YOU HAVE THE FIRE WITHIN!

Week #1 of a 3-Week Series, "Ignite Your Spirit"
(Rekindling the Theme That Has Guided Our Year
Wednesday, Nov. 4, 2026
With Rev. Richard Maraj

So how many people here are like goal setters and have a dream? A vision? Even set New Year's resolutions? Anybody into goals? And then my question for you is, how many of your goals are spiritual goals? And what are your spiritual goals? Is it to know your oneness with God? Is it to immerse your mind in the mind of God? Is it to achieve self-realization or achieve the Christ consciousness? Or to fulfill your divine purpose?

I'm going to ask you a question. It's going to sound a little silly … But do you think Jesus set goals? Do you think Jesus had any New Year's resolutions? Or do you think any great spiritual teachers like Buddha, Krishna, Yogananda, St. Francis, Meister Eckhart … do you think that they began the year thinking, like, *"Man, I'd like to lose 10 pounds and get in better shape"? "I sure would like to increase my income and spend more time with the family"?*

Now, they may or may not have done that, but one thing I absolutely believe: that each of them had in them a yearning and a desire and a seeking to have a deeper feeling, connection and experience of God. You know, to be the fullness of the expression of who they came here to be and to contribute to the well-being of others and the goodness of humanity. They lived from a strong foundation of spiritual groundedness and spiritual commitment to who they are and who they came here to be.

Jesus said, *"Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you."* That all the things in our lives will come, but the first focus -- the most important priority for us -- is our spiritual life; is our spiritual connection; is our spiritual practice.

Sometimes in our lives, we put the "things" in front of our spiritual life and our spiritual practice. Stephen Covey said, *"The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."* And the main thing is clearly to seek God first.

How many people would like to feel a greater and deeper experience with God? I think we all do. And how many people would like to know your true self -- your higher self – and live from that place? I think we all would. And how many people would like to have your divine light shine even brighter than you usually do? I think we all would.

This year's theme that we introduced in January on Sunday is "Ignite Your Spirit: An Inner Journey." You know, at Christmas, we light these candles … but I just thought, *"Well, how do we allow that to shine even brighter? How do we ignite it to radiate our light as brightly as we can?"* And we never did anything on a Wednesday, so that's why we're doing it now -- to share some of this over the next three weeks. It's our theme for the year: "Ignite Your Spirit: An Inner Journey."

Because sometimes our lights -- we feel they're going dim. They're kind of fading; feeling like they're almost burnt out. But our light is not meant to be flickering or timid. It is here, and we are here, to let it shine brightly.

So that's what we're going to do for the next three weeks. Today's title is "You Have the Fire Within." Or "You Have the Light or the Spirit of God Within."

You know, Jesus -- one of his main messages was this (in the book of Luke, Chapter 17, Verse 21). It says, *"The kingdom of God is within you."* You know, we are told the kingdom of God -- the Spirit of God, the goodness of God, the Allness of God, the fullness of God -- is within us.

And, you know, we all want a sense of peace. We want to want happiness and love and success in all of its various forms. And yet, many times we don't turn within to seek the guidance and the answers, even though the kingdom and the goodness and the guidance of God is already there.

So let me ask you a question again -- an obvious question: How many people believe the kingdom of God is within you?

And so, my question would be then: Why do we turn outside of ourselves for peace and happiness? Sometimes we think that money or power or status or keeping up with the Joneses or buying the latest gadgets and all the things that we think will make a happy and perfect life -- we turn to them, and not always turning within and turning towards our spiritual life, our spiritual practice.

Here's four reasons why we turn outside of ourselves and look for happiness outside rather than within.

The first one, interestingly, is an evolutionary wiring that human beings are biologically wired for survival and status. Human beings get a rise out of chasing external goals. It actually triggers dopamine in our brains, which historically has kept our ancestors striving, adapting, and reproducing. So, it's kind of in us that it's exciting to be able to seek and challenge ourselves to reach our goals.

The second one is to condition modeling: when we see our parents and other people in our lives seeking validation and trying to get achievements to feel good about themselves, that we will fall into that same pattern.

The third one is instant visible feedback: that when we get something like a job or a raise or something on the outside, the feedback for the work that we've put in gets validated quickly. But from the spiritual perspective, it requires silence. It requires patience. It requires self-reflection. And it is much harder work to turn within and to cultivate a deeper connection to Spirit. You know, sometimes we'd rather think, *"An achievement will give me a quicker buzz,"* and we don't think of it that obvious way, rather than doing some inner work -- doing meditation or increasing our meditation.

And then the last one is misdistributing the source. We think that whatever the thing is – a promotion or the gift that someone gave us or a friendship -- that all those things are the thing that makes us happy, and kind of miss out that God is actually the source.

Jim Carrey has a famous quote that I love and I think is so true. He says, *"I think everybody should be rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that that's not the answer."* That these things -- as wonderful as our world is and all the things that we can achieve and experience, places we can travel, things that we can become -- they're all fabulous! But they don't feed our souls. They do not touch the depth of joy and peace and fulfillment and meaning in our lives.

If we are lost, we need to turn within. **If we want to set goals and find a greater level of fulfillment and meaning in our lives, we should turn within.** Like, there isn't anything -- a relationship or healing or finances -- that it is not the best and wisest idea to turn within and tap into the rich, abundant kingdom of wisdom and guidance that is in us and is always in us.

You know, one of the things is -- that it takes work. A spiritual life and a spiritual practice takes effort. Anybody ever meditate and your mind wanders? And almost any time your mind wanders … if you're not wandering, you're falling asleep. I mean, it takes work. It really, really takes some work and effort.

I think I've mentioned this many times. About six or seven years ago, I went to a silent retreat. It was like a 10-day retreat. And there was silence for 11 hours a day. In fact, there was silence 24 hours a day, but there was actually conscious meditation going on. And it was hard. So, when you meditate for five minutes and your mind wanders for four minutes, everybody familiar with that? Try 11 hours of meditation! You know how much your mind wanders? And I'm not kidding! But we started out with 68 people and I think 52 finished. So, there were a number of people -- 16 people dropped out -- because it was hard.

So, spiritual work isn't easy. But I guarantee you, it is the best and the most positive and the most worthwhile thing we can do. Jesus meditated five or six times a day! Think about this! In that pedestrian lifestyle, he was meditating -- he was going apart and meditating; coming back; going apart -- six times! How many times do you think in our fast-paced world we would need to do it?

And so, it's important. When it says, *"Seek ye first …",* it is the top priority. Everything flows from there. But that's got to be the center. That's got to be the priority. That has got to be the biggest and most important goal.

Okay, so the second one is to **embody our divine nature**. And so, this world is beautiful and powerful and amazing. I mean, the oceans, the sky, the stars … I mean, the flowers, the music … I mean, it's incredible how incredible this physical world of form is. It really is quite stunning!

But one of the things I always find interesting is, as great and amazing as the world is, that when you close your eyes and turn away from the world and take a few slow, deep breaths, it's amazing how calm. It is amazing how peaceful and centered and grounded we feel just by turning away.

And the point I'm trying to make is: sometimes we think that things that are seen are the most real. But what is the most real and the most powerful is things that are not seen. And that is Spirit. That is the divine essence that is within us and around us.

You know, we are more than just a physical body. There's a line in Scripture that says, *"Greater is he who is in me than he who is in the world."* And so, it is the invisible essence of who we are that is the greatest part of who we are. And it's important for us to begin to embody that.

The fact is: you're just more than a physical body. That you're a pure light. That you are pure spirit. I have a meditation that I do each week with my sister, and one of the lines is, *"I am pure light, completely weightless and free."* I am pure light, completely weightless and free.

Let's say that together: *[with congregants] "I am pure light, completely weightless and free."*

Take a deep breath. Again: *[with congregants] "I am pure light, completely weightless and free."*

And one thing she says in the meditation is: Picture yourself and just be aware that you are spirit and you're free and unlimited. And imagine yourself in your body as a spirit. But then imagine yourself as a spirit just stepping outside of your body. That there is a freedom and a peace of knowing that we are absolutely unlimited beings, expansive and abundant. And to realize that we're eternal beings.

"I am an eternal being, part of an eternal universe."

"I am an eternal being, part of an eternal universe."

Let's say that together*: [with congregants] "I am an eternal being, part of an eternal universe."*

And again, if you were to think of yourself as an eternal being -- part of an eternal universe -- how would that change how you see yourself? And your confidence in terms of how you live and how you show up? in your life? And how you express yourself?

The Apostle Paul said, *"Fan into flame the gift of God that is within you."* And notice he doesn't say*, "Go find your gift."* He just says, *"Fan the flame of the gift of God in you."* That the gift's already there! The question is: Are we fanning it? Are we fanning the flames of this incredible spirit and being that we are?

You know, Paul said, "Christ in you, your hope of glory." And when we talk about Christ, Christ isn't Jesus' last name. Christ is really a divine principle. It is the divine essence that Jesus fully demonstrated and the divine essence that is in potential in each and every one of us.

You know, one of the things that we hear people saying in Unity -- we say that Jesus didn't come here to save us from our sins. That Jesus actually came here to awaken us to the truth. You know, the word "sin" -- it doesn't mean moral failure. It actually means to miss the mark. It's actually an archery term. And

what it really means is that to miss the mark -- to sin -- means that we have forgotten our oneness with God. That sin is actually falling out of alignment with our true nature, our true essence. You know, it's forgetting who we are. It's like sin is really like spiritual amnesia. We forget the truth and the power of who we are.

There's a line in Scripture, and I think it's the Book of James, and it says that not following God and not following the truth of who we are is like looking at yourself in a mirror, and as soon as you walk away, you forget what you look like. Because sometimes in our own lives, it's the truth of who we are – we're amazing spiritual beings. But when we walk away, we forget who we are. We forget our power. We think we're not enough. We think that we're weak. We think that we're hopeless and powerless. And that's just not the truth.

And salvation -- the word salvation -- let's look at that. It does not mean to be rescued from punishment. It actually means -- salvation means -- to heal, to restore, to be whole again. Salvation is to return to the alignment that has always been there that we just happen to forget.

Jesus didn't come here to save us, but to wake us up. To help us remember that we are the light of the world. To help us remember that we're the salt of the earth. That we're the temple of the living God. that we've been created in the image and likeness of God.

But sometimes, while it sounds great -- we want to be awakened to the power and the truth of who we are -- sometimes we would rather just be saved and have someone else do the work for us. Sometimes we would rather have someone to blame. Sometimes we would rather outsource or delegate.

You know, in a business, outsourcing and delegating can work. But in your spiritual life, it does not work! You can't hire somebody and say, okay, I need you to meditate for me for 20 to 30 minutes a day. Then practice gratitude, too. That'll be a really good one. And then have a positive attitude whenever anything tough happens.

That's just not how it works! Nobody could go to that secret place for you. No one can surrender for you. Nobody can forgive for you. Nobody do your meditation. Nobody can do your spiritual practice. It is your journey and your journey, alone. It is an inside job, and it's an important one!

If Jesus did not come to save us from our sins, what did he come to wake us up to? If he came to wake us up? And here's what it is: he came to wake us up from a human system that is limited with a small mindset that tells us that we are broken. That tells us that we are unworthy; that we are not enough and that there isn't enough. That we're powerless. That we're helpless. And that keeps us living in fear; keeps us living in lack and limitation.

You know, this is a mindset and a system that keeps us playing small, not believing in ourselves and being afraid and unworthy. This is not what Jesus has taught us, but this is what we need to wake up from and that we need to embody. Life is calling us to embody the fullness of the incredible spiritual being that we are!

Okay, the third one is to **raise your frequency**. Jesus said in the Book of Matthew, Chapter 5, Verse 15, *"No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket."* You know, a flame does not grow by hiding it. It only grows by shining it and raising it to a higher place so we can all see.

We are taught that Jesus did all these miracles to prove that he was the one and only son of God; to prove his divinity; and to demonstrate that great faith of his. But through Aramaic -- the language that Jesus spoke, and the metaphysical lens -- we see a different empowering perspective. Jesus performed miracles of all kinds: the loaves and fishes, raising the dead, healing the sick, water into wine.

And he was not trying to prove that he was divine. He was actually trying to prove and show us what we are actually capable of -- the potential that we have to do great things! This is Unity's favorite scripture, and it's this one: *"He who believes in me shall do the works that I do, and even greater things than these."*

Now, how could he say that unless that same divine potential -- that Spirit potential -- was in us? And what he is saying in this is: If you believe in the Spirit of God in you the way I've believed in the Spirit of God in me, through that Spirit, you shall do great things, and even greater than I have done.

And one of the things I find interesting about this is that Jesus -- what he was demonstrating was an energetic alignment. That faith is not just about belief; it actually is about frequency. Faith is actually connected to frequency. Faith is an inner coherence that realigns energy with the Source -- the Creative Intelligence -- and matching that frequency of good to what it is we want to attract and create in our lives.

In Aramaic, the word "faith" carries a sense of Amon, which means to align, to make firm, and to stand in unshakable certainty. This is what Jesus meant when he said*, "Your faith has made you whole."* He is describing aligning energetic frequency.

And so, whatever it is we want to achieve in our lives, we need to raise our vibration -- our energetic frequency -- to the level of the thing that we want to attract. That if we want to attract more prosperity, we have to raise our energetic level and frequency to that level of the thing that we want to attract.

And the ways that we could raise that vibrational level are with three things: the power of the spoken word, the power of our thoughts, and the power of our feeling.

You know that famous line, *"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he*"? As a man thinketh -- the thought; in his heart -- the feeling; so is he -- is the outcome. And these two things are absolutely powerful. You know, consciousness must precede manifestation. So. if we want to manifest and attract greater things, we need to practice raising our vibration.

A man goes to this revival and listens to the preacher. After a while, the preacher does an altar call to pray for those who want to be prayed over. And the man went and he said*, "I want you to pray for my hearing."*

And the preacher prays, and he puts his hand on his head, and then he puts his finger in his ear, and he's talking in tongues, and he's vibrating and shaking. And this goes on for a while. And then he lets go of the guy, and he holds his face with his hands, and he said, *"Son, how is your hearing now?"*

And the man says, *"I don't know, Reverend. It's not till next Wednesday."* Okay. *[Laughs]* It's a different kind of hearing! Okay.

So, Norman Vincent Peale -- who wrote the book, "The Power of Positive Thinking" -- said this: that one of the most important things for success and happiness in any area of life is to believe in yourself. Sometimes we'll be willing to believe that other people could be amazing spiritual beings; that other people could do great things. But the important thing for us is to utilize these practices to believe in ourselves. To believe in the truth of who we are: to believe in the potential that we have within us, and the great things that we are called here to do.

This week, let's practice to look within. That, no matter what is going on, to remember the kingdom of God is within us and seek that connection within ourselves. The second one is to embody our nature. And it is to make sure that we wake up and remember and embody the truth of who we are as amazing spiritual beings. And, finally, to raise our frequency -- our vibrational level -- to attract the things that we desire.

We have the fire within us. And the question is: How brightly are we going to let it burn? And the way to do that is to make sure we ignite our spirit. God bless you all.

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