

LUCK OF THE DRAW

Week #1 of a 2-Week Series on Luck

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A woman is by her husband's side, and he has been slipping in and out of a coma for the last couple of weeks, but she's been by his bedside every single day. And one day he came to and he motioned to her to come closer. He kind of in a soft, weak voice, said, *"You know, I've realized that you've been with me through every bad experience I've ever had. When I got fired, you were there to support me."*

And she's like, *"Yes, dear; I was because I love you."*

He says, *"And when my business failed, you were there: right there by my side."*

"Yes, because I believe in you."

"And, you know, when I got shot, there you were right by my side."

"Yes, because I saw and knew that you were not going anywhere; that you were still going to be with me."

"And when we lost our house, you stayed right there."

"Yes, because our life is together."

"And when my health started to fail, you were still by my side. And you know what?" he said.

"What, dear?" she gently asked, her eyes welling with tears, her heart filled with warmth and love.

And he said, *"I'm starting to think that you're very bad luck."* [Congregants laugh]

Where's my drummer? Boom, ba-da-ding, bong, boom! Okay, that was a very bad joke, but thank you for laughing and sort of applauding. But it does set the tone for tonight and for next week, because we're going to talk about luck.

So, some of you in here might be a smidge too young to remember this song. I'm not. It was 1985 and Tina Turner came out with a song that became a classic rock-and-roll hit called "What's Love Got To Do With It." Right? You probably have all heard that song, even if you didn't hear it originally, right? "What's Love Got To Do With It?"

And, spiritually, we might answer what was -- what one word answer might we give to that question: What's love got to do with it? [Congregant: *"Everything!"*] Thank you! Oh my gosh, it's just like I told you to say that! You said it right off. [Congregant: *"You owe me!"*] Yeah, I do owe you!

So tonight, we're going to talk about... we're going to change that question with one word, and we're going to ask: What's luck got to do with it? And you're pretty smart cookies, so I suspect if I said, "So, what does **luck** have to do with it? You might answer ... [Congregant: *"Nothing."*] othing. Thank you. You weren't quite so sure on that one, but that is correct.

We might say nothing, because luck has nothing to do with anything. But sometimes, maybe it kind of feels like it does, right? I mean, either bad luck or good luck might just kind of feel like it happens. And certainly in our world, a lot of people believe in luck, because there's like a million sayings. I won't go all through the million sayings there are. I'm just going to give you a few, though, of phrases that we have that involve luck.

For example, *"the luck of the draw,"* which happens to be tonight's title. Or *"lucky charm,"* which is not just a cereal, but the title of next week's talk. *"This is my lucky day!"* Yay! Or, *"Man, this just wasn't my*

lucky day." "He got a lucky break." "Thank my lucky stars." "If it weren't for bad luck, I wouldn't have any luck at all." "Well, as luck would have it ..." "Well, what rotten luck." "Well, that was a beginner's luck." "Lucky at cards, unlucky in love."

I don't exactly know what that one means, but that is a phrase!

"Don't push your luck." "Better luck next time." "Down on your luck." "Count yourself lucky." "Lucky streak." "Some people have all the luck." "No such luck." "Tough luck." "You're in luck." "A stroke of luck."

That's a few of the luck phrases [laughs] that exist. I'm sure there's more! My brain has pondered whether or not there might have been any research done on luck, and whether there are certain ways that we might be able to be so that we luck out -- oh, there's another one! -- more often. And lucky us; there was some research done on that, which is what we're going to talk about tonight and next week.

But first, before we talk about that, I'm going to lay a little spiritual groundwork. Because, you know, I love laying spiritual groundwork.

So, the spiritual groundwork I want to lay tonight is -- -what was, I should say -- some pretty good wisdom and counsel from someone quite smart. And it goes like this, "*Be in this world, but not of this world.*" Remember that? Master teacher Jesus said those words. "*Be in this world but not of this world.*"

Well, what did he mean by that? I don't know. I can't go back and ask him. But I can say what I think he meant or what that means to me. And what that means to me is that we are in this world. We are in this human physical experience. And in this world of physicality, we have needs; we have wants; we have aspirations; we have hopes; we have disappointments; we have experiences; we have emotions; we have accomplishments; etc., etc.

And in this physical world, there is polarity or duality. Right? There's up/down; there's in/out; there's right/left; there's success/defeat; happiness/sadness; Republicans/Democrats; sickness/health; love/hate; wealth/luck; good/bad; right/wrong. Even life and death. And much more. We live in a world of duality -- in this physical world.

And so, to me, being in this world says, "*I acknowledge that. I recognize that. I see that. I know that, and I'm not going to, like, spiritually bypass it.*" I've used that term in here before, but for those of you who don't know what that means, it's like, "*Okay, this stuff might suck right now ...*" That's a spiritual term, by the way: suck. [Congregants laugh] Sucketh. "*Actually, this might sucketh right now -- whatever this is in my world might sucketh -- but it's all good! Because it's all God.*"

Those are actually true statements, but if we go there right away, that's called a spiritual bypass. We've got to recognize; acknowledge; feel; but don't go down the rabbit hole. But it's very important that we be *in* this world and acknowledge our physical human experiences.

When our hearts ache, when a loved one passes, or when another child gets shot in a school shooting. We get scared when our bodies start not doing what they're supposed to do, right? Sometimes there's more -- I've got to say this right -- sometimes there's more month at the end of the paycheck than there is paycheck at the end of the month. Right? And that's troubling. We might get or be, right now, afraid that our rights or the rights of others are being possibly taken away. That's scary.

Acknowledge it; yes. And let's go to the second part of what the Master said. He said, yeah, don't ignore that stuff, yes. But know that, in the midst of all the stuff that's happening in this physical world, there's something more. So, don't get yourself so wrapped up in being of this world that you forget the more. And the more is something higher and something greater than anything that's going on on this physical surface.

In the midst of polarity, there is only -- in the midst of physical human experience polarity, there really is no polarity. There's only One. There's only God. There's only love. There's only perfect unfoldment, even when we can't see it.

And, personally, I am grateful to know that. To know that I can be in this world, but I don't have to be of it. I'm so grateful to know that! It's helping me get through times right now! And I feel lucky -- there it is again! -- to know this. To be able to be in this but not of this world.

So that's our spiritual foundation for the work tonight that we're going to talk about as far as the concept of luck is concerned.

So there was a scientific research done -- a study done. It was many years ago; it was done in England. They had thousands of subjects in this. And it was done over the course of 10 years. So, this was a long-term study. The person who did it was Dr. Richard Wiseman, and then he wrote a book called *The Luck Factor*, in case you want to go find it. This happened a while ago, so I'm assuming it's still in print, but it's called *The Luck Factor*. And out of the body of research -- 10 years that he did -- he discovered that there are a few simple attitudes that proved over consistency, over time, that people have that improve their luck.

And from now on, whenever I say the word luck, consider the fact that I did this: [mimes "quote" with her fingers] but it's so annoying when people do this all the time. Every time I say luck, I'm not going to say luck like that. But just know that I'm putting quotes now around when I say "luck." Because there really is no such thing as luck.

But tonight we're going to look at one of the things "lucky" people consistently do. They maximize. What is it that they maximize? They maximize two things. They maximize what they already have, and they maximize opportunities that come before them.

They maximize what they already have, and they maximize opportunities that present themselves. So let's take a look at each one of those.

MAXIMIZE WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE. So, you all know -- and I'm sure you're familiar with -- Jesus' miracle of feeding the 5,000. I referred to this a couple of weeks ago when I was talking about pre-gratitude. And he fed 5,000 men -- and women and children, coincidentally. So probably 10,000 people, probably.

Put yourself in Jesus' shoes -- well, sandals. Put yourself in Jesus' sandals for a minute. He's been in front of this throng of people all day. It might be hot. And you're noticing that some of them are starting to get perhaps a touch hangry. You know hangry, right? That grumpiness, that testiness, that short fussedness -- it's a new word -- that happens when our blood sugar gets too low. He might have noticed that some people -- maybe a lot of people -- in this throng of people are starting to get that way. And he's like, "*Oh boy; I've got to do something about this, because I don't want 10,000 people being hangry.*"

So, he asks everyone in the crowd: "*Let's pitch in, let's help, let's share our food. Why don't you pass it? You know, we're going to pass baskets. Let's bring it up here, and then we'll share. Okay, great.*"

So, his disciples pass the baskets. They come back up, and what do they have? They have five loaves of bread and two fish. I mean, seriously: really? What do you think Jesus thought right then? I mean, he was human, right? He probably got a little irritated at that. Don't you think? I mean, wouldn't you have? There had to be more food!

By the way, that came from one little boy. One little boy gave that. Nobody else gave anything; they were bogarting their food. We know that. [Congregants laugh] We know that! But that's not my point. That's just a little aside.

My point is that he looked at that and could have gone, *"Oh, well, that's not enough! That's not going to feed three people, let alone 10,000 people."*

So, let's pause the story for a second and look at your life. That maybe you have a need that you really want to have met, or you have a heart's desire that you want to create. And you look at what you currently have -- resources, time, expertise, experience, money -- whatever it is that you might need, and you might think, *"I don't have enough. I don't have what it takes to solve this need or live this dream."* And you might get frustrated and throw in the towel and say, *"Well, forget it. I can't do it."*

Lucky people have a different attitude. Consistently showed they have a different attitude. Lucky people see whatever they have -- no matter how little it might be -- as something to start with.

Oh, I like that! Something to start with: a place to begin and build on.

And that's exactly what Jesus did, right? He took that little meager amount of food, was grateful for it, blessed it. And it multiplied enough to feed all those people.

So, this is how we maximize what we already have. Three things to do. It's not rocket science, but listen up, because it's important.

Acknowledge; perhaps take inventory of what you already have. And, my friends, you always have more than you think. You have more than you think! You have more resources than you think. So, take the blinders off of what you think you have and spin it out a little bit. So acknowledge and take inventory -- step number one.

Step number two: **Be grateful for what you have already.**

And then make the best possible use you can of it. We know, spiritually, one of our fundamental teachings here is that what we acknowledge and are grateful for, we attract more of it. Right? When we up-level our vibration by seeing what we already have, and be grateful for it, then we vibratorily attract more. I love this Scripture in Matthew 25, Verse 29. It says, *"For to him who has, it shall be given, and it shall increase to him."* So if you focus your attention on maximizing what you already have, your vibration attracts.

Lucky people maximize what they already have by doing those three things: recognizing/acknowledging what it is; being grateful for it; and then working with it to the best of their ability.

And then they bring into the mix the second maximization idea, and that is to **MAXIMIZE ANY OPPORTUNITY THAT COMES YOUR WAY.**

I love that they did an experiment specifically for this. They probably did more than one, but this one particularly I love. And so it involved two people who were in the program already. They're in the project. It was called the Luck Project, and they were already in the project. It was Brenda and Martin. And they had both taken all these tests and had already been determined by the researchers that Brenda saw herself as very unlucky ... and in fact had unlucky, I did it, unlucky, experiences. And Martin, on the other hand, considered himself very lucky and had lucky experiences.

So, this is what they did. They told both of them that they were going to be going to a coffee shop -- separately -- going to a coffee shop; let a cup of coffee; sit down; wait for someone from the luck project to show up. What was it? What the experimenters did was put cameras outside and inside so that they could watch everything that happened. And they set it up so that the coffee shop only had four tables, and at each table was already someone seated, a plant from the experiment.

Then they set up two opportunities. One opportunity was that, right in front of the door -- right by the entrance to this coffee shop -- they put a five-pound note. Remember, did I say this already? It was in

England. It was done in England. So, they put a five-pound note right by the front door. The other thing they did was to have these people sitting there. But one of them was dressed like a very successful business person. And the others, not much. Not so much.

Brenda and Martin knew nothing other than they were to go, sit down, have coffee, wait for the person from the Luck Project to show up. So, Martin was the first one: Martin, the lucky one. He was first. So he goes; he immediately sees the five-pound note. It's like, "Oh, yay!" Picks it up: "Look at me!" He puts it in his pocket, goes and gets his coffee, looks around. Sits down next to the businessman; immediately starts to talk to him.

He says, "Hey, can I buy a cup of coffee?" The businessman says, "Sure; of course." They sat and chatted it up. He gave him some business strategy; some ideas. It was great. And then the Luck Project guy showed up, and took Martin away.

Now it's Brenda's turn. Oh, by the way, they replaced the five-pound note. And now it's Brenda's turn. And you, again, are sharp cookies, so you probably know what happened here. She walked right past the money; didn't see it. She walked in, got her coffee, sat down ... also next to the sharply-dressed businessman, but did not say a word to him during the entire time.

Later that afternoon, Dr. Wiseman called each of them in separately and asked them if any lucky or unlucky events had happened to them that day.

Brenda looked at him blankly and said, "Nope; it was an uneventful day. Nothing happened. I went into the coffee shop, like you said. I sat there and I waited. And that was it."

Martin, however, gave this colorful story about, "Oh my gosh, what an amazing day! I found five pounds and then I set with this really cool guy and got some great business advice. It was a wonderfully lucky day."

Exact same opportunities; very different responses to the opportunities that were presented.

So, people who consider themselves having good luck take advantage of the opportunities that are before them. And here's the cool thing. We live in a universe of infinite potential, and so there are opportunities always around. They abound. They're everywhere!

And I love these words from founder of Science of Mind, Ernest Holmes. He said, "We stand at the point of the limitless opportunity. Opportunity is right here today. It recognizes us as we recognize it." Ooh; that's a key phrase. "It recognizes us as we recognize it. We exist in limitless opportunities, which are forever seeking to express through us."

And then I love this quote from *The Luck Factor*:

"Lucky people are often convinced ..."

Because they don't know these spiritual principles, by the way ...

"[They're] convinced that their opportunities are the result of pure chance. They just happen to open the newspaper at the right page. They just happen to come across the right page on the internet, walk down the street at the right time, or go to a party and meet the right person. But my work revealed that these seemingly chance opportunities are the result of lucky people's psychological makeup. The way they think and behave makes them far more likely than others to ..."

And I'm underscoring this next word, big bold letters:

*"... **CREATE**, notice and act on chance opportunities in their lives."*

Did you hear that first word in the line? Create opportunities.

"I discovered that being in the right place at the right time is actually all about being in the right state of mind."

That could be something a Unity minister might say, wouldn't it be? [Congregants laugh] Right? Right?

So, there you have it! Lucky people maximize what already have and maximize the opportunities that are put before them.

So, I was thinking about this today -- percolating on this -- and thinking, "What's a personal example I could share of that?" And I'm like, "Hello! Yeah, of course!"

So in October of 2018, I stepped away from a church ministry. Some of you are here; thank you for being here tonight. I was a minister of a church for 22 years, and I stepped away from that. And I have to tell you, it was a career and financial walk of faith, because I didn't know really what else I was going to do. I'd been a minister of a church for 22 years. I knew it was time for me to go; I was clear about that. But what was unfolding in front of me, I didn't know. Financially, how was it going to unfold? I didn't know; it was a walk of faith.

And I love this little definition of faith: *"Faith is knowing that, when you walk off a cliff, one of two things will happen. Either the ground will rise up to meet you, or you will spread wings and you will fly."*

So, this was a walk of faith for me to do that. But I was thinking back, as I was reflecting on this today, that I definitely took inventory. "Okay, so what have I got to work with to start a new work?" I knew it wasn't a church. That was not for me to do ... kind of as they say, *"Been there, done that."* So, I didn't need to do that again.

So, what do I have to start a new ministry of some kind, a new business of some kind? So I realized, well, I had 25 years of spiritual growth and learning and teaching and practicing. Okay, that's got to be worth something, right? I had recently been certified as an "Art of Feminine Presence" teacher. Okay, that's cool; got that. I had a deep desire to continue to serve and inspire people. I knew that that was there in me. I had a small group of women who were taking "Art of Feminine Presence." They were in a circle, and they were taking that teaching with me, so I had them to start with. There's about six of us or so. I had a lot of people who wanted to stay connected with me from my church. I had a lot of ideas -- always had a lot of ideas -- and I had that faith thing going. So, it was my inventory of what I had.

I was grateful for all of that; so grateful for all of that!

So, then to make the best of what you have, Michele, here ... So I decided to go with the low-hanging fruit. Well, I've already got a group of women doing this "Art of Feminine Presence" work. Let's just keep doing that, and let's put the word out to expand that. And so, pretty soon, my one group got too big, and so we branched off, and I started another night. And then some people couldn't make that night, and so we started a third group. And so, for quite a long time, I had three groups running.

And then it morphed into a big retreat -- several retreats. Women's retreats. I had an idea to mentor women; I wanted to do that. And so I started putting the word out and got a couple of clients. And, as I worked with what I had, my new business started to blossom.

A few months after I left ministry, I had an opportunity present itself in front of me. It doesn't sound like it's going to have anything to do with this, but it did. A friend of mine said, *"I'm going to take you -- you deserve a vacation, a break. I have to go to New York for business Friday, Saturday, Sunday. I'm taking you with me. It's on me. Come."*

I'm like, *"Well, okay."* Yeah, that's proposal I can't refuse! And so, I went with her and it was an amazingly beautiful, delicious and healing weekend for me. In addition, my friend is a very savvy business woman. I

don't see her that often, so we don't chat regularly. And she was asking me, "*What are you doing now? How's it going? What's going on?*"

And I started telling her about my mentoring. And she asked me lots of questions and gave me such incredible wisdom for how to structure mentoring; how to price it; how to offer it. I mean, it was a huge, huge gift that I got! And I got that because I said yes to the opportunity! Not a hard decision, by the way, to say yes to go to New York! But I could have said, "*Oh no, I can't; I don't have time. I've got to work on this; I've got to do that.*" I said yes to that opportunity.

And, over the years, many opportunities have come, including the opportunity to be here two Wednesday nights a month for the foreseeable future. I'm really excited about that and really happy to have that opportunity.

The bottom line is: when I left my church, I really had no idea if I would sink or swim. I didn't know. But I maximized what I already had, and I maximized the opportunities that came in front of me.

And I can say seven years later that I've got a pretty nice little gig going on that satisfies my soul to the depths and still does some good in the world. And I feel very, very blessed by that.

So, my friends, what is it that's going on for you? If it's more financial resources that you're looking for, needing, desiring ... well, acknowledge, be grateful for, and use wisely what you have and look for opportunities to create more.

If it's greater physical health and vitality that you're looking for: acknowledge; nurture and be grateful for what health you do have; and look for opportunities to enhance and increase your vitality and well-being.

If it's a new home: love and bless and give lots of TLC to that home that you've got already, even if it's in the basement of a friend's house. And be open to opportunities that present themselves to you.

So you have an assignment this week. Are you ready for it? Good! Three of you are ready for that. [Congregants laugh] All right. Perfect. I'll be asking next week who took this assignment.

So, here's your assignment. If there's anything going on in your life where you're like, "*Yeah, of feeling in this world about it, not of this world ... sort of in the stuff. I'm in the minutiae. I'm in the fear. I'm in the ...*" whatever it might be. I'm seeing some heads shake: "*Yeah, I've got something.*"

So what I want you to do is: I want you to look at that. And think right now: what do I already have here? What do I already have? What resources? What tools? What skills? What knowledge? Whatever it might be ... What do I already have here? Because I promise you, it's more than you think. You have so much more resources than you think, including your faith. Including a belief that God's right in the middle of it. Those are important resources.

And then have your eyes open to opportunities.

And here's where the rubber meets the road: act on one. Act on one! And you just might find that you are pretty darn lucky.

And so it is. [Congregants applaud]