

WHAT IS CAUSE AND EFFECT?

Week #4 of a series on "Unity's Foundational Teachings"

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Okay; you ready? I want to talk about cause and effect. Okay? Now why is this important? How many of you want to have an impact on your life in the world? Anybody? Right! Okay, so most of us have an idea of what we want to create with our life, right? The impact we have, the effect that we have on our friends and family, on our own life. We have a desire to be impactful, right?

So if we know that we want to have an impact, then the question becomes: What is the cause that would create that effect, right? Now, there is so much discussion about that and I want to go there tonight.

[Holds up a rock] So can you all see what this is? Can you see what it is? It's a rock. It's a rock, okay? So the question that I have for you tonight is: Is there intelligence in this rock? [Congregation murmurs] [Laughs] I love when you guys murmur, right? Right?

How many of you have heard the expression, "dumb as a rock?" [Congregants laugh] The idea of being as dumb as a rock ... If we said to somebody was as dumb as a rock, would we think that was a high level of intelligence? Or would that be a low level of intelligence? Right? That'd be low level, right?

So some of you want to think, "Well, I think I know where he's going, so I'm going to vote that the rock is high intelligence." But I don't think that most of us believe that, right? Most of us believe that this is an inanimate object. That it's just going to sit there and it's not going to do anything forever, right? Now, what is the problem – and I'm going to get to it. What is the problem with that belief? a rock? The problem is that we extrapolate the way we believe about this rock to the entire solar system; that we think we live in a dumb universe. Right? Because you can't say that the universe is intelligence, if that intelligence isn't fully present everywhere. Right?

So the problem that we have is: we think the rock is dumb, and then we think, "Well, nature's kind of smart. But not all nature's smart." So where does intelligence come from? And yet at some deep level -- I think at a spiritual level -- we know that the universe is highly intelligent. And we think, "Well that's the spiritual part; it's not the dumb rock part right." [Congregants laugh] But I really want us to bring that level of intelligence into this conversation about cause and effect. Because that intelligence actually plays a role in the impact that you're getting from your life.

Now, another case in point. Anybody know right now what China's population is? 1.409 billion. [Writes number on easel pad] So that's a lot, right? In the whole planet, there's somewhere around 7 billion people on the planet and 1.4 billion of them live in China. Now, why is that important?

Well, in the earth, early '60s, there was a famine in China and a lot of people died because of it. They didn't have enough food to feed people. So what they decided to do was create a one-child policy. In the late '60s/early '70s, they created a one-child policy with the idea that they wanted to change their birth rate. Because it was predicted that China – in the '60s -- by the end of the year 2100 would have over 4.5 billion people. And with the '60s technology that we had at the time, they could not conceive that there would be enough food for 4.5 billion people. They created a social policy that said everybody can only have one kid because we've got to get our arms around this population thing. Right?

So what's happening now is according to the research -- and you know how I get geeky on research -- what happened now is, in the year 2022, the population dropped by 850,000. Last year, the top population dropped – 2023 – 2.8 million. It is now predicted that the population in China is going to be

.5 billion by the year 2100. Okay? So they're now predicting that, in the next 76 years, they're going to go from a population of 1.4 billion ... and instead of going all the way up to 4.5 billion, that it's now going to go down to a half a billion ... 500 million ... 500 million and change.

All right, now, why is that important to your life? Here's what I want you to see. I want you to see that life is always different than you are going to expect. And especially when you think you have control over everything, right? [Congregants laugh] Have you all had that experience? Where you realize where you thought you were going may not be where the intelligent universe is taking you? And no matter how much you want to change the cause, the universe -- in its infinite intelligence -- is taking you for a ride.

Now the question then becomes: Do you believe that? Do you believe that you can trust an intelligent universe to lead you to a place that's better than you can even imagine now? You're going to have to decide, right?

Now, let me give you another point. Now ... [Holds up rock again] I wanted a smaller rock, but I didn't think you could see it. If I throw this rock up in the air, and it lands and hits me on the head, what do we call that? Hurt? Yes, we call it pain, right? Right? Now, is that the law? [Congregant: "Gravity."] Right! Gravity is a ... law. It's a law!

Now, why is that important? [Laughs] Well, because, now you might say, "*Well, God, if you really loved me, you wouldn't allow this rock to hit me in the head.*" Have you ever prayed a prayer something like that? Like, "*Why is this happening to me?*" Have you ever prayed a, "*Why is this happening to me?*" And what we want to pray in this "*Why is this happening to me?*" is that we want to take very little responsibility for the cause because we don't like the effect. Are you with me there? Right?

But if the law was capricious, and you kept throwing rocks up, and they kept missing you, you wouldn't actually get the idea that gravity is a thing. And it's actually a law: that what you put out comes back to you, right? Have you all heard that? Right? Sometimes it's called karma; sometimes it's called spiritual law. And the idea is what goes out has to come back. "*What you sow, so shall you reap.*" "*As you give, so shall you receive.*" It's all spiritual law, right?

Actually, it is an outpicturing of this idea that there is cause. And cause has an effect. Now, what's interesting about this whole idea of Grace is that Grace says, "*Yeah, most of the time.*" But there are those moments that look like they circumvent the law, because what happens with Grace is you throw a ball against the wall, and it looks like it doesn't come back. But I want you to hear it differently than that.

So the law is, whatever I'm throwing against the wall is going to come back to me, right? Just 100 % of the time. Now, if I have a spiritual realization, right? If I have a spiritual realization and I no longer am in the same place that I was when I threw the ball -- because I've now gone to higher ground -- the ball still comes back because that's the law, and it has to. But I'm not standing in that place anymore. I've actually had a realization; I've had a healing; I've had a transformation, and I'm now standing in higher ground. So the ball still comes back, but it doesn't hit me! Because I no longer need the ball to hit me, because I'm not living there anymore. That's not my consciousness anymore. That's not my mindset anymore. That's not my belief anymore.

So the more that we ... [Laughs] But it does come back and hit the guy that's now standing in my spot. [Congregants laugh] Just kidding. Just kidding. Sorry. Sorry. I just; I still have to be me. Right?

So, so here's what I want us to look at tonight. I want you to see that whatever you put out into the universe, there is going to be an activity that brings things back to you. Whether we call it law; whether we call it karma; there is that activity. That as you put out anything in the universe, it's going to come back to you.

But when we look at the definition of karma for most of us, the definition that most of us were used to is this idea -- and I'm just going to read it: *"In Hinduism and Buddhism, the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences."* So the idea is that the sum of your past actions create your present experience, okay? And that's the law, right? That's just the law: as you give, so you shall receive. But Grace says that you move to higher ground.

Now, what's really the thing that I want us to focus on is: karma is all based on actions. Like, what I do. But ... [Laughs] I hope this works! But you are not just a physical being doing things. And, in fact, who you really are at a deeper level is both a mental and an emotional and a spiritual being. But karma, the way it's taught, is simply about your physical actions. And it's the idea that whatever you did lifetimes ago -- as it's taught in Hinduism and Buddhism -- is impacting your life right now.

And I want you to see that that's kind of a gross simplification. That cause and effect ... Yes, is there a physical component of it? Yes. Because what do all these things have in common? They're all energy. But the greatest way to increase your impact on your life, I believe is when we change the mental and especially the emotional level of your life.

So instead of focusing all of your energy on what you're doing, I want you to see that the greatest way you impact your life is by changing what you're thinking and, even more so, what you're feeling. If you want to radically change your life, change your feeling. If you're feeling love in a greater way -- if you practice every day experiencing and feeling greater love -- will that change your thinking? [Congregants: "Yes."] Will that change your behavior? [Congregants: "Yes."] And it all stems from the very basic of changing the energy of your emotions.

Like, if we are walking around life feeling unworthy, okay? Is that an emotion? Is it a thought? Or is it an action? I'm going to suggest it's an emotion. If you walk around feeling unworthy, that's an emotion. Now, does it cloud your thinking? Does it cloud your behavior? And is it going to create the experience that you have in life if you walk around feeling unworthy? [Congregants: "Yes."] And the thing is about unworthiness: it doesn't matter how much physical things change. Until you change at the emotional level, nothing's going to change. We have to change first at that deepest level of our emotions.

And when you change the emotions that you are putting out into your life, you actually change what comes back to you.

Now, is it helpful to change at all levels? Yes! But what I want you to see most about this -- this idea of cause and effect -- is: your emotions are the most powerful determinant of what's coming back to you. If you're regularly putting out love into the universe, is that going to change what comes back to you? Yes. If you're regularly putting out hatred into the universe, is that going to come back to you? Absolutely! If you're regularly feeling unworthy, it is going to impact your life.

And so over and over again ... Because I've wanted to do this series on Unity's basic teachings. And when we talk about cause and effect, most of the time we just talk about it from a physical point of view. We just say whatever you do to others is what others are going to do to you. It's the Golden Rule. And at some level, that's true! Whatever physically you're doing is going to come back to you. But it's not the most powerful way for you to show up.

The most powerful way for you to show up is to change what you're feeling. If you want more love in your life, send out more love. You want more joy in your life, send out the energy of joy. If you want more peace in your life, send out peace. And your behavior, your thoughts, the world around you will change because you're changing at the deepest level. You're changing the energy that you're into the world. And, yes, it's going to change who you are!

Most of us are working at this level alone. "Well, I'm doing all the right things." I know, but you're still a cranky goose! [Congregants laugh] Can you see the problem there? If you're doing all the right things, but you're resentful in doing it, how much of a banger are you going to get out of it? Not much! If you're doing all the right things, but you're doing it in a spirit of hatefulness, there's no upside in that.

Like, it's not just about doing things differently. It's about you taking full responsibility for your inner life and feeling things differently.

So if you had to pick the feeling that you want to come back to you in your life, what would that be? Do you want to feel more love? Do you want to feel more joy? Do you want to feel more peace? What would you like to feel more of? And know that, when you decide, then you begin to radiate that, and it comes back to you over and over again.

That it really isn't what you're doing. It really is who you're being. And so what is the feeling that you want to send out into the universe? That you want to see come back to you over and over?

How many of you would be willing to experience greater love, greater joy, greater abundance? I mean, all these are feelings. How would it feel if you had an experience of greater abundance? Like, what would that feel like? How would it feel if you experienced greater joy?

So this week ... You ready for your homework? This week ... [Laughs] Now, is this permission that you just get to be a jerk as long as you do it lovingly? No! Right? The real work is: I want you to be so clear about what you want your primary feeling to be in life. What do you want your primary feeling to be? And I want you to practice that this week.

You want more love? Joy? Peace? Abundance? Whatever it is. And I want you to see if you can get into the feeling of that, and resonate with that and expand that, and really allow that to be the way that you show up in your life. That you are pure love, pure joy, pure good, pure God. Whatever the feeling is, that's what I want from you.

You ready? Let's take it into prayer.

So I want you to take a deep breath for a moment. And of all the things that you could feel, what is the feeling that you would choose for yourself? Do you want to feel more loved? Do you want to feel more successful? Do you want to feel more at peace? Do you want to feel more alive? Do you want to feel more joy?

Today, I want you to practice being the feeling that you want. And whatever that feeling is, I want you to see that feeling being broadcast from you in the greatest possible way. That joy just goes out to everyone: family, friends, neighbors. Or if it's love, that you just broadcast love just as wide as you can. Or success; if you want to feel more successful, that you just broadcast the feeling of success in greater and greater ways than you ever had before.

Peace, love, success, aliveness, health. I want you to take on the feeling, and then I want you to broadcast it to everyone around you. That you become the living expression of that. That you can feel that love, that joy, that peace so profoundly within yourself that you are being the original cause of your life.

God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." The moment you decide who you want to be, and are willing to broadcast that to the world, you are that.

In the name and through the power of God, of the living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.