

## YESTERDAY'S TOMORROW

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My name is Rev. Becky Rohkohl, and I was ordained as a Unity minister last year. [Congregants applaud] Thank you! Although I've been in Unity and in all these walls since 1999. Not particularly here; you remember that "back in Memphis" story, right? Who'd have thought I'd find a Unity in Memphis where a place is so divided.

So, I have a question for you first before we get started: How many of you -- by raise of hand -- showed up just because of the title of this talk, "Yesterday's Tomorrow." No? I had some people say, *"Oh, I'm intrigued. I'm going to go just because of the title of the talk!"* So, then you can help me out here.

What is "Yesterday's Tomorrow"? Today! It's called living in today! I actually borrowed the title of this talk from a book from about 30 years ago called "Yesterday's Tomorrow" by Barry L. Yes; a 12-stepper. The 12 Steps is what brought me to Unity, and then I knew I was home.

But it was written for -- the book was actually written for -- people from the school of hard knocks, you know? People that had a little bit extra push to remember that they are the Christ's light. And that kind of was me for a long time. I actually wanted to be a minister years ago, but when I was raising kids I couldn't leave them, because I was a single mom. So, here I am and I am very blessed.

So TODAY is what we're talking about: today being a gift ... because it is. Because there are some people that didn't get today. Right? And we're not looking for tomorrow, but there will be some people that don't make it there. So TODAY means right now: right now in this moment.

I like to show people every moment counts. This moment; this moment; they all count. What are we doing with our lives in these moments? What are we doing with everything that we are?

The first time I heard about the gift of presence was from Thích Nhất Hạnh -- he's a Buddhist monk; he's the late, I should say -- in his book, *You are Here Discovering the Magic of the Present Moment*. Is there magic in the moment? I think sometimes we get so caught up in our busyness that we *forget* there is magic in the moment. We even forget, I've noticed, we're *in* the moment, because we're so busy doing instead of being. We're so busy doing what we think we need to do or what needs to be handled.

He goes on to say that the miracle isn't walking on water. The miracle is to walk on the earth: to walk, to breathe, to live right here in this moment. *That's* the miracle.

So, I'll confess that I don't always hit the mark on that. I'm a human. You know, sometimes I get caught up in that, especially since we just recently moved and we still are in boxes. [Congregants laugh] You know, I get home and I go, *"Ahh!! No, wait; I need to sit down and bring myself to here."*

I even annoyed Rev. Stacy a little bit this week with my ... I have a chime on my phone that dings every hour to bring me back to me. I remember in that: I take my breath. I remember drinking water. And I remember from standing my feet touching the floor what I'm doing in that exact moment. Because I really need a reminder! Even after all the studying and being in Unity forever, we still need reminders! So, it would go off and she'd turn around like, *"What is that? There's a bell!"*

I'd say, *"So, my body is here often, but my mind is somewhere else."* And I've often found that we either are reviewing the past or rehearsing the future. [Congregants laugh] True ... right? We're even going, *"Oh, I should have done that different. Why did I say that? Why did I do that?"* Or we're thinking, *"Well, tomorrow I'm going to set this up; it's going to be great! And tomorrow I'll have this and that."* And writing our "to do" list and always think it.

But what about this moment? What about today? We're overlooking it: the blessing of this moment.

So, I'll tell you a little story about a young lady that was getting married. Oh, and she was so excited! She was off for a walk on this long trail in the trees. And she was just so excited; she was spinning and like, you know, kind of looking like a fairy. Just spinning and dancing and thinking about her groom. And thinking about her dress, her cake; all these things that were coming. What will they do? How many children will they have? And she's spinning and spinning. And then in her last spin she turns and stops; she's in the face of a lion. A lion is right there.

What do you think she was thinking about right then? That moment, right? You've got to take care of that moment! So, sometimes we get lost in all this other stuff, and we forget that we are having moments here.

I love that, because it reminds me that ... And the Buddhist monk goes on to say that everybody should have these moments. And I can tell you: I've had plenty. Just recently -- mine was really scary. I heard words like rare, biopsy, fairly aggressive, survival rate. Anybody doesn't want to hear that. That was my lion. And, thank goodness, I'm still here. I got through my treatment.

But sometimes we just get jolted into the presence. And that's when I really changed a lot about trying to set up tomorrow. Because I know tomorrow is going to come, and I'm going to make it there. It's all going to be okay. I'm going to wake up in the morning -- God willing -- and I'll just go about my day. It doesn't mean to not plan your vacation in September; it just means to remember to live in this moment where you have it.

Lots of people have had the same experience that I have had, and I understand that it's uncomfortable. It could be another experience. It could be grief. It could be all kinds of things that just happen out of nowhere, like a car accident, or whatever. We don't wish that upon anybody. But that lion shows up and what do you do? You remember: you're in the moment.

So, mindfulness is in all kinds of traditions. East; West. I'm going to talk about a couple different teachers: one in the East and one in the West. And what I've noticed is -- I don't know if you guys have noticed in your reading -- we're a lot more alike than we are different. Did you know that? The words are different, but it's the same knowledge being spread. The same peace; the same living in the "now" and in the moment is being taught all across board.

Even in our own Christian Bible, it says, *"Be still and know that I am God."* Be still and know that I am God. As you are in this moment, in the stillness, in the quiet. It's about not about shaming yourself or blaming yourself for being distracted. You know, there's a world full of ADHD people out there right now that are going, *"Ohhhhh!"* But you don't blame yourself for it; you notice it. That's what mindfulness is. You recognize what's happening and you remember to come back to yourself in this moment -- in this gift; in this blessing that is your life right now.

So, I don't know if a lot of people know, but meditation and mindfulness are actually not the same thing. We like to use them interchangeably, but they're really not. And they work together really well.

Meditation -- which is kind of like a Western thing -- is a practice. We practice meditation. Right? It's like, *"Oh yeah, I'm going to go meditate or I'm going to walk and meditate or ...."* There's so many different kinds of meditation! Swim and meditate.

But mindfulness is a quality; it's who you are. Now, you use meditation in it -- use other tools. And like I said, they can be changed. But mindfulness itself is actually the quality of who you are in that moment, right here and right now.

So, kind of the East meets West, like I talked about. Thích Nhất Hạnh also has a quote that says, "*Life is available only in the present moment.*" The past is gone! We might want to change it. There's a lot I look back on and go, "Ooh; *I could have done that different.*" But here I am. And I wouldn't be here if I didn't have this in my past.

So, Eckhart Tolle: he's a teacher. He wrote the book *The Power of Now*. It was big for a long time. And he says this: "*Realize deeply that the present moment is all you ever have. Make the 'now' the primary focus of your life.*"

Can you do that? Can you shut out the other things? Can you go, "*I'm going to take care of me, and I'm going to take that breath. I'm going to remember: Here I am. And all is good. And I am a Christ's light in this world.*" Because you are! Your life shines!

So different cultures have different languages. But the commonality is: the moment is sacred. No matter which tradition you try to use it in, that moment is still sacred. You're there; you're alive; you're aware of what's going on; you're present.

So from H. Emilie Cady has a book. I don't know if you guys have read it -- *Lessons In Truth*. It's a tried and true one. I actually love this book. And she says that -- from Psalms 46: 10; it says, "*Be still*" -- is to see with the singleness of eye. Not trying to look back or look forward, but just to see. In this moment, this is what it is. This is life. This is my gift and my blessing from God.

To be in the now is to live from that awareness intentionally. Some people go, "*I'm there sometimes ...*" But focus intentionally to do this. And the more you practice it, the more it becomes habit, right? The more we practice this moment.

And you can find little tools -- like I said about my little alarm that goes off. But what's more important is: Why does it matter? Does anybody know why this kind of stuff matters, besides the spiritual part? Science has proven that, when we're too busy in our lives, we make more mistakes. They call it multi-tasking, right? You actually make more mistakes. And science has also proven that you lose memory cells faster when you're multi-tasking. I didn't know that! I thought multi-tasking -- I was a hero! Yes!

I worked in the IT field for 25 years. I thought, "*Hey, I can get it all done!*" Because I could at the time! But I didn't know what it was taking from me in that time to be multi-tasking.

And it might feel like it's a little slower to get one task done at a time, but it's not really. You give all of who you are in that moment to that task, and it flourishes. Your production actually gets better, is what they say. But if you're multi-tasking all the time, you become more anxious. That's part of the reason why our children are more anxious in this world nowadays. I think it's because they're trying to do everything at once. And you need to slow down and just be. I call that the doing person versus the being person. We forget things and we miss what matters.

What really matters to you? You don't want to miss that. You don't want to miss the blessing of that moment.

So, the teaching from the East -- from Thích Nhất Hạnh -- says ... In his gentle wisdom, he says, "*Life is only the present moment. Resisting reality causes suffering.*" So fighting this moment brings suffering upon me. Observing our thoughts freezes: don't judge them; just acknowledge them. Say, "*That's there.*"

And, in my practice, what I've noticed is: the more I observe them, the less I see them or they come across my mind. It's like something will pop in, and I'll keep trying that: just observing. How do I feel? Where is that in my body? What am I doing right now? And then it's less frequent for that same thing to come back in, because I'm working on observing it.

And he said, *"Complaining adds to your pain."* Anybody know any complainers? [Moans – congregants laugh] I do! I know some that have been complaining for decades. And it doesn't get any better. And I try to, you know, lovingly put the theology of Unity and the Christ light in there and it's, you know, beaten down with the stick. Because they don't accept that. They want to live in that moment of their suffering.

And you've got to know: we are not our minds. Now, that's different from: We create things in our minds. I'm talking about the physical piece of our mind. We are not that. We are our conscious, which rests in there. Our superconscious, which rests in there. But not the piece itself.

And enlightenment is open; it's joyous and it's calm. So, the more we can get into our understanding of this present moment, the more joy we feel; the more calm we feel; the more things we can do with our lives, right?

And Tolle -- from the West -- says about embracing the present moment, *"The present moment is only the only true reality. Spending time dwelling on the past or worrying about the future creates suffering."* That's that whole 'reviewing the past and rehearsing the future'; that creates our suffering. That helps put us in that place of suffering.

And again, he says, *"You're not your mind because there's a difference between your authentic self, your deeper consciousness, and the constant chatter that goes on."*

You may have chatter. Ooh! We just came from Southern California. We lived in a small town in San Diego County, but I had to drive an hour to work in this job that Richard was talking about. I drove back one way, an hour. And I would be so far out of my mind, I would not even remember stopping at the stop signs, stopping at the lights, getting on the freeway. Because I'm not being; I'm doing. And that's not what's called for!

So, now I actually bring myself back to: Remember what you're doing. Remember how you're being in this life.

And our inner consciousness is primary. In Unity, that's our inner Christ. Right? It's primary! Going within: that's where it all starts! That's where we connect. That's where we know who we are!

So, one of the practices I do is I -- like I said -- is I feel my body in the seat. I stop and I feel, *"Where's my body at right now? Am I sitting? Am I standing? Am my arms resting?"* And I just feel it! And then I try to touch my fingers together. If I'm in a crowded place, that's why you see me touching my hands. It's like, "Come back." Because this is when nobody thinks it's obvious; it's not obvious to people, because you're doing it right here. But it grounds you back to that moment ... just rubbing your fingers.

And I count a few breaths definitely ... especially when I get an urgent request for something that means I have to go now and get it done. I just have to count for a minute. And I'll do it, but I want to just be who I am first.

And noticing the simple things. When you're washing the dishes ... This is one of the Thích Nhất Hạnh things. When you're washing the dishes, are you out in La La Land, or are you actually washing the dishes? That moment -- in that moment: feeling the dish. You don't have to think about anything else, but just breathing in while you're doing it. It's not about concentrating. It's about noticing and being present with what's here.

I'm going to wrap this up and I'll leave you with this image. Okay? I want you to imagine you go home tonight and you're in a lovely home. And you fall asleep and you have the best sleep you've had in years. You're so happy and so rested. When you wake up in the morning, you're surrounded by packages. In fact, there's 1,440 packages around you, all beautifully wrapped, all there for you.

Does anybody know the significance of 1,440? That's how many minutes you have in a day.

So, when you wake up in the presence, you have this gift. When you unwrap it, what are you going to do with it? How are you going to spend it? That's what's important: remembering to be in your Christ and spending it in a valuable way for you, as well as the people that you love.

Each one is a sacred moment -- each one of those gifts. And I know tomorrow morning when you wake up you're going to go, *"There's supposed to be some gifts here!"* But they are! Those blessings are there; they're just not visible. We have to take it in with our intention and work with it. Each one is a chance to breathe, to love, to connect, and to be present ... especially when you're with somebody. Being present is a gift to that person. When you look them in the eyes and you listen to what they're saying. Even to yourself: being present for yourself is your own gift.

So, I want you to remember this: yesterday's tomorrow is now the gift of the present moment. The present moment is the most sacred moment you have at any given time. And God is here: not in the past; not in the future. Right here, right now.

So, I say let us be still; let us be awake; and let us be present. Amen.

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