

ONENESS

Rev. Richard Rogers

Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2024

Would you be okay if, tonight, I made you uncomfortable? [Congregants murmur and laugh] I'm just warning you, right? [Congregants laugh] Because I want to talk about the way you're praying. Because I'm going to challenge you to maybe be willing to look at the way you're praying in a new way.

So, when you pray, how do you do that? How do you do it? I mean, do you seek or ask or beg or borrow that Big Daddy come over here -- Big Daddy God come over here -- and save you from your miserable existence? Right? Is that your prayer formula? The more pathetic you sound, the more God's going to take mercy upon your soul, and finally give you that red Ferrari that you've been praying around all these years? [Congregants laugh] Right?

Because how we pray is very much defined by how we see God. Right? If God is up there -- "out there" in the universe somewhere -- then you'd better be a loud prayer. You'd better pray loud and often, because God's getting old and he's hard of hearing. And you need to make sure that your prayers get up to wherever God is, because you know that you are really separate and apart from God. And God's pretty far away, and God needs to hear your request. So, we pray loud; we pray often. And the idea is that we've got to make that gap. We've got to have a little bridge. Right?

But we often hear around here that God is within us. *"Oh yeah, but what does that mean?"* If God is really within me, then do I pray the same way?

Because one of the things that's different about Unity -- and I don't want us to back away from this difference -- is that we see prayer really fundamentally differently. When we pray, it's not about asking Big Daddy God to come and save us. But it's about acknowledging that the prayer and power of God is within us all! That we pray in acknowledgement that God is within me.

It's like, *"I don't believe that. God within me? Seriously, really? No, God's got to be out there, because I'm no good. I'm flawed. I'm broken. I'm less than. So, God better be out there because I don't sure how that perfection could live inside of me."*

But really, the process of prayer actually moves us into a state of realization of oneness.

So, what if you were willing to pray in a way where you were no longer separate from God? That God was no longer outside of you, but with every prayer you're acknowledging your oneness with God?



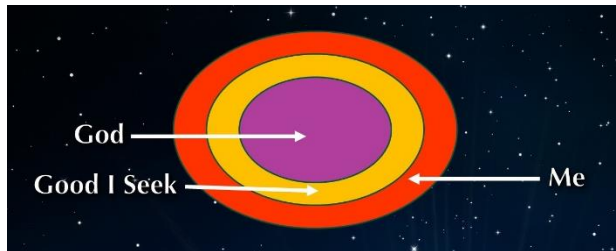
Let's, can we shoot that up there? Is that up there: the slide? It is now? Good; okay. So, it's like if this is our worldview, right? That God's somewhere out there in the universe; here's a little old me in the middle; and then the good that I seek is also outside of me. Right? So when I pray from the

traditional way we look at prayer, I'm trying to get God -- or the good I seek that is definitely outside of me because it's not within me -- I'm trying to get that good stuff in me: in my driveway, in my garage, so that I can drive my new red Ferrari around town. [Congregants laugh] Right?

But I want you to see that we pray, and when we pray like this, we really deeply profoundly feel that God is outside of ourselves. And so, when we pray, we're praying to this deity "out there" somewhere that's going to save us.

And what if it's not that way? And what if this radical thought that God is within me actually causes me to pray in a different way?

So let's go to the next slide.



What if all three of us -- God, self, and the good that I seek -- is all within me? What if it really is within me? What if every good thing, what if every blessing of God, what if God, the Holy Presence, is within me and all around me? And what if my job in prayer is to acknowledge that it's already within me?

Would that change your prayer life if your prayer life was acknowledging that God and infinite good is already within you? So, you're not praying to get it; you're not praying so that God finally hears you; but prayer then is the acknowledgement that you are already one with God and one with every good thing you have ever sought. With every good thing that you've ever desired; with every good thing! And we begin to change the way we pray.

And so, we begin to pray acknowledging that it's already within us. And we might not be experiencing it at the level or the way that we want to, but it's the realization that it's already within me. So, whatever you're asking for -- whatever you're praying about, whatever the desire is, whatever the longing or the wanting may be -- when we start from that mindset that, in reality, it's already within us, it literally changes the way we pray.

Because to pray that it's continually outside of us just continues to create the mindset that we are separate from God; that we are separate from our good; and that we're always in the striving state to try to get the good what we want. But it's always out of our reach!

How many of you have ever experienced that in your own life? Feeling like the good that you desire: it can't be within you, because it's always just outside your reach? It's always just "out there"? And if I could pray a little better, a little louder, maybe a little more consistently, God would cut me some slack and finally just drive it into my garage. [Congregants laugh]

Then I could be a happy little man driving around in my little Ferrari. Happy little man. Right? Upsetting the neighbors that the minister is driving around a Ferrari; that would upset them.

Everything I want is already within me.

Together: [with congregants] *"Everything I want is already within me."*

So, there's this book; it's a new book from Unity called *Discover Your Divinity*. And the whole premise of this book is to invite us to pray in a new way. You know, many of us who've been in Unity for a length of time understand affirmative prayer. And in this little book, she takes it to a whole other level. She invites us to look at affirmative prayer in a brand new way so that we're actually affirming what is true instead of reaching out and trying to grasp what always just feels like is outside of our reach.

In affirmative prayer, we actually acknowledge that that which we seek -- God, blessings, health, wholeness, abundance -- that which we seek is already within us! That we were designed for oneness.

Now, if I was God ... thank God I'm not! If I was God, it would be a little annoying to me everybody's praying for me -- to me -- to save them, and all the while I put everything within them.

It's like, *"Whaaaaaaat? I gave you everything! It's already within you! You're connected to the full infinite Presence and Power of the universe. It's within you! Quit praying to me for it, because you already have*

it! Let's focus on what you have and stop looking outside yourself for more and more stuff, and begin to actually pray in acknowledgement that whatever you seek -- whatever you desire -- you have access to because it's already within you!"

That we are already 100% completely one with God. [Congregant: "Amen!"] Thank you.

Reading from this little book, page 10.

"Affirmative prayer is a completely different form of prayer. The teaching of oneness -- meaning that there is only one divine power, and therefore God and humanity are one in absolute Truth -- changes prayer. Rather than presuming the power we seek is outside and separate from us, affirmative prayer empowers us to respond to life's circumstances by drawing upon the Truth of oneness. We can recognize, claim and embody the fullness of our divinity in the midst of the human experience. The Truth we affirm is the reality of God as the one and only power behind all that is. The truth is that we are one and there's only one power within us, and that power is God."

From *The Revealing Word*, she quotes:

"Prayer is more than supplication. It is the affirmation of Truth that has eternally existed, which has not yet come into our conscious awareness. It comes in a consciousness, not by supplication, but by affirmation."

I am one with God.

Will you say that with me?

[With congregation:] *"I am one with God."*

I am one with all that God is.

Together: [with congregation] *"I am one with all that God is."*

Now, if we're always praying for that Presence and Power outside of us to save us, it keeps us from ever feeling the full connection and presence and power of God. If we're always praying to a God "out there," we never realize that it's already within us.

And our prayer is actually one of the most powerful tools that we have for experiencing oneness.

I am one with everything I seek.

Together: [with congregation] *"I am one with everything I seek."*

One more time: *"I am one with everything I seek."*

I am one with pure health.

Together: [with congregation] *"I am one with pure health."*

I am one with infinite wisdom.

Together: [with congregation] *"I am one with infinite wisdom."*

I am one with all the good that God is.

Together: [with congregation] *"I am one with all the good that God is."*

See, over and over again, what I want us to see is that, as we come to the realization -- the spiritual realization, if you will -- that we were created in the image and likeness of God ... That God is completely and totally not only within us, but all around us ... That if we continue to pray in the old form that many of us were given from childhood, we actually deny the spiritual truth that is life-changing. The truth is

that God is right where you are! And if God is right where you are, everything that God is, is already right where you are; we just don't see it! Jesus said, *"The kingdom of heaven is all around you, and men see it not."*

You know, my usual joke is that's because all the ladies do. [Congregants laugh] That's why we don't stop for directions, right?

And the idea is it's already there.

And so, tonight, what I want us to look at is those times when we want to be saved by a God outside of us. It's taking us out of our oneness with God, which is our greatest gift. Our greatest gift is that you are created in the image and likeness of God! And no matter where you go; no matter what you're doing; no matter where you are in any event of your life, you are one with God. And as we claim that through affirmative prayer, we actually move our life into greater and greater ways.

On page 17. And I really ... I could read this whole book to you tonight. I know they have copies of it in the bookstore, so I'm not going to read you the whole book tonight. But this is so important! Not that we're just doing affirmations. How many of you have heard of affirmations? Right? We've all heard of affirmations, right?

You do affirmations, and it's like ... but then when it's time to get down to prayer, let's pray. Right? And when we start to pray, then the focus goes from affirming your oneness with God to praying to a God outside of you.

And I want us to see tonight that we can't have it both ways. We can't be fully blessed and keep praying to a God outside of ourselves, instead of acknowledging the presence and power of God that's within us.

[Reading from the book]:

"Affirmative prayer is the anchor in our divine humanity."

Can I read that line again because I love it?!?

"Affirmative prayer is the anchor in our divine humanity. It asks us to move past petitioning, begging, pleading, or trying to get God to do something for us. It is about our own awakening to what we are capable of being and doing in the world when we remember our spiritual identity."

What if the way we keep praying actually keeps us stuck? The thing that is supposed to be moving us forward and blessing us and changing our life, and transforming everything in our life, may be one of the reasons we feel so stuck ... Because we still keep moving God "out there." And it's not until God is firmly, completely within us -- and we are calling it forth -- that we begin to see transformation.

This is what Jesus said, Matthew 6:5:

"When you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites."

Not us! [Congregants laugh]

"You must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners, that they may be seen by men. For truly I say to you, you've received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father, who is in secret; and your Father who sees you in secret will reward you."

I want you to see that. That we're not here to use lots of words ... and pretty words and powerful words ... and big words or small words. We're here to go quietly into the inner chamber -- into our inner relationship with God -- and speak the truth that we know that we are one with God.

I am whole, I am healthy, I am blessed.

When we speak the truth -- when you stand and know that you or one with that living presence and power of God, and you do it from that innermost place -- you're not about big outer expressions; it's about knowing the truth in the innermost place of your soul.

Jesus goes on:

"And in praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think they will be heard for their words. But do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

So what do we need? We need our relationship with God! We need all that God is! We need to tap into that infinite reservoir of God's good and bring it into our life; that we are in the process of transformation.

See, what I want you to see is that there's an activity of a prayer. And the first step in the activity of prayer -- the first motion of prayer -- is to **be open to new possibilities**. Right? That when we move into that mindset of prayer, to really be open to a new experience; to a new activity; to something brand new that we've never seen before.

The second step is the **recognition that God is**. God is infinite. God is good. But, most importantly, God is where? Within me! And the good I seek is where? Within me!

The third step is the **integration** of that. And the integration of that God is: I AM. When I say I AM one with the infinite goodness of God; when I AM one with God's healing power, when I AM one with God's infinite abundance; when I AM one ... I acknowledge that God and I are one. And in that moment, we have achieved oneness! We've achieved that which we desire. We've received the answer to prayer already.

The fourth step then, in this prayer process is the **realization** of I can; I have; I know. That you've already received that which you seek. You seek abundance: I have. If you seek a new possibility: I can. If you seek greater wisdom; I know.

And then the fifth step is to **appreciate the shift in consciousness**. *"Oh, I didn't think I had it. I didn't think it was right there. I never realized that the Infinite was right here: right where I am."*

And then you rejoice and you give thanks that you've never been separate from God. That wherever you are; wherever you're about; whatever you're doing; the fullness of God is right there.

I am one with all that God is.

Will you see that with me? [With congregation:] *"I am one with all that God is."*

One more time, like we mean it: [with congregation] *"I am one with all that God is."*

I am one with infinite goodness.

Together: [with congregation] *"I am one with infinite goodness."*

I am richly blessed.

Together: [with congregation] *"I am richly blessed."*

I am whole and healthy in every way.

Together: [with congregation] *"I am whole and healthy in every way."*

All that I need comes to me now.

Together: [with congregations] *"All that I need comes to me now."*

And I want you to see, over and over again, that just changing the focus of our prayer life allows us to be more blessed than we can even imagine.

Tonight, if you hear just one thing, every time you pray, don't go "out there." Don't go "out there!" Because the good news -- the real spiritual good news -- is that God is right here. Right where you are

And when you find God here, you are forever different. Because you're no longer reaching. You're no longer striving. You're no longer needy. You're no longer broken. Because the glory of God is within you.

I am one with all that God is.

Together: [with congregation] *"I am one with all that God is."*

So, what I want you to see tonight is that I literally want you to change your prayer life. I want you to put the focus that you and God are already one. And it was designed that way from the beginning of time.

And that, whatever the need; whatever the situation; whatever the condition is that you want to pray about, I want you to acknowledge that the goodness that you seek is already within you. Because God is already within you. And God is infinite. And all things are possible. And as we begin to pray differently, we feel the presence of God more fully and deeply in our lives.

I am one with all that God is.

Will you say that with me? [With congregation:] *"I am one with all that God is."*

Pray with me.

Tonight, we acknowledge the truth that we are one with all that God is. And that whatever you seek is already within you. Whatever the need, whatever the challenge, whatever the problem, the infinite Spirit of God is already within you and is opening the door to a blessing so full, so great, so amazing that you will have everything you need and more.

I am one with all that God is.

I am one with all that God is.

Everything that I seek is already within me, because I am one with God.

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