

FAITH

Week #19 of an ongoing series on "Unity's Foundational Teachings"

Wednesday, May 29, 2024

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So tonight, I want to talk about your life path. And the question that I want to start with tonight is: Do you see your life path? Like, when you look at your life, do you see the path that you've been living through the course of your life?

Sometimes it's actually easier to look backwards; like, you can think, *"Well, I was here; and now I'm here; and then I went to there."* You can kind of see the path. And the point is, tonight: I believe that every soul makes a decision with the infinite Intelligence before they come into physical form and a path for their life is created.

Now, I'm not saying that this is preordained, because we all have complete free will. So, at any point, if you don't want to stay on your path, you can go try out anybody else's path. And you can probably think of maybe a time in your life where you were actually living somebody else's path. Can you think of a time in your life where you kind of decided that, *"Maybe I'll just live their path for a while"*? And then you kind of come to yourself and you realize, *"Oh, that's not my path at all. My path is over here,"* and then you kind of move back to your path.

You know, one of the things that is sometimes written in a wedding ceremony is that *"there are two people but one path before you."* No. No! Right? Just because you're making a life commitment to love that person; to adore that person; to find their behavior always absolutely fabulous ... [Congregants laugh] Your path and their path; there's never one path. They can be beside your path. You can walk each other's path; you can walk ... but you always have your own path.

Sometimes we, in our ego: we kind of want to get off our path. But our path is always the highest good that we can do in this lifetime. It is the greatest for our soul's evolution. So, part of tonight, what I want to talk about is really opening the space to ask Spirit to reveal your path to you. So that you see it. So you clearly see the path that you're on, and you can actually align with it.

Because what allows us to walk our path ... Now, think about this! This path is the very best for you: the highest level of good; the greatest joy, the greatest ... It is the highest level of good for you. So, what allows us to walk that path? And I'd like to suggest tonight; I believe that it's faith. That we actually have to have faith to keep walking our path, because sometimes our path gets hard. Sometimes it's challenging. Sometimes we think, *"No; there's got to be an easier path. I'd rather they go walk their path for a while, because their path is ... looks like they're having a lot more fun with their path."*

But faith is the thing that allows us to keep rising to higher and higher levels of good. And faith actually gives us the strength. It gives us the will. It gives us the understanding. It gives us the blessing. Faith gives us the power to forgive. Faith is the thing that allows us to be the best version of us.

Faith is the thing that allows us to attain the highest level of good that God has for each and every one of us. And it actually takes faith to believe that you can be that blessed. It takes faith to think that your life could be that good. It takes faith to know that the power in you is greater than any situation. It takes faith to -- day after day -- get up and be the most amazing version of yourself.

See, what I want us to talk about tonight is written about in Hebrews 11:

"Now, faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the convictions of things not yet seen. For by it the men of old received divine approval. By faith we understand that the world was created out of the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of those things that do not yet appear."

So, what I want you to see is that faith is actually the power that allows us to create out of the unseen infinite presence of God.

And faith can be a two-edged sword, because your faith can either create the greatest -- your greatest heart's desire -- or it can create a very scary life. Because whatever you have faith in, you're actually calling into experience; calling into expression; calling into your reality.

Anybody remember the movie, "The Gladiator"? I think it came out in 2000 with Russell Crowe. And he played Maximus. And one of the opening scenes is: he's on this giant horse; he's got his people behind him; and he's leading them into battle. Right? And one of the things he does is: gives them this talk before he leads them into battle. And in this talk he says, *"Imagine yourself three weeks from now, in your home, with your family, experiencing your life."*

That is an activity of faith-building! Because in the moment where the troops are right in front of them, he wants them to actually have a vision that is three weeks further down from their path on the life that he wants them to have. Because where was their focus? On the scary people in front of them.

How many of us know that we have, sometimes have the tendency to focus on the scary thing in front of us? And when we're focused on the scary thing in front of us, where is our faith? *"Well, they could eat me!"* Right? *"They could literally eat me. I could not make it. I might not make it through this day! This day may take me out."*

And he says to them, *"Move your focus."* He doesn't really say this, but it's implied. He says, *"Move your focus off of this moment and create an image of where you want to be three weeks from now and live into that."*

See, sometimes we think that's naive. We think it's simplistic. *"No; no! We've got to deal with reality. The reality is: there are scary men in front of me that want to kill me."*

Okay, you can focus on that. Right? You can allow your fears to overtake you and allow that situation that you're in right now to become greater and greater until all you can see is the problem right in front of you.

But the Scripture says, *"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not yet seen. For by it the men of old received divine approval. By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen is made out of the things which do not yet appear."*

Like, to get to the other side of that -- three weeks down the road on their path -- they had to be willing to see beyond the temporary scary situation. That's what faith does for us. It gives us the power to create the world that we envision and to draw the infinite spiritual substance to that vision. And then we step into it.

See, we always believe what we see. We do! We always believe what we see. The question is: What are you seeing in this moment? Are you seeing the thing that's right in front of you? Or are you seeing the reality, the experience, the life that you want to be living? But we'll believe it if we see it! And, in our mind, we have the ability to either see what is right in front of us or to create the image that is the highest and the best for us.

So, what do you see? Do you see the life that you want? Or do you see the life that's scaring you?

From *Daily Word*, from just a few days ago, from May 23rd, we read this:

"From a place of spiritual clarity, I see the world as it can be, not as it is. I hold the high watch for each member of my human family. I see their divinity; I see their wholeness; I see their spiritual right to live as a free child of God."

And I want you to see that this power is our superpower! That faith is the power we have that allows us to go beyond wherever we've been before.

And sometimes in life, we get so used to seeing our limitations that it keeps drawing us back and back into the smallness of life. But we have to be willing to look up beyond the limitations and to see a possibility that is greater than we've seen before, and to actually put our focus there until we can develop the faith to live into that life.

And imagination is the power that activates faith.

What you see actually activates your faith. And many of us look at imagination as a human quality. Like that *"My brain, my mind is creating these images and imagination, and that it's simply a human activity."* I don't believe that. I believe that imagination ... Charles Fillmore said it was a divine activity. That it's actually God dropping into your consciousness a vision: a possibility that is greater than we can imagine.

So, what are you imagining? How have you opened your mind to the ideas of God so that God can drop one great idea after another into your mind, and that you hold it with the power of faith. You hold it with your vision. Charles Fillmore said it this way:

"Faith is the perceiving power of mind linked with the power to shape substance."

I want you to hear that!

It is "the perceiving power of mind linked with the power of shaping substance. Infinite spiritual substance."

So whatever you hold in mind, infinite spiritual substance is gathering around that and creating that as your next greatest reality.

"It is spiritual substance, the power to do the seemingly impossible. It is a magnetic power that draws unto us our heart's desire from the invisible spiritual substance."

Now he said it three times, right? I think he wanted to make a point. Like. there is this infinite spiritual substance that actually waits for us to hold a vision! And it gathers around.

How many of you have heard at least a little bit about subatomic physics. Right? Sub particle physics? And what we know about this is that, whatever the person observing that sub particle matter -- it either acted as a particle or a wave based on that person that was observing it. Right?

So, at the smallest level of the universe, it is paying attention to what you are seeing. And what you are seeing is gathering more and more spiritual energy into that reality.

So, if you're not enjoying what you're looking at, change the image! Change what you're looking at! Use the power of imagination to create the life that you desire! And invest that much energy into it, night and day, as Scripture says. Right?

"Faith is more than a belief," Fillmore says. "It is the very substance of that which you believe. It works by love. Thoughts of condemnation and resistance must be released and divine love declared; then faith will work unhindered."

Faith working in spiritual substance accomplishes all things. This is the faith that cooperates with creative law, divine law. When faith is exercised deep in spiritual consciousness, it finds an abode with the underlying divine law without variation or disappointment, and it brings that result in a seemingly miraculous way."

Like, this is real stuff!

So what world do you look at? Do you spend 10, 15 minutes an hour a day envisioning the world you want to live in? Or do you spend 10 or 15 or 20 minutes a day worrying about the world that you see? Because both are acts of faith! Both are creating a reality! You're either using your vision in a direction that you want it to go -- that will gather spiritual substance around it to create the life you want -- or you're using your faith to gather around a life that just scares ... and this is a spiritual term ... the bejeebers out of you. [Congregants laugh]

Like, what do you want? And it's amazing to me that sometimes we don't believe that we can find 20 minutes a day to envision the life we want. It's amazing to me! That we would rather work 24 hours in a life that we don't enjoy sometimes than invest 20 minutes in a vision and holding a vision of healing or transformation or abundance or health or relationships. To invest 20 minutes a day envisioning the life that you want.

Because your faith is going to work. One way or another, whatever you focus on, you are empowering. So what do you want to see? That's really the question. What do you want your world to look like? Let's hold it in vision. Let's actually add power to it!

This is the last quote I want to share from Charles Fillmore. He said:

"Do not fear the power that works out things in the invisible. When you get a strong perception of something that your inner mind tells you is true and good, act on it and your demonstration will come. That is the way a living faith works. It is the law of the creative word. That faith is the power that allows us to change the unchangeable."

And I want you to look at your life right now and see if there's any aspect of your life that you've been struggling with that feels unchangeable, whether it's in your health or your finances or in your relationship. Any aspect of your life that feels that you've been frustrated; hasn't changed or moved or been transformed yet.

And I want you to actually begin to use the power of your faith for 15, 20 minutes a day. Just begin to envision the world; the life that you want; the finances you want; the health that you want; the relationship you want; the world that you want. Begin to envision it and, as you envision it, it actually forms and shapes substance!

Matthew 17, 14. When they came to the crowd, a man came up to him, me, and Matthew 17:14:

"When they came to the crowd, a man came up to him ..."

Meaning Jesus.

"... and knelt before him, and said, 'Lord, have mercy on my son, he's an epileptic and he suffers terribly. And he often falls into the fire and often into the water. And I brought him to your disciples, and they could not help him.'

And Jesus rebuked the demon ..."

Or the condition or the situation.

"He rebuked the situation, the condition. And it came out of him and the boy was cured instantly.

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, 'Whaaaaat?'"

No, it doesn't really say that, but I thought ... [Congregants laugh] It's how I would have done it!

"'What? Why can we not cast it out?'"

And he said, 'Because you have little faith. For truly I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will be moved and nothing will be impossible to you.'"

I want you to hear that! Nothing is impossible to you! But you/we actually have to have the discipline to hold a vision -- a greater vision for our life, for our world -- and actually live into that greater vision by believing in that more than our current experience.

And you get a choice. But I'm telling you, your fears are powerful. Your fears actually demonstrate what you truly believe. If you believe that the scary thing in front of you is more powerful than the presence of God, you're actually empowering your fears. You have more faith in your fears than you have in the creative power of God to create a new version of your life!

Twenty minutes a day. Twenty minutes a day for you to see a new reality in your life; to change what has never been changeable before.

See, this is our superpower! This is our ability to change the matter and the experience and the reality that we know into a reality that is far greater than anything we've lived before.

"Well, Richard, it's just a daydream." No!!! It's the creative power of God!

Let me go back:

"By it the men of old received divine approval. By faith we understand the world was created out of the word of God so that what was seen was made out of those things that do not yet appear."

"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for. It is the conviction of things not yet seen. The conviction of things not yet seen."

I want you to use this power. I want you to truly use this power for the betterment of yourself, your family, and the world. If the world isn't looking the way you think is highest and the best, change your vision! If your life is not out picturing all the good that you can imagine, change your vision! If your relationships, your finances, your health are not at the optimum level that you can imagine, change your vision and see a possibility that God will freely give you if you're willing to be disciplined enough to hold that vision over and over again until you believe it.

"I am ready to be changed."

Will you say that with me? [With congregation:] *"I am ready to be changed."*

One more time like we mean it: {With congregation:] *"I am ready to be changed."*

Pray with me:

And I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to the activity of God. That, tonight, we open to that divine possibility -- the possibility of faith -- and to use our faith in a conscious, deliberate way. To focus our faith three weeks from now -- on the life that we desire for ourselves; six months from now, and to see a possibility that we've never fully lived into. To know that health and love and abundance are available to all of God's children. But we have to have this faith to see it; to claim it; to be it.

Thank you, God, for faith. Thank you, God, for a vision of my life and a vision of the world that is greater than I've ever lived before. But with God, I believe that's possible. And, with God, I have the discipline to hold that vision in mind until that becomes my new reality. In the name and through the power of the living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.