

THE SILENCE

Week #8 of a series on "Unity's Foundational Teachings"

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So what do you know about Silent Unity? What do you know about Silent Unity? Silent Unity is Unity's 24 hours a day prayer ministry that has been going on for 143 years: the longest organized prayer ministry in the country. And it is organized.

And it started first as ... And I'm going to just show a little bit of its history tonight. Because what I want to do in this series throughout this year is talk about Unity fundamentals. And I want to go back to those things that are just where we start. Because I think for some of us, knowing the power of where we began really allows us to go to the next level.

So Silent Unity started out as a prayer ministry that people would gather, originally, in Myrtle Fillmore -- our co-founder's -- kitchen table, and she would pray with him. And then it became the silent prayer ministry. And then it became a phone ministry. And the number now is 1-800-NOW-PRAY.

I'm going to give you your homework right now. If you've never called Silent Unity, I want you to call Silent Unity this week. And I want you to just have them pray with you about anything. It could be anything. And I want you just to align yourself with that prayer ministry and feel what that's like to have someone pray with you about anything.

Because you may not feel like you need it this week. But I guarantee there's going to be a point in your life where you absolutely feel like you want somebody to pray with you because it seems too big or too scary or too overwhelming. And you want to know that somebody will pray with you about whatever is going on in your life. And in my experience, once you've called it when you don't need it, it makes it easier to call when you do need it, right?

So I want you to call Silent Unity; it's in Unity Village, Missouri, which is just outside of Kansas City, where the Unity Movement started. And I want you to call this week, 1-800-NOW-PRAY, and I want you just to let them pray with you. And I want you to feel that it's not scary. Like, and you don't have to say the right thing; you can just say, "My minister said I had to call you and pray with you." [Congregation laughs] "So my life is perfect in every way, but maybe we could pray for this person, or that person, or pray for my health, or pray for my job, or pray for the country" ... or whatever you want to pray with. But I want you to actually experience having somebody pray with you.

Because you know in this ministry with our prayer chaplains, we're committed to praying with you every week. Every week! Like, somebody is here -- dedicated to be here -- so that if you need prayer support, you have it. And this all started back in ... I'm going to read from *Unity Magazine* -- *Thought Magazine* -- from April of 1890. 1890: 143 years ago.

In the April of 1890 issue of "Thought Magazine," Myrtle Fillmore announced the opening of a new department that she called the Society of Silent Help. She wrote:

"All over the land are persons yearning for truth, yet so dominated by the surrounding error that they find it almost impossible without helping hands to come into harmony with divine Spirit. To open a way for those to help overcome their sins, ills and troubles is the object of the Society of Silent Help. The wonderful success of absent healing demonstrates that bodily presence is not necessary for those in spiritual harmony. Jesus said, 'Where two or more agree about anything, it is done for them by the Father who is in heaven.' For those who have experienced in asking, understandingly know that this is absolutely true.

"Hence, a little band in this city ..."

Meaning Kansas City ...

"... have agreed to meet in silent soul communion every night at 10 o'clock for all those who are in trouble, sickness, poverty, or who sincerely desire the help of the Good Father.

"Whoever may join in this society, the only requirement being that members shall sit in quiet, retired place, if possible, at the hour of 10 o'clock every night, and hold in silent thought, for not less than 15 minutes, the words that shall be given each month by the editor of this department. The difference in the solar time between widely separated place will not materially interfere with the results, for in Spirit there is no time or place. Hence, each member should sit at 10 p.m. local time."

The words that were given to be held in silent thought every night at 10 o'clock from April 15th to May 15th, 1890 were these: "God is all goodness, everywhere present. He is the loving Father and I am His child and have all His attributes of life, love, truth and intelligence. In Him is all health and strength and wisdom and harmony. And as his child, all these become mine through the recognition of truth that God is all."

This is exactly what the first members of Silent Unity of Silent Help did. They became quiet and meditated on the idea of God until that idea became a living reality in their minds and hearts. They felt Him as a living presence in themselves. And when they had gained a sense of oneness with Him, they affirmed that His goodness was being brought forth in their minds, bodies and affairs. They made their affirmations for one another. They made their affirmations for whoever asked for special prayers. If someone during the day asked one of this little band to pray with him, they would all speak their name and declare the truth for him. That is, they affirmed his oneness with the goodness of God, and health and love and harmony were then established.

I want you to really hear the spiritual foundation that we stand on in this Unity movement. Because the results are absolutely transformative. You know, there was a transformation, as I talked about last weekend. If you weren't here last week, I invite you to go back and listen to last week. Because the power of being established in our oneness with God is transformative.

Myrtle Fillmore went on to say this:

"A period of quiet and rest each day is your opportunity to establish yourself at the center of your being, the one place where the supply of life and substance is inexhaustible. God is the eternal life that we make into living."

And I want you to hear that statement: God is the eternal life that we make into living. And I want you to really hear that! Because if God is infinite supply – if God is infinite Life -- we make it ours. Like, because we have free will, we actually take hold of that infinite, inexhaustible resource and we manifest it into our lives. And that's what the Fillmores – that's what these early pioneers in spiritual understanding – that's what they learned: is that God is infinite, but they had to have the wisdom and the intelligence to actually use that power for their highest and best good. To lay hold of the infinite, and to manifest it in their lives.

She goes on, and this is from Myrtle Fillmore's *Healing Letters*:

"Each day you should have a period of stillness when your soul may gather sustaining power and restoring life. God gives freely; but it is up to us to keep the receiving channels open, to keep attuned to the realities so that our intellect does not take us out among the limited ideas of the world.

“The manifest man must have the sustenance that can only come from within. We should not draw the strings of the instrument of Spirit so tightly that the music of our soul cannot be fully expressed. But this is what living in the world without withdrawing into that secret place looks like.”

So how many of you remember having a transistor radio? Anybody? Now, when you had your transistor radio, do you remember dialing it in? Right? And it was kind of ... it was almost ... it was more art than science, right? And you know, if you wanted to listen to the ball game or you wanted to listen to music, whatever it was, you had to kind of dial it in. You had to kind of find your station. And any of us who have taken a road trip know the joys of having to dial in a radio as you drove from state to state to state, and looking for the next station ... trying to dial it in so that you could hear it. And then when the sun set and the power changed, it was like, “Wow!” And, you know, everybody ... it was fabulous, right?

And I want you to see that, for many of us, this is part of our spiritual life: is learning to dial in God. And when we take time in the silence, we actually learn to dial in God so that we are open and receptive to the infinite flow of God in our life.

From Canyon Ranch, the resort down in Tucson ... In their publication, they quote a Catholic nun who's also a Zen master, Elaine MacInnes. And she writes this: *“Silence is the vehicle that takes us to the innermost center of our being, which is the place of all authentic practice.”*

You know, Unity: we had this idea, right? That we could actually have a direct experience of God and touch the infinite reservoir of God's good.

Unity has a five-step healing process that allows us to anchor into that Presence. And the first step in this process is called **RELAX**. To set aside time each day for prayer, begin by quieting your mind and relaxing your body; opening your mind to the awareness of God. Breathe deeply, knowing that you are in the presence of God, and the presence of God is within you. Let go of all concerns and know all is well.

The second step is **CONCENTRATION**. As you close your eyes and relax your thoughts of the world around you, begin to think about God -- about God's presence in your life. Focus your mind on that single thought or idea or Scripture that resonates with you. Repeat this idea over and over again, silently or even aloud, until it becomes your only thought.

MEDITATE. Step three. Allow this focused state of mind to move you into a deeper awareness of God. *“Be still and know that I am God.”* Be still as you concentrate on God's divine presence within you.

And then step four is **REALIZATION**. From the depth of your being, know that you are one with God. This knowing -- this realization of this experience of God's holy presence in silent soul communion -- is the receptive state of mind and heart when you listen for the inspiration and the guidance and answered prayer.

And then the fifth step is **GIVE THANKS**. Let gratitude be your heart's joyous response to the experience of communion with God and God's infinite goodness. Give thanks for the blessings that come and be ready to receive the good.

You know, there used to be an expression in Unity. And we used to say: *“take something to prayer.”* Right? You've heard that? Take something to prayer. And it was this idea that, if there was a need or a problem or a challenge, you would actually take it into prayer. And not just ask God to fix it or heal it or bless it ... But you would actually take it into prayer until you realized that what you were holding in prayer was actually already done.

Everybody knows what a Venn diagram is, right? [Laughs] Yeah, I can hear the ... Right? Venn diagram, okay? Now, I want you to think about: This first circle is your desire, right? The second circle really isn't a circle at all, and it's God's infinite good. Okay? When we take something into prayer -- when we go into

the silence -- we take a desire, and we take it into the infinite goodness of God until there's a realization that that desire is already done. Right? Now you think, *"Well, what if it's not God's will for you to have the healing or the abundance?"* or whatever it is you're taking into prayer.

The thing that happens as you go through that process of prayer -- as you go through that step, as you're taking that desire into the infinite -- there's a part of you, at this point, that has to surrender how you think it's going to go. True? So when you get to this thing where you take it into the infinite goodness of God -- when you take it into infinite Source, when you take it to God -- there's a point where your desire and God's infinite goodness connect. And you actually realize, first, that it's already done. And sometimes the realization is: what you thought was the best that it could ever be isn't close to how good God wants to show up in your life. And you realize that your desire was way too small!

And as you take it into the Infinite, and you see the good, you feel it's more ... You see it; you feel it; you know it as you experience that place, that connection. And in Unity, we call this "The Silence."

I'm going to go right in that little spot. But we call that "The Silence." And "The Silence" in Unity is that place where we know that we know that we know that the healing has already happened.

See, most of us learn to pray by asking God for things. Right? That's how most of us learn to pray. We go to Big Daddy God; we say, *"Cut me some slack; write me a check; heal my friend"* ... whatever it is. Right? We go to Big Daddy God and we ask for whatever it is we want.

Unity has a very different approach. Unity's approach is: you take it to God and you actually experience the healing within yourself. You actually experience it within God. And you're not asking God to do something; you're actually realizing that that healing has already -- is fully possible. And the moment you see it in the Infinite, you know that it's already done. And then when you know it's already done, then that final step is just gratitude. Because you're not always sure when or how or where, but you know that you know that you know that it's done.

And that's such a radical change for the way that most of us have been taught to pray. Because most of us have been taught to pray to go outside ourselves; to ask God to fix it, instead of taking it deeper within our soul to realize, *"Oh, it's already ours."*

Jesus said, *"The kingdom of heaven is within you."* It's already been given to you. That, whatever you seek in prayer, it's already within you. you. So we take the limitation, we take the desire, we take the want, we take the need -- whether it's healing or abundance or relationship -- we take that within until it's realized. And then we just feel the joy and we go out living with greater joy and confidence because it's already ours.

And this is the piece that I think, like, that we're kind of missing in Unity churches today: is the piece that we're not really helping people go deep enough within themselves to get the realization that the founders knew how to do so fully and completely. That we're back to asking God to fix it. And that's not what the Fillmores taught. The Fillmores taught to go in: go within your soul and see it done.

These are the words of Charles Fillmore and Cora Fillmore, his second wife. After Myrtle passed, he remarried -- Cora Fillmore.

"By quieting the mental man, and by passing through the discipline of intellectual silence ..."

Right? By quieting the mental man and passing through the discipline of intellectual silence ... like learning to have the discipline to quiet your mind ...

"... man arrives at the very threshold of God's workshop, the threshold of Being. As he passes into this inner chamber, he finds he is entering the holy of holies, where noiselessly, silently a mighty work is always going on, but where there is neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard. God works in the stillness.

"As man comes into the presence of God with his prayer in the form of an affirmation of truth, holding the prayer steady in mind and consciously unifying his mind with the mind of God, he is aware only of the soundlessness of God's word as it weaves itself in and through the whole soul and body consciousness: Illuminating, redeeming, restoring him according to his faith and trust; according to his strength and power to receive.

"This is quite the unfoldment. In this spiritual silence, man's realization is established in his heart, and he has the assurance that his prayer is answered and that the Law of Demonstration will bring forth its fruits."

That's powerful ...! Sorry. That's powerful stuff! I mean, that is powerful stuff. To stand and know that whatever the need, whatever the challenge, whatever the problem isn't going out there in the world and fixing it or solving it or even goal setting. And it's not to ask Big Daddy God to come in and save you. But it's to take it into the deepest place within your soul and realize that the infinite goodness of God is within all of us. And whatever the need, whatever the concern, whatever the desire ... as you take that with you, and have that realization of realizing that you are in the presence of God's workshop and that God gets things done! And as you take it in, you will have a healing, a transformation, and then your joy is overflowing.

So are you ready for your homework? I want you to really think tonight about the thing that is the most important to you in your life. I don't care what it is. It could be a healing; it could be a relationship; it could be financial. I don't care what it is, but pick one thing. And I want you to take that into prayer. And not ask God to solve it or fix it or heal it. But to take it into the deepest place within your soul and feel the glory of God there answering your prayer.

That, as you take that deep within your soul, you will actually know that it's done. It actually expands your faith. You will know that it's done, and your joy will be overflowing.

And people will say to you, *"How do you know that it's all going to work out?"*

"Because I know!"

"How do you know you're going to have the healing or the blessing or that you're going to have the money that you need in time? How do you know that it's all going to work out?"

"Because I've seen it. I've experienced it. I've felt it within myself. I know that it's going to work out."

And when you're, you know, literally mindset, it doesn't make sense how somebody can just say, *"I just know that I know that I know that it's all going to work out."*

See, this idea of taking something into prayer was like a responsibility. Somebody asked you for prayer in Unity and you said, *"I'll take that into prayer."* You really did the inner work. You would take the time and you would sit until you saw them healed; until you know that it was done. And it was transformative; it wasn't just words. It was an experience of the allness of God.

And I believe that we have to get back to that experience of the allness of God. We need to touch the infinite goodness of God until it's real for us. And when we touch that infinite goodness of God and it becomes real for us, our faith goes through the roof. All things become possible. Everything that Jesus taught begins to make sense.

See, I believe that we have to go deeper. That we're hanging out in the shallow end of the pool, and the fun stuff happens in the deep end of the pool. And in the deep end of the pool, you actually feel the presence of God.

You ready? Take one thing this week. Take it to the deep end. Feel the infinite goodness of God and know in that moment that it is done.

Will you pray with me?

I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to the activity of God. And today we use the true power of prayer. That we ask, but not in the way that we've been taught to ask. We don't just use words to ask for what we want. We take our deepest desires back into our soul and we take them to the infinite reservoir of God's good. And there's a realization there that -- whatever you seek, whatever you desire -- God is infinite, and every good thing will be provided for you. So in the name and through the power of the living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

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