enough.

And that's why we sometimes struggle living the abundant life we all want to live. Finding the level of joy and love and happiness is because we don't believe that abundance is there, even though it is.

And the two reasons we don't live as prosperous and abundant lives as we would like. The first one is: Our minds are conditioned into lack, and we reaffirm it with worry and fear and doubt. And the second one is: We do not practice the spiritual laws and principles of prosperity. These things exist, but we've got to bring life into them and move them to get that energy and abundance flowing and circulating in our lives. And it takes work! It takes spiritual work: important work. But most of us would rather attend the "my-life-gets-better-without-any-work-at-all" school of success! [Congregation laughs] And it doesn't exist! It just doesn't happen! It takes work; it takes spiritual work. Abundance is possible. All the things that we desire are possible: to live prosperously. But we've got to do the work.

Last week we started a two-week series called "The Keys to Living Abundantly." And we started with the first three of the seven that we'll share. And last week I shared that number one is **a mindset of abundance**. Because all abundance is grounded in spirituality, in consciousness. Listen to the words in the Book of John; it says, *"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in good health, just as your soul prospers."* That the foundation of all abundance is that we prosper our souls; that we

connect with the infinite. That we immerse our minds in the mind of God and, as we are filled with the goodness and allness of God, our lives open to allow the abundance of God to flow through us.

And the key to that thing is that we have to consistently keep immersing our mind. Jesus prayed consistently five times every day. Consistently to keep up that consciousness of God, that consciousness of abundance, and that mindset of abundance.

And so we need to do consistent prayer, consistently seeking God with all of our heart. And being still, so we can be of one; so we are a greater channel for God's abundance to flow through us. To develop such a mindset so that we know that I live in God's abundance and God's abundance lives in me.

Let's affirm that together!

[With congregation] *"I live in God's abundance, and God's abundance lives in me."*

Just take a deep breath. Expand your heart and your mind to that awareness and that great truth.

And the second thing is to **be a cheerful giver**. The Law of Giving: *"As you give, so, too, shall you receive."* As we give, we will receive! It is getting the Law of Circulation -- and giving -- moving in our lives. And whether it's giving of a smile, or giving assistance or help or support; all the ways of giving activate the flow of good energy in our lives.

And, of course, the hardest one of giving is giving of our finances. Tithing: it scares us, because we think, *"I don't have enough now; if I give, I'm going to have even less!"* But no! It actually increases the flow in our lives. Because it is the law! As we give, so, too, shall we receive.

And then the third principle we talked about was **being a good receiver**. A joyful receiver. We always hear giving, but receiving is important. You know, we talk about wanting prosperous lives, yet someone gives us a compliment, and we don't want to take the compliment. Someone buys us a gift; "Oh, no, you really shouldn't have." They offer to give you a helping hand; "No, no; I really don't really need any help." We're saying to the universe, "Hey, I want abundance!" But when even in the small ways it's coming, we start blocking it and refusing it and sometimes not feeling worthy of it.

Every one of us needs to learn to be a joyful and willing receiver. To receive the good; receive the joy; receive the abundance. And that is an important aspect of that flow, as well. Giving activates it, but receiving helps it keep going and flowing.

So we're going to look at the fourth through the seventh principles and keys to living abundantly today.

The first one is to **BUILD A FOUNDATION OF GRATITUDE**. Gratitude is a powerful and important foundation for us to build to live abundantly, because gratitude sees the good; it acknowledges our blessings; and it appreciates what we have. And that keeps the good flow of energy moving in our lives. The practice of gratitude helps us feel better. When we're grateful we tend to be more positive; more optimistic. But gratitude can help in all areas of our lives, imagine in your relationship if you express more gratitude with one another. Or to your children. Imagine if we expressed more gratitude about the work that we do; how much more joyful that work would be. Or how much we express gratitude for the people we work with; the environment in our workplace would increase. Gratitude in all areas of our lives would improve our lives. And not only help us enjoy, but help us actually attract more things to be grateful for.

How many people would say that you are a grateful person? We were all taught that, when someone does something nice, say *"Thank you."* Someone gives you something nice, good things happen, say *"Thank you."* And that's a good and important part of the foundation! But there's an even deeper level that is important with the foundation of gratitude. And Paul puts it this way in 1 Thessalonians. He said, *"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you."* Other versions say, *"In all things give*

thanks, for this is God's will for you." And it means: No matter what's going on -- even when things are struggling; even when things are difficult; even when things are not going the way you would like it to go -- in all things give thanks, for this is God's will for you. It is God's will that you see the good in your life and appreciate what you have. And appreciate the life that we've been given, even when things are not as ideal or as perfect as we'd like.

And it's not always easy. Because when things don't go well, sometimes we can turn to being angry or frustrated. Or thinking, *"This is unfair! This is just not right!"* And look to want to blame somebody. How many people have ever gotten frustrated or annoyed because life did not go the way you wanted? [Congregation laughs] Anybody ever want to blame somebody or just get ticked off? I mean, that can be a response sometimes of not giving thanks in all things. Sometimes we just want to give thanks for the good things. But it's learning how to give thanks in all things that is a powerful foundation for living more abundantly.

Jesus gives a great example of giving thanks in all things -- and demonstrating the foundation of gratitude -- with the loaves and fishes. There wasn't enough. But he didn't turn to blaming the disciples or getting angry or thinking, *"This day is going to not go well."* what he did was: He gave thanks for what was there. He was able to see the good still in that situation. Affirm it and call it forth and turn a difficult situation into something that was absolutely wonderful. And, most importantly, he didn't stress and get anxious about it. He was so centered in it that things unfolded in an amazing and wonderful way.

So one of the things we need to do is, when things don't go as well as we'd like -- if we experience a break-up or are having financial struggles -- that we need to learn how to be grateful in those situations. Jesus said, *"In this life there will be trials and tribulations, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world."* So that means that, even in difficult times, there are things to be grateful for. And even if you're hurting and struggling, still say, *"I am grateful for my life. I'm grateful for my health. I'm grateful for my home. I'm grateful for my job. I'm grateful for my blessings. I'm grateful for all the people who love me. I'm grateful for all the people whom I love. I am grateful that God loves me. I am grateful in knowing that, even though I'm struggling right now and going through a difficult time, this will work out. I don't know how, but I know that this will work out. And I am grateful for my life."*

The next time you're going through a difficult period, develop the foundation of gratitude. Not just being grateful when things are good but being grateful all of the time. Because there's always good things in our lives. There are always blessings. And it's important for us to always appreciate this gift of life that we've been given, even when things are not perfect or ideal.

And it's important to not let one thing or a few things that aren't going well spoil the experience of this whole, amazing wonderful life that we have been given. If we truly want to live more abundantly, gratitude must flow in our lives every day and in all circumstances.

The next principle about living abundantly is to **ASK FOR YOUR ABUNDANCE**. Jesus said, *"Ask and you shall receive."* When you think about it, asking is an incredibly creative power. Because asking is the calling forth and the shaping of the abundance of God into the things that we would like it to be. It is about claiming the abundance and blessings that are available to us.

And the thing I like about asking; it's about two things. One: it is about having a clear desire. And two is: Believing it is possible. Because when you ask, usually you believe that thing can come forth. And so asking is the desire that opens a channel to allow the Law of Attraction to take place and flow in our lives.

And I love when Jesus said, *"Whatever you ask ..."* It means that it's unlimited! The most important thing when you ask is to be clear: What do you want? Abundance has different forms for different people that will bring fulfillment in their lives. The question is: What do you want? What does your heart desire?

Sometimes we're so busy struggling in life, just trying to get by, we don't know what we want! Or we don't even take the time to figure out and get clear about what we want.

In the Book of James it says, "*If you are lacking in anything, ask God, who gives generously to all.*" Would you like to have peace in your life? Then ask! You want happiness? Then ask! You want to have outrageous success? Then ask! You want to be wildly in love? Then ask! Ask!

One of the keys to getting in the universe and in life is asking! Sometimes we're afraid to ask. Sometimes we don't want to ask. Here's a hallmark. Number one: Think of something you want and ask. Ask the universe; open up your life to that thing you desire. And secondly: Pick something that scares you and stretches you. That is bold. Something like you wouldn't ask it now, but if you had all the faith, you would ask it. What is that second thing that is a big stretch for you that you'd be willing to ask.

Oprah put it this way. She said, "*You get in life what you have the courage to ask for.*" So what is something you want that you are willing to have the courage to ask for?

Asking is a powerful gift and tool that God has given us. And the question is: Are you willing to practice asking for your abundance?

The third thing we're going to cover today that is a part of living abundantly **is PRACTICING FEELING PROSPEROUS**. You know, Scripture says, "*As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.*" We always hear, "*As a man thinketh, so is he.*" We kind of miss that middle part a little. Because we get the idea that thoughts are creative; thoughts produce results. But it says, "*As a man thinketh in his heart.*" And it means your thought plus your heart ... plus your feeling. The thought plus the feeling equals the outcome.

And so I think sometimes we don't realize the creative power of our feelings. And creating feeling behind the things that we want and the things that we desire.

How many people have heard of Emmett Fox? Emmett Fox has a thing called "The Mental Equivalent." He said whatever you want in your life, first create the mental equivalent in your mind. Get clear about what it is you want and what it looks like. But also a part of that mental equivalent is feeling what it would feel like if you had it in your life right now. That when we get the thought and the feeling unified, that mental equivalent will draw and attract the things that we want in our lives.

So what is it that you want? And when you know what you want, it's important to feel as if you've had it: if you have it in your life right now. That's what Jesus meant when he said, "*Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*"

So if you want a job, what would it feel like if you had that job right now? If you wanted more money, what would it feel like if you had that money in your life right now? If you wanted more love or harmony or fulfillment in your relationship, what would it feel like if you had that right now?

In the book, *The Feng Shui of Money ... Feng?* Is that how ...? It says the more you practice feeling rich, the more you will attract riches. The power of feeling is important! We have a practice in the prosperity class that we do a little thing where we feel prosperous. What would it feel like for you to say, "I'm feeling that I live a prosperous life." What does prosperity feel like for you?

Let's do a little thing; just repeat after me.

"I am prosperous."

Together: [with congregation] *"I am prosperous."*

Take a deep breath. Again, half voice.

[With congregation]: *"I am prosperous."*

Now I want you to feel prosperous. If you had everything in your life that would be prosperous for you, what would that feel like? Feel prosperous.

Again, half voice.

[With congregation]: *"I am prosperous."*

With feeling, again!

[With congregation]: *"I am prosperous."*

Deep breath. And feel prosperous. it is a powerful and important thing.

Somebody came up to me and said, *"If I get the good that I want, I'm not sure how to feel."*

I said, *"Just feel good! Any good feeling or grateful feeling or positive feeling."* Any positive feeling with the thought is a good thing!

Sometimes we think we don't have control over our feelings. But we have the ability. We can cultivate feelings. And we don't have to wait until something happens to make us feel good. We can create; we can feel good now.

I'll be you if I told you right now: Feel powerful. Okay, feel powerful right now! How many people would say you felt a little more powerful. Okay, right now feel relaxed. Feel relaxed. And I'll bet we all did! Okay, feel excited! Yeah!

See, we have more control over our feelings ... and feelings are creative. They're powerful! And you attach them to a thought, and they become even a more powerful and attractive force.

So the final thing I want to look at about truly living an abundant life, which means a meaningful, joyful and fulfilling experience of life. And yes, money is great and wonderful, too; it is a part of it. But an abundant life and a prosperous life is really a full, enriching and wonderful life. And to do that, the final one is that we've got to **SPREAD LOVE BY SERVING OTHERS.**

Albert Schweitzer said, *"I don't know everyone, but I know one thing: is that the only ones among you who will be really happy are the ones who have sought and found how to serve."*

Gandhi said, *"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in serving and helping others."*

Martin Luther King said, *"The most important question to ask ourselves is: What am I doing for others?"*

They have done scientific studies of how helping others -- being in service to others -- makes a difference in our lives. The number one thing, they said, that helping others does is: It makes us happier. They did a study of 2,000 people over five years. And the people who listed themselves to be very happy were the ones who volunteered for at least 5.8 hours a month.

And there's something about helping others ... They say your serotonin level goes up. There's a "feel good" hormone that gets released. And if you receive help from someone, your serotonin goes up. And if you watch someone help someone, your serotonin level goes up. It is powerful!

The other thing they say is: Giving back also helps us feel happy. Being engaged with other people, and being active and more connected to life. All those things are reasons of when we give of ourselves -- or help or serve or support -- that it absolutely makes a difference.

Sometimes we say things like, *"Oh, when I get successful [or when I get this], then I'll give ..."* No! It's a part of what will get us there -- is that level of happiness and fulfillment.

Sometimes we think we don't have enough time. I remember years ago, I used to volunteer as a baby cuddler at a woman's shelter. It was like a four-hour commitment. And I said I would do it in front of my

class, so I had to do it. [Congregation laughs] Volunteer, and that's where I wanted to volunteer! Four hours. But I started thinking, "*Oh, man; I don't have enough time. And duh duh duh.*" You know, "*It's going to take all day.*" And I did that, and amazingly, not only was it fun to be cuddling those babies -- it was phenomenal! But the thing is: I had enough time; I had enough sleep; I had enough energy.

I mean, we give ourselves all kinds of reasons why, but when you do it, something activates and moves. I felt better; I hope those kids were blessed. It was a joy! I know the staff was, and it was amazing experience. And I didn't lose anything; in fact, I gained so much!

Another one that they say is that, when you do giving in the world, other people see it and it actually becomes contagious. Just like the serotonin thing.

Another one: It reduces chronic pain. that when people who are in pain volunteer, and it's not thinking about ourselves for a little while, actually helps release and reduce some of the pain. It lowers our blood pressure. They find that, over a long period of time, volunteering every year, that your hypertension can go down by 40%. It is absolutely incredible.

And that's like how praying and giving has to be cyclical. it's when it's ongoing that the benefits actually have increased benefit to us over time. They say that teens who volunteer tend to have a better self-image, are more compassionate, and have higher grades. We tend to live longer; it reduces stress and isolation and depression. And it helps us.

And finally, it gives us a sense of purpose. There are all kinds of benefits, it says!

But I think the greatest one is -- the reason it's important? Because it's an expression of love. And that's the greatest commandment. We all know to love the people we love. We know to love our family. But these are usually people we don't even know! And expressing love by giving of our gifts, giving of our time, creates a level and dimension of love and fulfillment that loving your family and doing stuff you get paid for doesn't give you. That level of altruism -- of truly loving and helping someone, whether you know them or not -- gives a deeper dimension of fulfillment in our lives that nothing else can quite replace.

Whether you're helping in a soup kitchen, or helping coach a high school team, or you want to be a greeter or an usher, or any of the things you could be doing, all of them are good. And when it's done with joy, it blesses the others and it blesses ourselves. And it creates an amazing energy of upliftment for the world.

Mother Teresa said, "*Giving and helping of others is love in action.*"

And the other thing I think it does is: I think it makes us realize that our lives matter. We matter to other people! Other people's lives are enhanced by ours and ours by them. And it's important to remember that that's our purpose. That's why we are here: to love one another; to help one another; and make the difference we came here to make.

A state government employee was in his office and was bored. He had nothing to do. So he was looking around this old filing cabinet and found this old brass lamp. And he rubbed it, and this genie appeared and said he'd give him three wishes.

Skeptically, the guy thought, "*Well, is this real ...?*" So he said, "*Okay, then; well, give me an ice-cold Diet Pepsi.*" Poof! He had his Diet Pepsi right there. And then he realized this thing's for real!

So he put some more thought into his second wish. So for his second wish he said, "*I would like to be on an island filled with beautiful women who all want me.*" And poof! He was on this island with beautiful woman all looking at him desirously.

And then his last one he said, "*I wish I never had to work a day again.*" And poof! He was back in his government office. [Congregation laughs]

So ... We can all live an abundant life! We can all live a prosperous life! And we don't need a genie, and we don't need to make wishes. But we do need to put into action and do the spiritual work to get the laws of abundance and the principles of prosperity moving in our lives.

This week I encourage you, besides the ones from last week, is to build a foundation of gratitude. Be grateful for all the good things and find ways to be thankful even when things aren't going well. To appreciate your life still. To acknowledge all the blessings.

Secondly, ask for your abundance. Have the courage to ask for what you desire, because asking shapes and calls forth the good of God that is available to all of us. But we must ask!

And then practice feeling prosperous. Feelings -- just like thoughts -- have creative power. And when you feel prosperous and feel like you have the thing, it will magnify that power to attract.

And finally, spread God's love by helping others. Serve and volunteer. Not only spread that love, but make the difference you came here to make.

And finally, if we open ourselves to all of those, we can truly make a difference in this world by living the keys to living abundantly.

God bless you all!

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