

COMPILATION OF SERVICES ON
METAPHYSICS FROM UNITY OF
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METAPHYSICS

UNITY OF LOUISVILLE



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Unity Perspectives of Metaphysics, Kim Bencker



UNITY PERSPECTIVES OF METAPHYSICS

by Kim Bencker



Unity invites each of us to live from the center of our own truth. This way of living is a daily practice in prayer, meditation, observation of our thoughts, and actions. It calls for us to be open to finding a new way of being.

Thank you for being present today. Practical metaphysics. I am training to be a Licensed Unity Teacher (LUT), which has definitely given me a new perspective. Something that we say every Sunday is, "Wherever you are on your spiritual journey, you're welcome here." This resonated so much with me because, and what I love about Unity, too, is that we don't criticize you. We don't say, "Well, you should know all of these things. You need to be acting exactly like this all the time or you're 'insert result.'"

Embrace the fact that we are exactly where we need to be, that we are exactly how we have to be in this moment. That pushed me in my thinking, that we preach that we are the creators of our world. We manifest what we want to create. You saw what happened on Wednesday with the riots at the Capitol Building.

How did I do that? What did I do to create that?

We start to question, "How did I manifest this? How did I bring about these events?" Not so perfect things brought me to this.

We're still perfect. Don't think that because something bad or something not great happened, that it's absolutely totally our fault. How dare you do that. That's not what this is about. It's about taking into our thinking, our consciousness, and saying, this is what it is right now. I have every single tool in my tool belt to do better. One thing that we talk about a lot here is, "How dare you have an ego, how dare you possibly think about anything that's not Christ-like."

A beautiful tool that I gained from studying metaphysics was from *The Revealing Word*, which is essentially a version of Charles Fillmore's definitions. And what he said regarding ego is, "Man and woman by reason of our divinity, make and remake ego at will. In this lies our greatest strength and our greatest weakness. The ego itself is possessed by nothing. It is a mere ignorant child of innocence floating in the mind of being, but through the door of its consciousness must pass all treasures of God."

Ego can be our greatest strength. We look at it and we think, "How can this possibly be our greatest strength?" I have learned that ego is the mirror. Ego isn't here to drag you down unless you let it. By taking that moment and recognizing when you get that twinge, when you hear that monkey mind talking about all your faults, you can stop and say, "Hold on. What was that? What created this idea in my mind?"

That's where the greatest strength comes in. It is the most powerful tool that we can use to say "I can do better. That's not what I want to create. That's not who I want to be. I want to be this beautiful creature of spirit, of love, of understanding so I'm going to take that recognition. Thank you, spirit for showing me, and I'm going to do better."

You may be asking yourself, "How do I do better?" Unity is always saying we should take it to prayer, meditation, do this, do that, write your affirmations. Meditating can be hard at times. Life is so loud. Life's so busy. How can I just sit down for five minutes and meditate when I could be doing a million other things? There is no wrong way to pray or to meditate. You must totally, absolutely clear your mind. Be an unfiltered vessel.



**I am doing the best
I can every day.**

That takes practice and we need to not judge ourselves because we can't get there every day. We are still actively connecting with spirit. Give yourself some slack. What is your way of connecting with spirit? The hiking group -- that's a great way to connect to nature. You're in the spirit. You're physically moving. You're getting that energy going. That's a great way to connect to Spirit, to ask those questions to say, what is it you need me to know right now? What is it you want me to learn and to internalize right now? And it could be petting your cat or your dog. I like to knit and crochet. Is it painting? Is it yoga? Is it playing the guitar? Whatever you feel like that connects you to Spirit works.

According to Myrtle Fillmore in her healing letters: "Students should not try so hard to go into the Silence. When your growth brings you to a place where your consciousness may be so completely merged with the spirit of Christ's ideas in God's mind that you lose all sense of things about you, it is time to seek and go into the silence. One should not try to hurry the experience."

So again, we could let our ego from before say, "You're not doing it right. Be better. Why are you not a perfect child of God right now?" Or you can give yourself a break. Every time that we are connecting with spirit, whether it be through consciously recognizing our thoughts or through our personal practice of prayer and/or meditation, we are connecting to spirit. We are going deeper into the spirit when we avoid those moments. We're missing out on those beautiful gifts.

As a Unity kid, we say the affirmation three times increasing enthusiasm, which is our zeal. I want you to really take this in. "I am doing the best I can every day." Please repeat with me please, three times:

I am doing the best I can every day.

I am doing the best I can every day.

I am doing the best I can every day.

You doing the best you can is exactly where you need to be. It is exactly what spirit is asking from you. You don't have to do anything crazy. You don't have to get on your knees and plead multiple times a day. Doing the best you can is spirit in action. That's all you could ever ask for yourself. This is where our gifts come in.

“And now my children listen to me. Happy are those who keep my ways, hear instruction, be wise, and do not neglect it. Happy is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors for whoever finds me, finds life and obtains favor from spirit,” Proverbs, 8:32-35.

Do your best every day. See those gifts from spirit and love yourself and others fully and completely. Thank you for being with me today. I love you. I bless you. And I truly appreciate you.

Worship

Meditation

Talk

Podcast

Jesus, A Great Metaphysician, Gerry Boylan



**JESUS,
A GREAT
METAPHYSICIAN**

by Gerry Boylan



May all beings be at peace, may all beings be free of suffering. May all beings remember who they are.

I was really excited about this particular title: "Jesus, A Great Metaphysician." The first draft of this talk turned out to be a two-hour college lecture for theology class, and I decided that didn't work too well. I had to sit down with that for a while because I'm used to teaching classes. I had to ask myself what was missing maybe because I had a lot of good stuff in it, but it was all up here as well. How do we get here?

It began to dawn on me I missed something. I think perhaps, for those of us who have been attracted to the New Thought religions or schools of spirituality, we got hooked into the message. This is important because it didn't destroy the old message, but there was so much more truth to it. It really did open our hearts and let go of a lot of blame, shame, and guilt, that stuff that we've been carrying around with us for centuries. But I began to realize that it's not just the message, it's the presence. I'm sure there have been teachers in your life. I hope there have been a lot of teachers who you probably remember to this day. You might not even remember what subject they taught you, but what you may recall is their presence with you, how they, on some level of their being maybe without even trying a whole lot, simply honored your presence. And they were open to your questions. They were open to how you were searching for things, and they were willing to give a part of themselves to you, no matter what the subject matter might've been. It began to become a little bit more clear to me that Jesus' role as a metaphysical teacher was not just a whole bunch of nice ideas, but it was his presence that allowed the message to become alive. It was his presence that allowed the message to become real. Sometimes I find myself missing that reality, getting more in touch with the message than I am with the presence.



**If I was in the presence
of unconditional love,
how would that affect
me?**

What I began to discover was this: What would it be like to be in the presence of unconditional love? What would it be like to see this as the meaning of Jesus and his teaching? Not words, not books, not paraphrases, not warmed over lessons, not

interpretations of somebody else's interpretation, but the truth and reality of what it would be like and what kind of response it would make.

If I was in the presence of unconditional love, how would that affect me? How would that affect how I looked at myself? How would that affect how I looked at you? How would that affect how I look at the world? If I realized no matter what, no matter how I felt, no matter what was going on in the external world around me, that I was still in continually and always in the presence of unconditional love, what would happen to fear? What would happen to being right? What would happen to judgment?

Everything we see in here today, all of these channels are all saying the same thing. The only reason why they're attractive is they're dressed up in new clothes. We get kind of hooked on the clothes rather than the message.

I remember a teacher walked up to a student one time and the student said to the teacher, "How come you keep telling us the same thing?"

And the teacher said, "Because you'd never listened."

There's a story told of the apostle John, who was the last of the apostles to remain alive here on planet earth. He was living in a kind of a faraway land, old and somewhat decrepit. Every morning they would wheel him out onto a patio and he would talk to this group of people that would gather there, who were always waiting. I mean, this is one of the last people that knew Jesus alive. So they were really waiting for this knockout kind of message. And they would all gather every morning when his friends and disciples would wheel him out onto the patio. He would look out at the front of this group of people and go, "Little children love one another." Then he would turn around and go back and everybody would go, "What was that? What's the rest?"

What he was saying was there is no rest. That's it. If you could get that through your thick heads, "Little children love one another." They wouldn't have to do anything else, there would be no other place you would have to go, it's right there. Little children love one another. And maybe it's the message itself, as well as the presence that was so radical, that it took 2000 years to begin to recognize it as being the truth. We're still doing that. We're still understanding the radical nature of that idea... to love your neighbor, to do good towards those who hate you.

In the East they make a distinction between a teacher and a guru. A teacher shows the way, the guru is the way. This sounds familiar. "I am the way, the truth, and the life." I am, so are you. I become so enamored of my own presence, or with the presence of one or two other people, that I forget how deeply we are connected with one another. I lose track of that one. I lose track with the presence of unconditional love. When I fall

into judgment, or I turn on the television, even when I sit down meditating and I can't seem to quiet my mind, I get back into judgment. I say there must be something wrong with me.

"Little children love one another."



"Little children
love one another."

I just sat down and allowed some thoughts to come to me. In some ways this teaching and this message and this presence could come together with each one of us. The first thought that that occurred to me was this phrase, this idea that somehow or another, we have so terribly distorted. And that is, "Oh Lord, I am not worthy." So much of it comes down to feeling or experiencing ourselves as being worthy of unconditional love, which is garbage.

If you go back to the original story, there was a guy who was in charge of the synagogue. He had servants under him and he came up to Jesus and he said, "Jesus, would you please heal my servant?"

He says, "Where do you live?" He gestured down the road.

Jesus started following him. And the guy said, "No, wait, stop. Oh Lord, I am not worthy that I should enter into my roof, but only say the word and I shall be healed. My servant shall be healed." In other words, "I don't want to bother you. I don't want to take your time. You can work the miracle of healing my servant right here, right now in this place, where you're standing. You don't have to go six miles away. It doesn't have anything to do with me being bad, or being limited, or being wrong, or being unworthy. I don't want to waste your time. You can do that miracle right here. Right now." That's the old saying. And that particular phrase was adopted by a whole bunch of people who thought, "This is a great way of controlling everybody else, because if they don't feel worthy then they're going to have to come to me to get worthiness."

As soon as that message got out there it was distorted in this twist. As it might have been we could have started looking out there for the truth right then and there.

"Oh Lord, I am not worthy." Bologna.

Don't do anything to become worthy. You already are unconditional love. You already are worthy. There is nothing that can get in the way of that. That's why we say the kingdom of heaven is within you. Where else could it be? And if it's within you, it's within everyone and everything else. Even Paul said this, "Absolutely nothing can separate you from the love of God." Nothing, not even how you think, how you feel, not even your sense of unworthiness, that it wasn't even yours to begin with. Nothing can get in the way.

Nothing.

How are you loved? "I love you," Jesus said, "with an everlasting love." If I could get that one, how would my life be different? How would my relationship with myself be different? How would my relationship with you be different? I love you with an everlasting love.

The people he had the most run-ins with, the scribes and the Pharisees, were the people who said, "You are what you do. You are what you look like. You are what you appear like. And if you follow these rules and regulations, then you are okay. And if you don't, there's something wrong with you." And the biggest objection Jesus had was, "That's not who you are. You are a divine child of God. There's absolutely nothing getting in the way of that. So you screw up once in a while. So you make a mistake. So you fall asleep. Does anyone condemn you? Neither do I condemn you. I'm not judging you. I never have. And I never will. I'm not even judging the scribes and the Pharisees. I'm getting annoyed and angry at them because the only way I can think that can wake them up. If I keep pushing, maybe they'll realize that whatever it is they're selling isn't what they're supposed to be selling."

There were some who responded to that. Nicodemus, especially, was so scared to let out in public that he was okay with what Christ was saying, but he knew it in his heart. Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him one day and went up to the mountain top of Mount Tabor, and he showed himself as a being of light. He said to them, "This is who you are too. This is not just me putting on a little light show for you. This is who I am. And because this is who I am, this is who you are."

Love God and love your neighbor.



The Golden Rule: Love God and love your neighbor. Books of wisdom say, love God, love your neighbor. All the rest is commentary. If you love yourself and love God, you will love your neighbor. Love God and do what you please. That always knocks me out because my ego is thinking, "If I love God and I do that, I can do this." That's not it. If I love God and love my neighbor, I know everything that I do is going to be a reflection of love.

The Father knows the prayer of your heart. Even before it is spoken, ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opening. What father would give a child, a snake when he asks for a fish; or a rock, when he asks for a loaf of bread; or a scorpion, when he asks for an egg? An earthly father would not do something like that. What about your heavenly father?

He already knows the needs of your heart before you even speak them. How many times have you been lost in prayer? When have I asked for something that I thought I needed, but it really wasn't what I needed? How many times have I gotten what I asked for and found that I didn't want anyway? The Father knows the prayer of your heart. Can I open myself to that as being the truth and say, "Father, here's what I think I need, here's what I think I want?" You know him better than I do, better than my limited personality self. I'm putting my prayer, my open-heartedness in your hands.

The New Testament is filled with parables that have lessons that are so practical and yet so beautiful. One of my favorites is that of the prodigal son, because I always identify with the prodigal son, he messed up, wanted his money right now, went out, spent it, blew it all on stuff. Then he was sitting in the pig pen, feeding the pigs. And he said to himself, "You know, even the servants in my father's house have better food than I have. I know what I'll do. I'll go back to my father, and I'll give him a little speech. I'll say, 'Father, I've sinned against you and against God, blah, blah, blah.' And at least things will be better than they were." His father had been looking for him every day, standing at the top of this hill, a little old man. He saw his son in rags and pig poop walking along the road, coming back home. He ran to him and embraced him. The guy

had his little speech prepared, "Father I've sinned against God sinned against..." And his father stopped him, saying "Get my son a robe, get him a ring for his finger, kill the fattest calf, because my son was lost and now is found." The essence of that particular parable was that the prodigal son thought he was so far away from his father, but he never left his father's love.

"It's always there, son. You might've traveled far in the physical world, but you never left my heart. The reason you've never left my heart is because you never could leave my heart."

Karma. You've wrapped up the whole karmic message in one little sentence. He didn't read a book about it, didn't write 10 books about it, didn't write a big book about it, didn't go into past lives. He said, very simply, "You reap what you sow."

You reap what you sow.

It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man entering the kingdom of heaven. It was not an impossibility. That was a sort of Middle Eastern metaphor. There was a gate in Jerusalem that was called the Eye of the Needle. In order for a camel carrying a full load to get through it, the camel had to go down on its knees and crawl through.

One of the most beautiful, sad moments in scripture was when a rich young man talked to Jesus and said, "What do I need to do to be saved? I obey the commandments, I do all those things."

Jesus said, "If you will be perfect, if you really want to follow the path, let go of all of that stuff you own, because that's not who you are." That's the rather free translation. But I think it's pretty close to the truth. The rich man looked away and walked away because he had many possessions. God that's heartbreaking. I can't do this because I'm so attached to these things, because I think they are who I am.

If you had faith the size of a mustard seed and you said to that mountain, "Get up and walk," it would. This is not a judgement on myself, but I wonder where is my faith? If I tell a little grain of sand to move a couple of centimeters, I can't do that. But I do believe it's true. If you have faith, the size of a mustard seed, say to that mountain, "Get up and walk," and it will. We do that all the time in Unity with healing. When I hold you in the light, in the truth of who you are, that's what Jesus did. How did Jesus heal people? This is a message and a lesson that comes from energy. Not necessarily saying something, but essentially the way he healed people.

If you have faith the size of a mustard seed and you said to that mountain, "Get up and walk," it will.



My sense of this is, I see the truth in you, I see the perfection in you. I even see the perfection in your body. My sense of your perfection is so powerful that it overcomes your sense of illness and limitation. What can I learn from now on holding yourself in that light, holding others in that light? What do you do with the outside world? You deny that, say it's an illusion.

The Scribes and the Pharisees tried to trap Jesus one afternoon by asking him a question, "Who do we pay tribute to?"

He said, "Show me a coin of tribute whose face is on there?"

"Caesar's."

Again, a one-liner: "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God, the things that are God's." They're all even.

Each one of us is going to have to work out what that means to each one of us. I'm not going to tell you what that means, but it is such a beautiful, concise message. What am I supposed to do? Am I supposed to deny the outside world, pretend that it's not there, make it into illusion? Or am I supposed to deal with that in the best way? I know how to connect to my own spiritual alignment, with the truth of who I am and the truth of who God is for me, what's important in life. What are my values supposed to be? How do my values affect me? Your treasure is also talking about a way of becoming aware of what is going on with you and how you're responding to the world every moment of every day, and whether you're responding to the world with the highest vibration possible. Where your heart is there, your treasure is also.

Here's the whole message: Nothing truly exists, except unconditional love. I will give you the strength and the wisdom and the courage to be able to put it into practice. In truth, the message is a reflection of who you are, not what somebody told you, not what you learned from your family, not what you learned from your church, nothing that you

learned from your own limited consciousness, but a reflection of the truth of who you are. When you call to mind and heart the presence of the Christ Consciousness within you, to you, and through you, there is absolutely nothing that can get in the way of your truth.

Worship

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Talk

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God - Oneness, Spirit, Creator, Raamesie Umandavi



God is in the allness of you and me. We are each an expression of God, the Good or allness. God is the universal principle.

It is an honor to be with you this morning, sharing this sacred space with you. I thank Rev. Valerie for the invitation. It is a vision and a journey that has long been in the making. And I'll tell you that it wasn't my vision. At first, it was many of your words. You saw something within me in the years that I've been active in this church and through my heart connection that I found with many of you outside of this church.

So thank you. Thank you, everyone is my prayer. The energy we are sharing right now - and any time that anyone listens to this recording or watches the video - the energy that they add to this collective pot, will go out and in some way, make a difference in someone's life. How that will touch someone's life in ways we do not know. It may be today, a week now, six months from now, a year from now. Know that our collective energy is powerful and that where two or more are gathered in the name of God and the name of Spirit in the name of presence that that energy never ends and never stops, never stops manifesting.

I digress a bit. I've been part of this church for 21 years. Now, that kind of means I'm getting old. I started in late 1999.

It wasn't long after that, that I met Alan Scherer. If you know Alan, you know he never meets a stranger. He makes it his mission to greet you. He greets newcomers, makes them feel well, connects them to others, and connects them to the good things that are happening in his church and the good things that are happening in the world. Also if you also know Alan, you know he is good at volunteering you for some stuff. A lot of the things that I've done here have been because Alan volunteered me.

He said, "You know, you'd be good working with kids." And there I was three or four years later, having worked with almost every group of kids in the youth group here. "You know, you'd make an excellent prayer chaplain," he said. Here I am, a prayer chaplain since 2005, not all in these walls. What I have seen in my fellow prayer chaplains in this church is that we took our ministries beyond these walls. We took our gifts, our knowledge and our consciousness outside of these walls. And we used it in the circles that we're in. We use it for our callings, for animals, for people that are living on the street, for the disenfranchised. So there is a seed that can get planted and then it blooms and takes root in who knows? Years later, 21 years later, what can happen?

To go off script here, one of the things that I've learned in my journey is that it is good to be open to the way that Spirit guides us, the many ways that Spirit can talk to you. The many ways that Spirit can answer a prayer, or the many ways that spirit worked through another person for our blessing and for our greater good. Also the ways that spirit uses us to be an answer to prayer for someone else, the way that spirit can use us to be a blessing to be at the right spot at the right time. And we may not know. We may not even know that we are an answer to someone's prayer.

I wouldn't have created this message if it wasn't for Alan, and for many of you. Alan is one of my dearest friends. All that I got volunteered, cheered on, and loved into doing. I have an aunt that used to say, "God works in mysterious ways," and I believe that's true. So today I stand here on the shoulders of giants and the spiritual leaders and the spiritual teachers that have gone before us in this ministry. And in this work, the Lellies, Reverend Judy, Richard Thomas, Reverend Judy Grimes, Reverends Jack Poole, and Susan Eng-Poole, Reverend Jerry Baldwin, Reverend Valerie Mansfield, Keith Mitchum, Walter and Sharon Hutchins, Renee Morgan Brooks, Reverend Lance Livesay - who actually gave me my start at platforming during the Wednesday night service that we started back in 2005. And we were doing that - Reverend Ray, Robin Nelson, Reverend Alma, and Reverend Gwen at Unity of East Louisville and many, many others who are not on this stage and many others I'm sure in your lives, and the countless people that worked behind the scenes to make all of this work, who give and serve and volunteer their time so selflessly.

**God works in
mysterious ways.**



Today we continue our theme this month on practical metaphysics, we began the new year with Reverend Valerie who led us in a white stone ceremony to symbolize start the new year with a clean slate, an opportunity to set an intention for who we know we are and making room for who we want to be, what we want to experience, what we want to bring in to ourselves and to our lives. Then on the second Sunday, we had Kimberly Bencker who is a Unity teacher and trainer, a multitalented profound young lady, and she did an excellent job - by the way - sharing with us a Unity perspective on metaphysics. Last Sunday, Reverend Gerry Boylan spoke to the topic of Jesus, a great metaphysician. Today our topic is God - Oneness, Spirit, Creation. When I heard that topic, I thought that it was a tall order.

I'm going to talk about God, spirit, oneness, and creation. I thought about it, and after the year I've had, honey, I'll take a tall order of some spirit. I will take a tall order of the presence of the divine in my life. And I'll take a tall order, biggie size my order, of seeing peace in the people that I know and the families that I know. At a time where our country

has been in such unrest, we're still living through a health pandemic that has taken lives and has taken jobs and millions of people are affected. Yeah, I'll take a tall order of Spirit. Seeing that if I fine-tune my thoughts, my actions, my intentions, my heart, if I fine-tune even the things that I say to myself in private, if I fine-tune that to a higher level, that I'm allowing myself to be a vessel for spirit. I am agreeing with God for the goodness in another person's life and the changes that can happen in another person's life and that God can work in mysterious ways, like my aunt Charlotte used to say. Yes, honey, give me some spirit, give me some peace. Give me some joy. Some radiance.

When we say metaphysics, metaphysics is defined as the study of science, beyond the physical, the study of that which transcends the body or the senses as we can see. So when I think of practical metaphysics then, or practical spirituality, I'm thinking of practical things that I can use on a daily basis to make a difference in my life today. I don't want to wait until I go to heaven. I want to see some goodness. I want to see some change. I want to be a part of that goodness. Today. I want to when I leave here not be the same person that walked through the door. And so that is sort of taking me back to my upbringing in a Southern Baptist church, getting filled with spirit and allowing spirit to move through me and to change the little part of me that I might think otherwise.



**Now my concept of
God is bigger.**

Now, when I think of the concept of God, talking about a being in the sky, that's what I grew up with. God was a being in the sky. We had to get on our knees and pray, sometimes we had to repent and we had to do all of these things that felt like I had to convince someone that I was worthy of an answer or a solution or guidance or provide. So now after the years of being in this church and after taking a bunch of workshops and being volunteered into things and joining things, I found that that was the best way to practice and to learn and to experience and also to fellowship with others. So now my concept of God is bigger.

I want to share from a book called *Heart Center Metaphysics, A Deeper Look at Unity Teachings* by Paul Hasselbeck. He actually quotes H Emily Katie's book *Lessons in Truth*. "There is but one source of being, this source is the living fountain of all good, be

it life, love, wisdom, power, the giver of all good gifts. You have the power to draw on this source for all the good you are or ever will be capable of desiring. God is the name we give to that unchangeable inexorable principle of the source of all existence."

I've learned to let go of some of my baggage around the name of God, the concept of God. I might use some words, interchangeably, spirit, or divine presence. Some people like to think of mother/father God, some people might say lord, some people in some cases might say, Jesus Christ. Whatever that name is for you, then like our meditation, our daily work, we can be at one with that. We are one with that. We live and move and have our being in that presence. And Charles Fillmore in his book *Prosperity*, calls it the substance that's in back of all forms. So there is that invisible energy that's everywhere, present that it is in all things. It can move through all things. That is the substance on which we can draw on. When we realize that we can experience the oneness with this, then we can open ourselves to greater and greater levels of creation.

When I think of oneness, I think of being one with this presence, with this spirit, the basic Unity principles say that God is all good and is active in everything everywhere. It says I am naturally good. You are naturally good because that divinity is in me and is in everyone. We create our experiences by what we choose to think, what we choose to feel, in what we choose to believe. Through the affirmative prayer and meditation, we connect with God, we connect with spirit, with the creator, and bring out the good in our lives. I can do and give my best by living the truth that I know.

The prayer chaplain program started at this church around 2003 or 2004. I forget which one, I didn't join that year. I'm pretty sure I would've tried to join that year, but I didn't feel the call in here. And it began to get louder. As spirit does sometimes it got louder and louder. I did sign up the next year, 2005, during weekend training. I discovered that I love to pray and I love to pray with others. As life would have it, I had plenty to pray about back in 2005. It was before then my mother was diagnosed with cancer. I was a new chaplain during that time when I became aware of the opportunity to practice what I know. This is what I'm talking about when I'm saying practical metaphysics and God and oneness and spirit and creation, that when we become aware, or even when we are willing, we may not necessarily know how, but when we are willing to align with something greater with that presence within us, that still small voice that speaks to us, it can open doors and create something beautiful.

**We learn to go
from our head, to
our heart.**



In the hospital, my mother had taken a turn for the worse, and it became apparent that she was dying. Honey, I was a mess. I was all surrounded by beautiful people here that were lifting me up and supporting me. And I remember Martha Creek and Reverend Susan Eng-Poole, they actually taught me that I could pray for my mother during that transition. So in the hospital, I remember sort of just kind of having an inner dialogue with spirit in my head, "Okay. Spirit, my mother's dying. I couldn't change that as much as I wanted to. My mother's dying. I'm only going to get to do this once this particular lifetime once, how would I want to do that? How would I want to show up, how would I want to experience my mother and dying?"

I decided how I wanted it to be that week in the hospital, not knowing that it was going to be her last week exactly. Not knowing when she would take her last breath, but knowing the inevitable was coming, I was able to decide how I was going to be in spirit in the experience, the real-life experience. We find ourselves in these real-life experiences, how I was going to be during that experience. And I tell you that that was one of the most pivotal experiences. And also one of the most tangible experiences of being led by spirit. I spent that week, if it's possible to feel good, but I did feel good about how I was choosing to experience my mother's dying.

I stayed with her in that hospital the whole week. I played her favorite music and prayed to her and I talked to her. I said everything I felt like I needed to say to my mom before she left. And I was at peace within myself. And I was grateful that I could connect to Spirit, that I didn't have to necessarily go through church. I had people here that were praying with me and I have people that were calling and texting and getting in touch with me. But then I could have an individual experience of spirit at that moment. And yes, it was hard. I was a mess for years after that, just in the devastation of losing my mother.

But I have a solid knowledge that as I connect, as prayer chaplains we learn to go from our head, our thinking, our thoughts, what we see out here to drop from our head to our heart. Dropping from my head to my heart, beauty was created, grace was created and

spirit had stopped there. Now, years later, I have connections with women who are like mothers to me. I have an aunt I love dearly who is like a mother to me, and an uncle who's like a father to me. So many beautiful things that have come out of that. So it doesn't matter how dark our days might feel or how lost we might feel or whatever it is that we think we need. And we may actually really need something. Know that you can connect to that oneness, that you can experience that, giving room for spirit to create what is highest and best. So thank you.

I thank you for joining me. I thank you for being here, for holding the space, for being who you are. And I thank God for moving through me on this day. Blessings. And so it is.

Worship

Meditation

Talk

Podcast

The Will and God, Rev. Valerie Mansfield



God's will for us is to live fully open as love. Our individual will grows through our desire to live life full out as wholeness, abundant radiant centers of Love.

We are continuing our talk on practical metaphysics. This title is *The Will & God*, but it's really about the grace and the will of God. So what is it? Thy will be done - or our will be done? How do we as individuals walk our spiritual journey, living our spiritual talk, creating beautiful music, stepping up at times of need? How do we embrace and live the grace of life? There was a question posted by our news executive director Chad Rogland, on Unity's ministers page. I don't know if we're supposed to share this or not, but I'm going to - because it's private page, it's just for ministers - The question, I think, went something like this, and I'm just paraphrasing here: "Is Unity a Christian church or are we something else?" The majority say, "Yeah, we have Christian traditions." And what does that mean? What does that really mean? What does it mean to each of us? Because at Unity here in Louisville where I grew up, yeah, I was always taught that I was a Christian.

And at the same time, I was taught that there is good in other traditional religions also, that really, it's all the same, just a little bit different interpretation based on the culture that people are in, all the customs they have. And so then when we let our ego block us from our good, are we living God's will. And if you don't like the word, God, change it to whatever you choose your greater spirit to be. I typically like the word spirit, but since I'm really talking about a Christian thought process here - the will of God - I thought I would use the word today, but you can change it to whatever you want.



"Thy will be done."

Many in the Christian tradition believe that that "thy will be done" is really about living a life of suffering and sorrow and poverty, loneliness, and death - that we live to die and we have to be saved before we die. Well, that is not what I believe, and it's okay if you believe that. I believe that "thy will be done" means that I am here to live life out loud, disruptive, managing the chaos, the best that I can because we live in a cosmos of chaos and we have stuff coming through us and at us all the time, right? Sometimes, we have to go to that ego mind and say, "Okay, what am I going to do with this?" You know, someone will say something to you or maybe do something that you feel put upon by. It

happens. Is that God's will? No, it's not. And if you take it on, then you're responsible for it because that's your will, not God's will. So don't take it on. The universal expression is "God is." It's not a person. It's not an entity that's pulling strings or a puppet, it just exists, and it exists as good. And I know that because the truth that Jesus taught.

This is from a 1928 Emily Cadie writing called *The Will of God*. She says God taught us, "What man is there of you who if his son asks him for a loaf will give him a stone, or if he shall ask for a fish, you will give him a serpent? If you think being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how many, how much more shall your father who is in heaven, give good things to those who ask." Whatever we give out in the world is what's going to come back at us, whether it's in this lifetime or another lifetime, which is why I don't believe in death.

This physical body may transform, but the soul is of that omnipresence of spirit. It can never die and is only good. Evil comes in our error thinking. So it comes through our own thought process and our own beliefs. What do you believe? I believe we are made full, and by that I mean that we receive all the fullness of life when we are born into this world. We have the fullness of love, there is no death. We have the fullness of life; there is no sickness. We have that fullness of power; there is no authority greater than us. We have that fullness of joy; there is no sorrow. We have that fullness of good; there is no evil. There is no error thinking unless we think there is. And that's where we get in trouble, that second dimension. We are the spiritual self, the fullness of life, the fullness of love, the fullness of power, the fullness of joy, that fullness of all good.

We have a human side that buys into the other, the darkness, the sickness, the death. Why? Because sometime a long time ago somebody wanted power and they changed the teachings. They interpreted them in the way that they could create control. And we believed him because, you know, there weren't a lot of folks around, and we believed what people told us, right? But we know that's not the truth anymore, and we know it's not true because of all the findings of other books, ancient books, that came before the writings of the Bible, or at least at the same time.

So what does that really mean for you? What does it mean for you and for me? That's what it really boils down to: What do I believe? At one point in my life, I believed in sickness. And there are times when my physical body is kind of in pain today, because my thought process for some reason is out of balance. We have to balance ourselves in the good and recognize our error thinking. We have to balance and walk through life through that journey... as the love, with the wisdom of the universe.

All the knowledge is out here in the ethers, we just need to tap into it. We have to be responsible for ourselves. When my kids were growing up, I would tell them, "Check your drama at the door cause your mama don't want it." Be responsible for yourself. You

make the choices. There are consequences, sometimes they are consequences, and sometimes they're not. And when they're not, own up to them, don't be a victim and put it out on somebody else. Or if you don't like what somebody else does, don't try to make them wrong. Look at your own stuff. I was taught to look at mine every day.

**Be responsible for yourself.
You make the choices.**



I was taught as a child to look at my stuff every day. There are days when I forget because sometimes I'm tired. And yet, when I'm aware of what I said, what might have done, then I have to forgive myself. I have to be responsible for myself. I cannot be responsible for everybody else in the universe and all their stuff. Sorry. It doesn't work that way. There's nobody responsible but you. And that's really the will of God, because we have free will. There's nobody pulling the strings. If you want to be evil, own up to it. If you want to be a victim then be a victim, but own up to it. And if you want to do good and be good, and live in a world with peace within yourself, creating peace outward then take accountability for your own stuff, dig deep and move forward, because that's what it takes.

What is your will? How are you living in this room right now? Because guess what? This moment is the only moment that matters. What happened yesterday is gone. You cannot change it. You cannot do anything about it. So look at it, heal it, forgive yourself is the only way they feel it, and move on. So if you need to journal, if you need to talk with someone, whatever it is you need to do to purge it from your mind, from your being so that it does not dig in deeper and cause dis-ease in the body.

In Unity, we teach that our thoughts create the blocks, which create the disease in our body. Now, sometimes we brought it from way back there, right? 200 years ago, we did something and now we'll clean it up, so it's going to show up in this body. Clean it up, look at it, breathe through it, expand the pain out of the body, expand the thought out of the body. And even if the physical disease takes hold until you leave this planet, continue to expand it outward so that the next time you come back into the physical incarnation, you do not bring it with you.

You know in Unity I was taught to look at "Where's the fear?" And I really didn't go through life with a lot of fear. And it took me by surprise. One day I was walking my dog, a big 90-lb dog. We were walking down the street. We did this every day. I was actually walking over to my sister's so we could walk our dogs together. Around the corner from my sister's and mom's came these two big dogs. As they rounded the corner, I was on the opposite side of the street with my dog and there was a lady with a little two year old on the other side of the street.

The two dogs crossed the street and attacked, or tried to attack me. My dog stood his ground between them and me. The lady grabbed the little boy and she ran. Thank God she did because she wasn't very big and the little one was about two. If those two dogs would have come at them, it would have been not pretty.

My dog got a hundred puncture wounds. Here's this 90-pound dog, which I cannot carry, bleeding all over. A lady in her car started hollering at the dogs and beeping her horn, and then she got between me and the dogs and got them across the street. She followed me back and here's this dog - just by sheer will - walking down the street. Then I had to get him into the car and to the vet.

This dog had always given me unconditional love. When he was a puppy, I was very ill. Knowing how active puppies are, this puppy would just lay beside me when I got paralyzing headaches and couldn't move for hours. This went on everyday for weeks and months. That unconditional love and attachment we had with each other was unbroken. And he survived. The vet cleaned up all his wounds and kept him in the hospital for a few days. That dog lived to be about 18. So there's good.

It was better that we were attacked than that lady and her baby because I don't know if that baby would have survived. And that was the will of the day. That was the universe looking out for the best in the situation. That was my good.

That was the will of the day. That was the universe looking out for the best in the situation



I started talking about this because of fear. After my illness started getting better, I went to ministerial school. I went back to my roots, because every day I was going to the doctor and I started showing up at Unity every day because that was my roots. And if I could be here in prayer, and I, sometimes I'd just come and sit, It would get me in that space. And it started my healing process. I started back doing my yoga here on Wednesday nights and just slowly, slowly coming back into classes. And I was able to heal myself. I let go of that which was no longer working for me and began to heal.

When I was in ministerial school, they asked me, "What is it that you fear?" I had to really think about it, because I didn't fear a whole lot. And I looked at the instructor and said, "I fear loose dogs on the street." I noticed that anytime I saw a loose dog on the street, my heart would race, and I would get into that little bit of anxiety. So I had to work through that, and it took a long time. I can now see a loose dog on the street and my heart doesn't pound. When we got a new dog I told my husband I have to have one I could pick up. If I'm walking the dog and something comes along I want to be able to pick up my dog and hold it. We have a beautiful little Cavachon. She's full of life and love.

That fear was something that really took hold of me. I had to move through it, and let it go. I've done that because it was part of my journey to see what fear was really about. When you grow up in a unique community and there's not a whole lot to fear, you need to see fear. That's how I encountered that fear. And I know that it is good, and it is only good. And that is the way of peace.

There's a quote that I ran across this week by Emerson that spoke of Jesus' mysteries and talks about the yogis. Yoga was one way I moved through my fear. "The universe is represented by every one of its particles. Everything is made of one hidden stuff. The world clothes itself in a drop of dew. The true doctrine of omnipresence is that God appears with all his parts in every moss and cobweb."



"The universe is represented by every one of its particles. Everything is made of one hidden stuff."

Jesus taught us, "I and the father are one." There is God in every instance, there is God in every encounter. There's good in every encounter. We have to look for it. We have to dig deep sometimes and realize that, yes, this is my journey, and I am not a victim. I am not fearful. I am here to boldly live out my life. And yes, I may judge some things. I'm not perfect, but I am alive. I am the fullness of good. That's the great life. That's our inheritance, that fullness of life. That is the will. Our inheritance, a great life, a good life.

So as we let go of those negative thoughts, that dis-ease in the body, and we meet it fairly and squarely in the moment without fear or hesitation, we can walk through life, full out singing and yeah, sometimes digging in deep, but it's all good. And humankind will prosper and grow as each of us prospers and grows, living the abundance that we truly are. And so it is.

Meditation

Worship

Talk

Podcast

Awaken to Spirit, Rev. Valerie Mansfield



Awaken to Spirit

Rev. Valerie Mansfield

We awaken to Truth that we are God expressing as the Christ in us or the I AM. This awakening creates peace on earth through our greater understanding of Oneness.

Walking in the spirit of love makes us free. We talk a lot in Unity about oneness and spirit and awakening, and it's sometimes difficult to explain to others. How do you get there? How do we practice it? What does it really mean to be awakened to spirit? For me, it is walking the path. It's walking that light of my own journey, which is going to be different from everybody else's journey.

We really awaken to the truth when we walk on the holy ground and follow the great I am. In Unity, Jesus is our way-shower. We stop and think, "What would Jesus do?" How would Jesus proceed in this moment, to create that peace within ourselves, to create that love as ourselves, for ourselves, to create that greater understanding of what life is really about?

What I came up with this time was to be in balance. And what I mean by that is to be in balance in our heart and in our soul. That's when the awakening really takes place, when spirit is alive in us, as that love, as that harmony. That's when we experience oneness - not only with ourselves, but with all that is right. We shift into that truth of our being into that higher consciousness.

We do it through faith. I have yet to find a blueprint that works for everybody. If anybody has one, please let me know. That's my analytical mind, I'm going to try to figure it out. We each have to figure it out for ourselves. What works for me may not necessarily work for you, and what works for you may not necessarily work for someone else.

At the same time, we all get to the same place of that love, that spirit rising in us. Jesus showed us the way to enter that higher realm through faith and that inner spirit of law. What I mean by that is that law being the truth of our mind, of our being, that divine mind, the greater than we are mind, is how humanity is saved. It's how we, as individuals are saved. I don't use that word a lot in Unity because it scares people. You know, when I start talking about being "saved," I'm not talking about the physical outside act of a baptism. I'm talking about an internal acceptance of who you are, where you're at, and how you're unfolding.

What does that transformation look like in you? What do you realize and recognize as the conscious shift? Many of us seek outside of ourselves. I know sometimes I try to figure out what's going to come next. Instead of going within I reach out and say, "Okay, what's the pulse in the world what's going on and where do I fit in it?" Then I stop and I think, "Okay, that's not going to get me my answers. My answers are going to come from within me." I stop just to be present in that moment with spirit and say, "Guide me to that space within and show me the way. I will follow if I know the way."

"Guide me to that space within and show me the way. I will follow if I know the way."



It makes life a lot easier when we ask from within. When we ask outside of ourselves, we're asking the mirror of ourselves to show us the way. Instead of asking the artificial self, we're asking that spirit within us. We slowly allow ourselves to realize that it's okay when we're seeking outside of ourselves. But we know that when we seek within the real answers come. The grace that we are looking for shows up when we see and enter for ourselves.

Jesus told us that we have to be born anew. What does that mean when we're finding spirit, to be born anew? For me, it means to change and find a new way of being. It can be a small change. It doesn't have to be a life shattering change. It's just a change in consciousness. That small change takes me a little bit higher in that realm of spiritual being. So it can be the little modules of change.

I'm going to do yoga for 30 days. I'm going to take time for self care. What does that look like? That may look like being quiet, painting, drawing, reading, or just sitting without thought, without having to be at that next Zoom meeting. It's really important that we take these little nuggets of self care. That is awakening to our own spiritual self. It's our own healing that we're embracing when we do self-care.

It's not selfish to do self care. The world will still be there if you take an hour out of every day, to be quiet, to go for a walk, to do yoga, just to be caring to you. When you embrace yourself in that love, and really think about what that feels like and the emotions that arise within you, you radiate that out into the world. It's that inner peace that radiates when we do our own self care. That inner love that radiates changes our thinking at the deepest levels of consciousness.

Our beliefs and our patterns have to change, but they don't have to all change at once. It can be in small doses, because that's really the enfoldment of spirit. When you're working in harmony with that divine, universal consciousness, cosmos, spirit, whatever word you give it, that's when you're really seeking to live from that kingdom within.

We seek to live in the little moments, not just the big ones. The little transformations give us a place of unconditional love. The more we practice awareness of the little things, the more we become aware of our own unfoldment. Sometimes I'm just in awe of the way the universe all aligns up in harmony and things just unfold. I think, "Wow, I couldn't have made this happen in a hundred million years." Yet, when you align with

yourself, in yourself, in that harmony, with spirit; it's easy, it's graceful. There's nothing hard about it when we allow things to unfold.



When you align with yourself in that harmony with spirit, it's easy, it's graceful.

I talk about self care, but we also have to let go of that expectation of something in return. As we awaken to spirit, we have to realize that we are open and receptive to all the good in the universe, and we send all the good in the universe outward without any expectations of anything coming to us. We know that God is our source therefore in spirit we are always taken care of. When we give with the expectation of getting something in return, we're looking outside of ourselves. Instead, we must give unconditional love and be open to whatever good the universe will hand to us. We know the good in the universe is already ours, so we don't have to worry about it. We don't have to think about it. It's already manifested in us and through us. We seek that transformation from within, through that oneness in our mind, in our body, and in our spirits.

We have to realize that when we're in that space of oneness, in the Trinity or the Holy Spirit, that it's not the little "I" that does the work, it's the Christ within - the spirit within that's rising - that actually does the work. The first thing I say every week in our 9:00 a.m. meditation is, "It is not I, but the Christ within who does the work." It's important for me to remember that I don't have to force things to happen. I don't have to create this big analytical diagram of the way the world's going to flow. Sometimes I can get caught up in all of that. I have to just breathe and allow spirit to unfold in the universe with me. I have to allow that Holy Spirit to become alive.

"It is not I, but the Christ within who does the work."



Part of our experiences with baptisms of the Holy Spirit have been focused on the outer cleansing of our physical body with the water as purification. The real truth of the Holy Spirit baptism is when our heart and soul join together and find spirit within us. Know that from consciousness, there are no limitations, that we walk together free in this life with ease and grace. We do this not only physically, but mentally and emotionally. We can be baptized in the Holy Spirit any time, any day, because we can do it ourselves, that cleansing of our thoughts and our alignment of our heart and soul.

Charles Fillmore tells us that there is a great fundamental truth behind baptisms. People feel cleansed and their purity arises within them. There's fundamental changes that happen, but the water doesn't really have anything to do with it, it's just the outer symbol that we use. That inward grace and omnipresence that is alive within us, as us. That spiritual principle enters into our consciousness and cleans it. That is the spiritual power of awakening - we can each do it on our own.

This is a quote from Charles Fillmore from May 16, 1923: "The baptismal of Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit is the baptismal in which you breathe upon yourself. We are told that Jesus did breathe upon his disciples and said, 'Receive ye the Holy spirit.' And they received it. They got something. They went through a transformation in the organic structure of the body. The cleansing force went down into the very cells of the organism. And those disciples became what we call the redemption, the renewal of this cellular force of the organism, and that is eternal life. And there is no other eternal life."

The spiritual power that we receive through the Holy Spirit is what heals every molecule in our being and in the world around us when we join together as that one awakened spirit. That's when we're all truly living as peace. It starts with us. It starts within. It radiates out. Peace is available to each and every one of us, not only within ourselves, but in our outer world that we create and manifest. It starts within. We each have to say, "I let go and I let God." Get out of the way and let the great I am show you the way.

It's not easy. Sometimes fear will challenge us and show up in different ways. Remember the spiritual power is within you. When you develop those greater senses and you become aware of other people's unrest, breathe. Breathe into your spiritual power and allow them to unfold. The pain in your heart will shift from self to empathy for others. We have to start with ourselves to heal the pain before we can reach out and assist others in healing the pain.

Your prayer work will become prayer work for others, because there's a greater oneness, a greater consciousness and state of being for all. Just take the moment and be. Be in that spiritual power that you are radiating that unconditional love and walking through the grace of life.

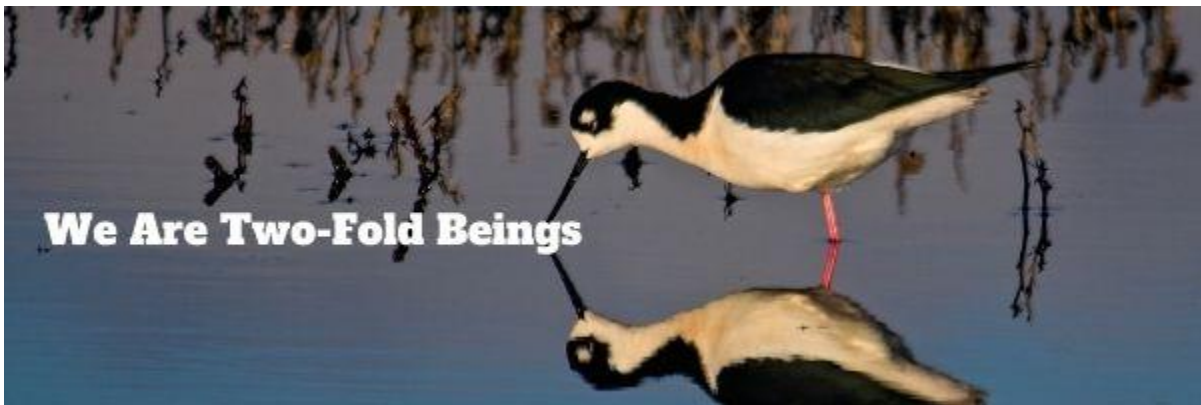
Meditation

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Talk

Podcast

We Are Two-Fold Beings, Rev. Valerie Mansfied



We live in both the physical and spiritual worlds. This walk is life. A life in balance, is a life of happiness, harmony and vision.

That is what love is. That is our heart expressing. As we walk together our morning will come, and because we live both in this physical and spiritual world, the walk is life. It's a life that we all seek in balance, a life of happiness, harmony, and vision for the good, not only for the good of ourselves but for the good of all. I truly think that that's why Unity, especially Unity of Louisville, is growing during this pandemic because we all have to wake up to that self-awareness of love, that self-awareness of life. We are the ones who have the answers. Nobody can give us the answers.

We have to go within ourselves for those answers. It sounds simple, but it seems like we talk about it a whole lot. Our thoughts, our prayers, what we are praying for is what we're getting. When you're looking at life and it's not quite hitting the mark for you, and you want to be born anew to wake up to a new morning, I suggest you look at what your thoughts are. What are you praying for? We know in Unity our thoughts are the creative power manifested in the outer world.

I love the song *Our Thoughts Are Prayers*, because that's how we begin, in prayer. But we don't pray outside of ourselves, we pray within. We ask for the answers to be unfolded. Look at our own senses, look at who we are right now. If everybody just stopped and took a breath and had to say who they were right now, what would your answer be?

For me, it's a divine expression of life, and I don't always get it right. I go within and I ask, "Okay, what am I doing? Where are we going? Show me a way through this pandemic, through ministering at two churches, through social injustice, through racial injustice, through everything that's gone on, political upheaval. Show me the way, because if I got to do it on my own, in my own mind, there is no way I'm going to figure it out." When I trust, I go within and trust spirit to say, "Okay, this is what life looks like, and I know that's not the truth. There's a bigger picture somewhere. So connect me to that bigger picture and show me the way of where I'm going and what I'm doing."

Eric Butterworth tells us, "There is a tremendous source of wisdom and presence, right where you are. Act from that belief and all things will become easy." And when I read that, I thought, "Wow, you know, a lot of times I'll say it's not easy, but the truth is, it really is easy. We just have to do it." So I'm gonna read that again. "There is a tremendous resource of wisdom and presence, right where you are. Act from that belief and things will become easy." If we do nothing but that, life begins to be in harmony, balance is restored in the outer world, and love expands. He goes on to say that "You can only be you. You can't do anything that is not part of your innate potential. A swan cannot become a duck. You can only do that which is the fulfilling potential of your life."

We have to let go and get out of our own way. I know that I had to, sometimes I still do. My ego kicks in occasionally. That's like fighting water up a stream trying to make

something happen. All I really have to do when somebody says, "Hey, I want to do this," is go into prayer. And I say, "Is this the right way? Is this the right path?" If spirit says yes, then I say, "Okay, go ahead," and I let it go. I let it unfold because it's not always mine to do.

**We have to let go and
get out of our own way.**



Life is really always asking, "Who are you?" "Who am I?" Because there are two parts of us. There's that human self, this physical body, and my ego, which is good. I'm not saying ego is bad because I don't think it is. I think it's the driving force that makes us happen. Sometimes mine might need to be calmed down a little bit, but that's okay.

There's that spiritual side of us leading the way. If spirit is leading, and ego is driving, what is the potential of life in harmony and the vision that you see manifesting in the world? Pretty powerful when you think about it like that. When we work in harmony with that spiritual, human essence of ourselves, how much power is there to create and manifest in this world? Our own life of good ripples out as love and good for others to be enfolded and empowered, to bring good into their lives and to bring their life into harmony and balance.

I think that's why every one of us shows up here on Sunday mornings. We show up as leaders, we show up as seekers, but we are leading a different way, a new way of walking the path. We are the answer. For many of us, we've wandered through eternity never finding that answer. So here we are again, and for some of us, we're leading the way to find the answers, not only for ourselves but for humanity as a whole, that we are bigger than ourselves. The small self, there is a bigger picture that we fit into, that we are a part of. We just need to get out of our way and follow the path, follow spirit.

My answer is going to be different than yours. When I ask a question, your answer is going to be different from someone else's, because we are all unique. It takes all of us as a community to create truth in the world. Not only this community of Unity, but our sister church, Unity of East Louisville and Unity churches all over. The mission church that's meeting the activity center right now, the Baptist church down the street, the

Jewish synagogue, and every other culture and religion around the world - we are all one. We are all neighbors. We just don't recognize each other as that oneness. We are no different. Our answers are different because our path is different, but together we are one, and oneness is the way.

For those of you who have been around for a while, you know that I am a Jesus person. I love my brother who shows me the way. For others there could be another prophet, another Messiah that you resonate with more, and that's fine. Follow your path, follow your good, wherever it leads you. But Jesus is my way-shower, and he demonstrated to us to go within and to find the Christ, find the God in you, that "I am," and then follow your path in life. It's not a struggle. I think I said that last week when I was talking about the Holy Spirit, it's really not a struggle. Life is not meant to be a struggle. That's a bunch of hogwash where I come from. Life is meant to be happy, harmonious, beloved.



We follow our inner guidance to that path to transform ourselves first.

We have to begin to allow the I am to unfold into that happiness, into that creative power. Manifesting the life we are here to live, showing the way for others. Unity's vision, our mission, is to transform ourselves and the world through love, healing, and service. That's very empowering. We follow our inner guidance to that path to transform ourselves first. You have to put on your own oxygen mask before you put on the mask of your family, your children. We have to take care of ourselves first, and that's not selfish. That's self-care. That's self-awareness. Then we show the way, just as Jesus showed us the way.

Sometimes it makes folks really uncomfortable because there's a lot of fear in this world. So many of us are so used to being told what to do when to do it, how to do it, that we don't really think on our own. We've gotten out of that habit of going within and finding our own answers. It's kind of scary. Life gets to be scary, and that's when you really need to stop and go within and ask for the path to be illuminated for you. Because it does not have to be scary. We do not have to live in fear.

Finding ourselves is like a scavenger hunt. Think about it, you're on a scavenger hunt, and you're looking for these different items, and when you find them, "Yay!" And then you go onto the next one. So that's really what we are doing. Life is like a scavenger hunt and every day we wake up to find a new gem. No matter what that gem is, it's going to lead us down a path. It's a path of good when we're following from our intuitive power. Every day we go within, connect to that higher self, ask for that new gem, and it appears. We follow it to finding balance, harmony, or a bigger vision. Life's bigger than we are.

Sometimes I'm just in awe of the way things unfold. As you all know, sometimes I tend to argue with spirit, like "What, you want me to do what now? Yeah. I don't know about that one." But I usually end up saying yes. I might struggle with it in my mind because it's scary and it puts a little fear in me. Yet when I get out of my own way, out of my own mind, and I go into my heart space and I say, "Okay, this is for the greater good. And it's a greater good that I really don't know or see right now. But I already understand." I have that inner knowing that it's the right way to go. We have to look at what we value when we're making those choices. What are our values, and how do they change? You know, I'm not the same person I was 10 years ago and tomorrow I'm going to be a different person than I am today.



**Are we trying to stuff
new ideas into an old
wineskin?**

Are we trying to stuff new ideas into an old wineskin? Are we trying to stuff new things into our heads and not letting our hearts unfold? Spirit is the source. If you're trying to stuff it into an old wineskin, I say, go buy a new one. Just empty out the old one, let everything come out, and go buy a new wineskin and put your new stuff in it. Create that space within yourself. How do we do that? You energetically go into your own being and you feel where there's discomfort. You feel where there's a block, and you breathe into it and you let it go and push it out. When those old thought patterns come in, you stop them and say, "No, I have a new thought, a new idea, a new way of being, and I'm following that path."

There is a guiding force that is bigger than all of us. We're part of that bigger picture. We all have a part to play in the role of humanity. In order to play the part, we have to remember what we already know, what we have forgotten because it's right there. We just have to tap into it. We have to find and stand in faith without fear and allow the higher presence to guide us.

There's a little poem here that I'm going to share, called *The Creed*, by Ella Wheeler Wilcox. It's older, so the language is a little masculine. You can change it if you choose to. I'm going to read it as it was.

“Whoever was begotten by pure love, and came desired and welcomed into life, is of immaculate conception whose heart is full of tenderness and truth. Who loves mankind more than he loves himself and cannot find room in his heart for hate may be another Christ. We all may be the saviors of the world if we believe in the divinity which dwells in us. And we worship it and nail our grosser selves, our tempers, our griefs, and our unworthy aims upon the cross. Who gives us love to all pays kindness for unkindness, smiles for frowns, and lends new courage to each fainting heart, and strengthens hope and scatters joys abroad. He too is a redeemer son of God.”

I wanted to read this poem because it's that reminder that you, too, are God, God is in you. God is everywhere. There is no spot where God is not. You are all that is in the universe. You have the same capabilities that Jesus, our way-shower did. Together as a faith community, who has decided in the middle of a pandemic to grow and live by the values of faith, integrity, healing, and service, we are pushing the boundaries of everybody's comfort zones, and that's okay. Spirit is just calling us to be that which we say we truly are, a diverse community filled with love. Is it easy? Actually, it is. It really is easy.

Spirit is just calling us to be that which we say we truly are, a diverse community filled with love.



We join together with spirit and let go of the fear about how we're going to do it, what we're going to do. We live in harmony, together side by side, and we walk the path that each of us is drawn to. Yet we walk it together as spiritual beings. When we follow our

individual intuitive awareness, we are actually doing our own work. Spirit will join us together with others to do the work of the good for all.

We know our good reflects in our mind and body. What we are seeking we already are, we just have to let it unfold. We all want happiness. We all want to live in harmony. We all have a purpose. When the fear rises, fear because of change, fear because of growth, fear of the pandemic, fear of the illness, fear of death - if we let that take root, the fear grows and there's no room for the good. We allow it to flow outward into Mother Earth to be transformed into that love. We know that love brings good. We know all of this is the truth. Yet we doubt our abilities to go within and *be* good, to do the work that we were taught to do.

When your morning comes around you'll be alone and know you followed through the path of truth. Go within, know who you are, what you're here to do. What love do you share? Today is a day of love, so love yourself by manifesting happiness, live your life in harmony and join together in spirit. Expand the love to all those around the world. For others who are seeking balance in their life, be a way-shower be a leader, shine the light of love and harmony for all to see.

I love you. I bless you. I behold the living presence of spirit in each of you.

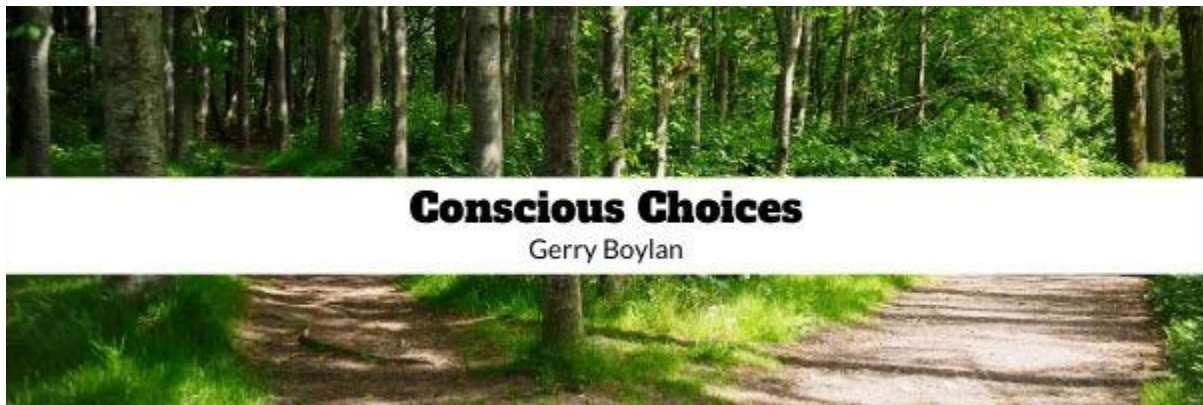
Meditation

Worship

Talk

Podcast

Conscious Choices, Gerry Boylan



We get to choose whether we live in Coma Consciousness or Conscious Awareness. Do we allow fear, sickness, guilt or the outer to rule? Do we stand in faith and rule from our innermost higher self?

May all beings be at peace. May all beings be free of suffering. May all beings remember who they are.

I could not help but think of that marvelous saying of Jesus, "The father hears your prayer even before it is spoken. The father knows the desire of your heart even before it is expressed." If we really knew that, how would it affect our choices? Would we choose differently? Would we choose more gently? Would we choose more openly? Would we ask for help? Not just when we need it, but ask for help each moment of each day.

Help me to choose what's right for me. Most of the time I don't know. I think I know what I need. I know what I want. I think that getting what I want is going to make me happy, but it doesn't usually, or if it does it's only for a split second. What would it be like if my continual prayer was, "Lord that I may see. Show me, allow me to manifest, allow me to open myself, to allow me to create what it is that I truly need - not what I want - but what I truly need in this particular moment in my life?"

I continue to go back to that wonderful line from the rock opera, Tommy, "See me, feel me, touch me, heal me." It might not have been meant that way originally, but to me that is such a marvelous prayer. "See me, feel me, touch me, heal me." Notice what that does to our choices. Instead of choosing what I want, instead of even trying to choose what I need, I open myself to the truth of my soul's yearning at this particular moment. I allow myself to be healed, I allow myself to be fed, I allow myself to be held, I allow myself to be touched, I allow myself to be real.

Sometimes I think I am free, but I really wonder if I am. We all showed up here on Sunday morning because that's what we do on Sunday morning. "Oh yeah, I go to Gerry's class or I check in on Unity," and I do, because that's what I do. It's what you do, but is it free? Did I do it just because I'm used to doing it? What would it be like to take a moment just to step back and ask myself, "What are all the things that might influence my choices in life?" Notice what you begin to come up with.

I remember years ago, I was working in a treatment center for alcohol and drug rehabilitation. I was talking to a class of family members who were rather hostile because they didn't particularly like the idea that their son/daughter/spouse was in treatment and didn't understand anything about alcoholism or other kinds of addiction. I was trying to get the message across without beating dead horses, and I came up with this idea. I said to them, "Is there anything in your life that you would like to change?" It's a rhetorical question, but you can imagine raising your hand or not.



**"Is there anything in
your life that you
would like to change?"**

I said, "Do you have a general idea of what you need to do in order to make that change possible?" I had confirmation from everybody in the audience. For instance, say I would like to be in better physical shape. That's what I'd like. And I know the things that I need to do. I need to drink more water. I need to put more fruits and vegetables in my diet. Blah, blah, blah. We know all of the things we need to do.

Third question: "How come you're not doing it?" All of a sudden you could see this look of consternation on people's faces. They began to realize - if they were open enough to it - that there were any number of goals in their lives that they could achieve. They had the methods and the means of being able to achieve these goals but they weren't doing anything about it. Now it's a really difficult step to recognize that you are choosing not to put in practice what you already know. Nobody likes to look at that. I don't like to look at that, because I've got to ask myself those same three questions all the time. I don't like to look at it. I know nobody likes to look at that, but the crux of the matter is: "How come I do what I don't want to do? I don't do what I love. I do what I hate. What's the matter with me?" The answer could be really simple: you are a human being and you tend to avoid responsibility. You would much rather blame it on someone else or something else. To be responsible for getting my body in shape means that I'm also responsible if it doesn't get in shape. I'd much rather blame somebody else for that impossibility than to take on that responsibility myself.

Now we can raise that to all sorts of different levels. This is not about judgment, please. Because it is very easy once we start getting into self-questioning like that to fall into judgments. "There must be something really the matter with me, because I'm not doing this right." It's not about that at all. It's about beginning to enter into a consciousness that is sometimes referred to in spiritual literature as the witness or the observer. The witness or the observer consciousness is part of our spiritual being that has the ability to step out of a particular situation and to see it in a very non-judgemental but understanding kind of way. It's not psychological dissociation, but it is that certain amount of detachment of stepping away.

Let's suppose I'm having difficulty with someone in my life whom I love and who loves me back, that somehow or another that relationship just doesn't feel right. There's something missing or something that needs to be done. I don't know what that is, and I don't want to blame the other person for that because I realize that I'm responsible for whatever this is too. In order for me to be able to understand what it is and how to be able to deal with it, I need to take a step out of that emotional state of mind that lense of "Something's wrong here." Take a step out of that emotional state of mind and take a look at this in a very non-judgmental, non-attached kind of way. I do that. I step out of it, I look at myself and I look at this other person. I say, "Now what's going on here?"

Maybe one of the first things I notice is that somehow or another, I am carrying around a sense of guilt or shame that says, "I'm not doing enough in this relationship." I'm projecting that on the other person and saying, "I think that's why they're pushing me away," which has nothing to do with the truth. It is what's going on with me. When I allow myself to be in that objective, nonjudgmental state of mind - if I am open enough to it - all of a sudden I realize there are things that I can do to make that situation different. It's not that the other person has to do anything, but maybe what I need to do is stop for a minute and let go. Say, "I am feeling guilty about something that I don't even know if it really exists or not. "

"How can I choose this differently? How could I see this differently?"



Most of that is my own self-talk in regards to my own self-doubt. So what would it be like in my relationship with this other person, if I were to let go of all of that stuff? all of a sudden by asking that question, the stuff that I have been holding onto begins to disappear, sort of melts like the snow. I realize the only thing that is getting in the way, the only thing that's skewed about this relationship, is my thoughts about myself. I can do something about that.

My favorite commercial is "Could have had a V8." I could do this differently. Course of Miracles suggests that's a wonderful question to ask ourselves. I would say to myself, "How can I choose this differently? How could I see this differently?" If you don't like what you've done, the choices you've made, you can change that!

Leo Buscaglia, The Love Doctor, said, "If you don't like the scene, get the hell off the stage." The metaphysical reality of that is, if you don't like the scene, *create another one*. You have the ability to do that. None of us needs to be controlled by external events. That doesn't mean we're not going to be. Realize that we are the ones who are allowing that to happen. We're making that into a truth, that if something is going on we have to somehow be affected by that. If that's going on, then this is how I am supposed to react to it.



If you don't like the scene, create another one.

We had a great example of that recently in the elections. People voted and people didn't vote. That was a choice. People voted for one side, people voted for the other side. That was another choice. For me I really wonder, how many choices were made out of fear? How many choices were made out of outrage, how many choices were made because we thought that we couldn't live without that choice? How many choices were, "I'm not going to make a choice?"

What I'm suggesting is if we were to stop and look at it, asking ourselves the question, "Were my choices really free? Or were they dictated by fear, by outrage? Were they dictated by past experience? Were they dictated by projections into the future? Were they chosen, or choices that I made out of my own sense of hatred or separateness? If they were, were they really free?"

I'm not making a judgment about that. This happens to me all the time when I'm given the opportunity to make a sermon like this. I have to get into my own space of self-questioning and say, how does this work for me? How free am I? How free am I writing this sermon? Do I want everybody to like me because I did a good job? Is that going to interfere with my freedom?

I'm suggesting that for practically everything that you and I do, there are hundreds or thousands of pieces of mixed motivations that we are not even conscious of. I remember doing a hypnotherapy class a number of years ago. One of the teachers who I really liked and respected said, "At least 80% of all of your actions during a day are

motivated by the unconscious." You're not even aware that you're making a choice, or the choice that you're making is influenced by past behavior, by past ideas, by prejudices, by old things, by old messages, by old tapes, by old ideas. You're not even aware that you're not doing it on your own.

A student once asked his master, "Master, what is the secret of spiritual life?"

The master said, "awareness."

The student said, "Master, I don't quite understand."

The master cleared his throat and said, "Awareness."

The student was still somewhat befuddled. "Master. I still ---"

"AWARENESS!"

You are the meaning-maker of your life. No one and nothing else is.



What would it be like if you were aware how unconditionally loved you are? Would that influence your choices? Would that make a difference about how you responded to yourself? About how you responded to your own self-talk? About how you responded to other people? What would it be like to be aware that you will always have the freedom of choice? What would it be like to be aware that as one of my teachers likes to say, you are the meaning-maker of your life? You decide what everything in your life means. You have a choice, to decide one way or from thousands of different ways of taking a look at, "What does this mean? What does it mean to me?" You are the meaning-maker of your life. No one and nothing else is.

I was gifted with a piece of spiritual wisdom a number of years ago that keeps coming back to me. That is the question: "Does what I am planning on doing or what I am thinking about open my heart or does it close my heart?" I try to ask myself this question every once in a while. I've gotten to the point - and I've noticed this with quite a few

other people - that we can actually feel, almost on a physical or vibrational level, what it's like to have a closed heart, and what it's like to have an open heart.

We can know that. Part of my trip right now is being aware of that. Is my heart open? Is it closed? I can almost feel that vibrationally. When something happens and I fall into judgment or anger or outrage or separateness - BAM! - it's like a door being closed. I feel my heart close up. What kind of choices are available to me with a closed heart? Not many. What kind of choices are available to me with an open heart? Practically as many as I want.

Can I walk through a day becoming a little more aware of having an open heart or a closed heart? There's no rules here. There's no way of saying, "Okay, this is what you should do. This is how you should choose." That is going to vary for each one of us, probably moment to moment. What is the best choice for me at this moment might not be the best choice for me five minutes from now. I don't know that. Neither do you. We can plan for the next 5,000 years, but none of us knows what's going to happen in the next minute.



I make a choice to do an act of service. That choice blesses everybody, blesses everything, blesses the universe.

I'm sure Valerie had to contend with that most of last week with opening the church for White Flag. I really honor you and the church for doing that. That was a choice you made, and just an absolutely beautiful one. Thank you for that. Notice what that does. That blesses everybody. I make a choice to do this particular act of service. Now, obviously some individuals are directly blessed by that, but in a very real sense, in a way that goes beyond our human understanding, that blesses *everybody*, blesses everything, blesses the universe. It is so powerful and so beautiful. That's a choice that we make. I can see love instead of this. I can see peace instead of this.

One of my favorite stories about choice is in Christian scripture, the story of Martha and Mary, which you're probably familiar with. Jesus was visiting with Lazarus' family, with whom he was great friends, and Mary, who just sat at his feet, almost like a cat sitting in the sunshine just sort of sucking up this absolutely wonderful, loving presence. Martha,

who is much more practical, is in the kitchen cooking dinner, but of course she notices all these other people who are not cooking dinner who are sort of basking in the sunlight. She starts banging some pots. Do you ever do this? You start banging some pots and pans together, just to get their attention, to let them know, "I'm really sweating here, man. I'm really working hard." Finally, since nobody recognizes all the banging, the pots and pans, or the work she's doing, she complains about it. And Jesus wonderfully says, "Martha, thou art busy about many things, but Mary has chosen the better part."

Now that's really nice, but someone still has to cook dinner. What he was saying, I believe is, "Martha, you can also choose the better part in cooking dinner. You don't have to sit and bask in the sunlight to get the unconditional I offer each one of you. All you have to do is choose to change your point of view."

One of my favorite examples of that is from when Thich Nhat Hanh was talking to a group of people. And he said, "When you're doing any everyday task, you can make that into an act of love." No matter what it is. His example was "When you're doing the dishes, imagine that each dish is a little baby Buddha." How would that change doing the dishes? I'm still doing the dishes, but I'm turning it into an act of love. What a powerful expression of choice. I'm still doing what's necessary. I'm still doing what I need to do, but I'm not carrying that around with me as a burden. I am doing it as an act of service and an act of love.

"When you're doing the dishes, imagine that each dish is a little baby Buddha."



Every moment, every day, we begin with the idea of asking for help. "Lord, that I may see, help me to choose to have an open heart in doing whatever it is that I am being called to do today." Whether it is giving a sermon, shoveling snow, opening my house, opening my home to someone who needs it, or just sitting down and having breakfast. Can I make that into an act of love? Can I choose that to be an act of love rather than just something that I'm doing? It is only the ego that thinks, "Oh my God, that seems so exhausting to be aware every minute." And yet the soul, the spiritual aspect of our being said, "Wouldn't it be wonderful to be open to the truth of being unconditionally loved

every moment of every day and to have the possibility of being able to share that divine union with unconditional love with everyone I meet and everyone I see.

May all beings be at peace. May all beings be free of suffering. May all beings remember who they are. Thank you.

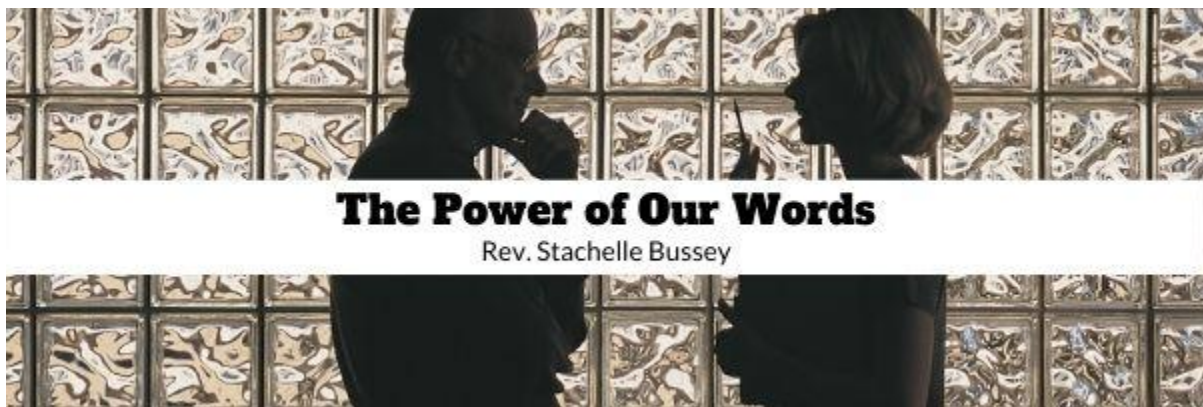
Meditation

Worship

Talk

Podcast

The Power of Our Words, Rev. Stachelle Bussey

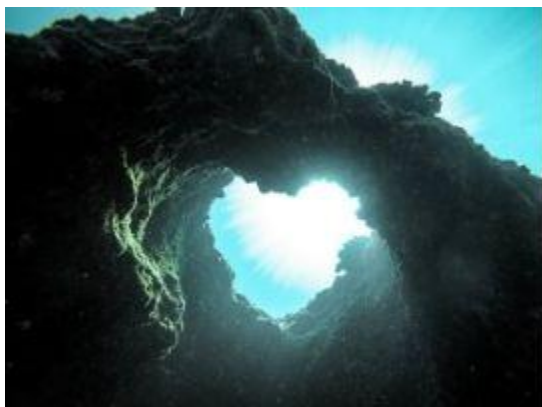


We are God/Spirit in action and our gift is the highest power in the universe, the conscious power of thought. We have control over our own thoughts. Our thoughts are our creativity center in which we manifest our life and world.

I do like to do these kinds of things, because I think it's important that people understand that I'm not about fake diversity and fake inclusion. I am very grateful to call Rev. Valerie a mentor and also a friend. She keeps trying to get me to do the healing thing; I just haven't got there yet. There are just a few of us who are here, most of you are online. I am absolutely grateful for the ministry of Unity, which literally came in and rescued the Hope Buss and allowed us to operate and do our outreach from here. I'm very grateful for all the faces that are on paper in the sanctuary. I'm thankful for Nicole who is my partner on this journey. It has not been an easy one, but we're here.

I have the privilege today of talking on a subject that I'm still learning about myself. That's the power of words. I was so glad when I found out that Unity was Christian because I was tripping a little bit, but I'm so glad that Unity encompasses all of it. Luke 6:45 says, "A good man or human brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart."

My focus for today: "For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of." We are going to talk about the power of words. I guarantee you, the power of words and the things that we do say - I can say something like, "Oreos," and I know where a lot of people's minds went. We all went to Oreos and some of us started thinking about how many we could eat before we had too much. Or we start thinking about things like food. With virtual church and coronavirus, when you start saying things you really understand the power of words. In 2020 going into 2021, when we cannot physically be together, I think our words have literally gained so much meaning that we never even thought they would have.



“A good man brings good things out of the good in his heart and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil in his heart.”

I don't know about you, but I've been in some tough situations and predicaments. I've also had my fair share of arguments. Don't judge me. I like to argue, I like to debate. We all know how the typical disagreement goes: a few words back and forth, a few choice words are sometimes thrown around. You know what I mean when I say choice. It's those times where you are worked up, and out of nowhere a cuss word or something just slips. You may act like you are perfect, but I'm just going to be real. A cuss word just

slips, or better yet, something unkind or something hurtful comes from your mouth. Sometimes you say to yourself, "Where did that come from?" Have you ever just said something and shocked yourself?

Have you ever said some things that left your lips faster than you could catch them, and the minute that they came out you wish you could take it back. You start feeling regret, maybe shame. If you're like me, sometimes you're disappointed in yourself that you let yourself get so worked up that you would even let something like that come from your lips. After all, we do claim to be spiritual people. Maybe you've been in that situation before with your spouse. Maybe you've been in that situation before with your children. Rev. Valerie, maybe you've been in that situation before with Unity? I don't know. Maybe you've been in that situation before at your job, where you can literally feel the sting of your words the minute it left your lips and landed in someone's ears.

It's been me before. If you can be honest, has it ever been you? You sit next to the person who you had the argument with, or you just keep looking at the camera, keep looking at the screen. If somebody says something to you, or you are sitting next to the person that offended you, you just keep looking away. Even after years and years of being told and reminded, "Think before you speak." My mom said it all the time, my godfather, my teachers said it. Knowing the impact and the power of our words, it seems that the rule doesn't stick to us when we need it to stick to us the most.

Think before you speak.



Where did these words come from? Why in intense moments or highly emotional moments do we use our words as weapons? If you asked my personal opinion, I think a few things happen. I think we use our words as weapons because sometimes we get defensive. We immediately go into protection mode. Somebody might say something you don't like. Just the other day there was a Facebook situation, somebody said something to my partner Nicole. I almost lost my mind. I immediately went into defense mode. Like, "Hold on, you don't get to say that." We start to play these games with our words, and we use them as weapons toward each other. I think we do that because

that's the first line of our defense mechanism. 'You're not going to get me before I get you.'

If you're like me, you like competition. My mom used to say something like, "Do you always have to have the last word?" I think we like to win. It's sad because sometimes that winning comes at the cost of taking jabs at somebody you love or somebody you have to work with. The last word hasn't always really worked in my favor, but I think I am infamous for getting the last word. A couple of my school referrals probably said it.

The other thing is, maybe it was something that we really wanted to say. We just needed the opportunity to say it. I think that's the biggest one. Sometimes when our words slip, sometimes when we say things in the heat of the moment, sometimes we're just like, "Where did that come from?" You're just waiting on an opportunity. Sometimes it doesn't have anything to do with the situation, you were just waiting on an opportunity to say what you really wanted to say. You need to get that off your chest because you've been holding it for a long time. So you found this perfect high, emotional opportunity to really say. "I don't like you!"

In these stressful moments our words become our swords, cutting. Sometimes they cut so deeply. Let's face it, would you ever admit to yourself that when you start saying stuff like that, you lost control? That wisdom and advice of choosing our words wisely seems to leave us when we start having debates and conversations, especially ones that lift up our differences, and literally cripples our ability to tap into our spiritual wisdom. Because honestly, we just need to get our point across at the moment. See those are the moments when our words expose our spiritual immaturity. This is where we are.

Jesus being real like Jesus is, takes us through the long sermon. They call it the sermon on the plane. You know, Jesus goes all the way around a corner and gets back somewhere else.

Call into the forefront the things in which we need to mature, especially in our language. Here in this passage in Luke 6, there's a huge crowd - Jesus, wherever he goes, draws a large crowd - gathered in front of Jesus, and they have come because they wanted to hear him teach, kind of like they do Rev. Val. They came to do two things. They wanted to hear Jesus teach and they wanted to get some healing. Jesus goes down the line. (Read the whole chapter when you get a chance.)



"Love your enemies and do good, giving without wanting something in return."

It felt like he just put everybody on the bench. "Sit here for a second. You need to hear some things like this." Jesus starts saying things in Chapter Six, like "Do good to those who do good to you." And if I was there, I would have been like, "Jesus, that sounds real simple, but you don't even understand some of the stuff I got to deal with." He started saying stuff like "Love your enemies and do good, giving without wanting something in return." Jesus is laying it on thick in Luke 6. In verse 36, he is commanding them to be merciful and then comes in with the parable like Jesus does, about the blind leading the blind, and then gives this infamous illustration about pulling the plank from your own eye before you try to remove the plank from your brother's eye.

Jesus kind of gives us the mama kind of thing in Chapter Six. Ultimately all of that brings us to our focal point. Verse 45, the dagger of all of our intentions - in verse 43 and 44, he lets us know that a good tree does not bear bad fruit nor does a bad tree bear good fruit and we are known by the fruit that we produce - then he goes for our language. Jesus expands the requirements of the law, shifting it from expectation to transformation.

He says that if we are good followers, good God people, good spiritual people, we should be responding to his words with action. Jesus summarizes his higher standard by stating, "The good person, out of the good treasure of his heart produces good. The evil person, out of his evil treasure, produces evil." Then he comes with the thorn. "For out of the abundance of the heart, our mouth speaks." That hit me differently. After reading all that together, I felt different.

Fruit. What comes from my heart comes out of my mouth. What's in my mouth. All these things in the summary, "The mouth speaks what the heart is full of love." I had to pause and meditate on that for a second. Reverting back to what I was saying in the beginning, maybe I really did mean the words that I said. Could I have meant evil when I said that? That's actually in my heart. This is a text about our words, but it's more about what's in your heart, because from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

In our culture, we believe that the heart houses and deals with these emotions in isolation. We think our heart is just a singular thing that is not connected to anything else. I can rip my heart out because we think that the heart works alone as a separate thing, away from the body. In the text, the biblical concept of heart doesn't stand alone. Its network is bigger than our emotions. It's wider than that. In this text, in the Bible there is no distinction between our minds and our hearts, literally merging our mind, our will, and our emotions together with the language of an organ that can feel, think, and act.

**It's not our works, but
it's our words.**



With this fruit that Jesus mentions that we bear, it's not our works, but it's our words. I didn't think that's the fruit he was talking about. I thought it was like, if you raise your kids right, the kids grow up and do well. That isn't what he was talking about. The fruit the tree bears is literally the words from your heart that come out of your mouth. I feel like I need to hang there for a second. The emphasis belongs on the fact that the fruit we bear is not in our works, but it's in our words.

Christian work without Christian words is like having empty calories. We talked about the Oreos at the beginning. If you have tried to eat healthy, you understand that when it comes to food, empty calories means that the food contains little or no essential vitamins or minerals. In other words, these foods provide nothing of value to your body beyond calories that are excessive pounds. It can give you food, but it can't do anything else. In other words, these foods provide nothing. The only thing it does is add to your waistline and your legs, and that isn't really what you want.

Truthfully works rarely reveal the heart. You can do good work and that may not be the matter of your heart, but words are. We can do all the community service we want. We can march in the streets all we want. We can deliver thousands of meals all over the city of Louisville or wherever you may be watching from. We can open pop-up shelters. We can do daycares. We can build schools. We can write policy with all the good intentions. We can house the orphans. We can feed the hungry. We can clothe the naked and be full of works. At the end of the day, it's about the words that we speak, that reveal the true nature of our heart.

The reason our spiritual communities are struggling is because we've done something well for a long time, we've worked really well. We've done things really well, but it's really not been from the heart. The reason our spiritual communities are struggling is because we think because a person is gifted, or they're good at something because they can do it well. If we learn to listen to their words and the way that they speak to situations, we will find that they have proud hearts and not pure hearts. Proud hearts produce prideful words, but a pure heart produces pure words, pure intentions.

If I could just break down a couple of things. The difference between a prideful heart and a pure heart is a prideful heart always tries to turn everything back to them. I did this. The words they say always have a way of centering what they did, how they did, how well they did, what they can do. A pure heart works and doesn't need the recognition because we understand that it is our spiritual Christian duty to be on this earth and literally be serving leaders. We don't need the recognition.



Proud hearts produce prideful words, but a pure heart produces pure words, pure intentions.

Prideful hearts center, their work, their feelings, and their thoughts, but pure hearts and words, center the need of others and what the need is at the moment. Prideful hearts and prideful words speak with arrogance. Those with pure hearts speak with spiritual awareness. Prideful hearts can cause negative conversations about others who don't work as hard as them or like them. Pure hearts understand the power of the community and the need for all of us to come together. We don't need prideful hearts. We need pure hearts in this work. Prideful hearts and words can reveal a lack of contentment, but pure hearts understand that the call is to serve and literally be at the feet of those who we are serving. We are not better than anybody else.

That's not who we are. We are pure heart people. We are spiritual people. We are called to lead like Jesus with humility. We don't need recognition. We need people who are willing workers, who want to get the work done. Prideful hearts and prideful words express the need for power and control, but pure hearts understand the need and what we can do when we all come together. We are not called to be prideful people or speakers. We are called to be co-laborers with each other faith members and faith

communities. We are called to lead a life of solidarity, of unity, of true oneness. And if our words are full of pride and self gratification, it creates an interception in our oneness. That's what's wrong with us. Our oneness, our unity keeps getting intercepted by people who do go work, but it's prideful work.

Selfishness and prideful hearts are a disruption to the work that we really have to do. It breaks our community. It's toxic. It is contaminating. If everything you speak starts and begins with you then it's empty calories. It has no place in this work. It's not healthy for the church. It's not healthy for the community. It's not healthy anywhere you go. If God, the spirit, lives in our hearts, then our words should reflect it. Our heart should be submitted to the spirit. Our words should reflect the true nature of a living God. Pride is not an attribute of a Christ follower. Pride is not an attribute of a spiritual person. Humility, that is what controls our words. The spirit that lives within us. We are the conduit. We are the carriers of God's spirit. And the power of our words shows the power of the spirit that is working within us. How do we know who you are standing with? We hear the words that you say. The Bible tells us, from an evil man comes evil works, but from a good person, from a good human, comes good fruit.

That's what a community is led by: the spirit. The mouth speaks what is in the heart. Proverbs says death and life are in the power of the tongue. How many people have you killed with your words? How many dreams have we killed with our words? How many jobs? What have we done to our community with the things that we've said? Literally, the power is in our hand to literally speak death or life. What are we speaking to our community? Are we speaking houselessness? Are we doing pop-up shelters? Are we speaking of poverty? Are we trying to create opportunities for people to be powered in economics? What are we speaking to our community? If the city of Louisville is dead, that means the spiritual leaders are not speaking life to it. I know the churches are closed, but the doors could still be open. What are we doing with our words?

Literally, Jesus ascended. And I know we aren't at a Pentecostal church, but he left and said, "I give you this one thing, the power of the Holy Spirit." With the Holy Spirit, what can we do? It seems that we can do the things that Jesus did. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I numbered in the name of Jesus Christ." He grabbed the man's hand and said, "Get up and walk." It's the power of our words that will make the difference. The community we want to see, the unity we want to see, the justice that we want to see. Dying literally starts with the power. What are we speaking? Life or death?

It's the power of our words that will make the difference.



The words I use can reveal whether I'm walking by my own strength, or if I'm walking in the spirit through connection to the mind. I can do good work and not be connected to God. I could do a whole lot of good stuff and not be connected to God. I get passionate about this stuff because it's a whole lot of people doing good stuff because they are gifted, but nothing is changing because their hearts are not in it. It's for something. But what can we do, Unity? I'm just a part of the flock. What can we do? We can open a pop-up. We aren't going to complain about what the government does. We aren't going to complain about what they can do. We just go do what we can do. We come together and we can do it. We literally speak life into the world, a little bit of hope.

What does it mean to have the words of the spirit? What does it actually mean to be moved by the power of words? How do we build God's beloved community with the power of our words?

I ran a pop-up shelter with Leah for seven days and all I kept hearing Leah say was "unity." We are about empowering language. That's what it is. It's posted all around here. It's about empowering language. You know what I'm about. Ain't no power like the power of the people, cause the power of the people don't stop when you lift people up. We ran a pop up shelter where all we could do was give people what we had. Do you know what it meant for people to say, "I'm just glad to feel human?" What did we do? Nothing. Called them by their name. What did we do? Fed them really good food. What did we do? Let them have as much as they want. What did we do? We can't do everything, but we can do something.

Are we empowering people? That's the first thing we need to do. What kind of language? We need empowering language, language that literally lifts people, gives people a hand up and not a hand out. That's what hope is. We need to empower people with our words. When you see somebody who does not look like you, when you see somebody shaking a bucket on the corner, understand, you might not have money to give them but what you can say is, "I see you." Call them by their name.

First thing we need to do is have empowering language. The second thing we need to do, we need to have edifying language. The process by which one gains a greater understanding of something. Someone should have a better idea of how to be spiritual or how to be a community because they came in contact with you. What is edification? We mature together as a community. The third thing, I wasn't even going to say this one, but a language that literally exalts our spirituality and exalts our God.



**We need to use
empowering language,
edifying language, and
language which exalts
our spirituality.**

I don't know about a whole lot of solutions. Now Nicole, she likes policies and the government. I don't like policies, none of that. Our solution for our world right now is a unified church, a unified faith body. And you know what I like to say, it isn't just Christians. It's going to be some Jewish people. It's going to be some Buddhists. It's going to be some Muslims. It's going to be some atheists. It's going to be some stuff I don't even know anything about. We're going to need some African diaspora, we're going to need some ancestors. We're going to need a whole lot of spiritual people to come together for this work. We are not each other's enemy. Injustice is our enemy. We're not each other's enemy. These policies that are racist and literally keep people marginalized and oppressed, those are our enemies, not each other.

We need to exhort our God in our language. "Silver and gold, have I none, but in the name of Jesus Christ, get up and walk." But he grabbed his hand. God asked Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" Ezekiel, like a regular person looked back at God and said, "You're God, can they?" What did God do? "You tell them to live."

Language must be spiritual because that's where our power comes from. We don't have government powers. We have God powers. We have spiritual powers. The last thing we need to have is an eternal language, a language that speaks to building the kingdom of God and seeing the benefits of it here on earth. I don't believe the kingdom of God is far away. I believe that the kingdom of God is us in the making. It's us doing it right now. It's the work that we're doing with some white people, some black people, some Latinx people, all of us coming together and literally saying, this will be our language as a community. Uplifting us, building us, strengthening us, strengthening our community.

That's our language. Does it serve humanity? Then we can't do it. Does it serve humanity? Then we shouldn't say it. Does it uplift people? We shouldn't say it. Does it empower people? Nope. We shouldn't say it. I'm passionate about this work. God is using spiritual people to reconcile this work, to redeem this world. We are the conduits. We are the conduits by which God puts his spirit through and it goes to the world. But then we become the carriers of the Holy Spirit. When somebody gets next to you they shouldn't even feel the same.

Your words have power. I'm choosing heaven today by loving. I'm choosing heaven in my language. In my language I'm choosing heaven today. The way I talk to my brother, I'm choosing heaven. When I speak to my spouse and they make me mad, I'm choosing heaven today. When my kids work my last nerve, I'm choosing heaven today. When I see the homeless man on the street who hasn't had a shower, I'm choosing heaven today. I'm choosing empowering language. I'm choosing edifying language. I'm choosing a language which exalts God and spirituality. I am choosing internal language because that's God's loving community. That's what we're trying to get to. That's the power of our words. Amen.

Meditation

Worship

Talk

Podcast