

20/20 Vision

Jan. 8, 2020

Rev. Richard Rogers

Rev. Richard Rogers: So how much do you like cliché's?

[Congregation laughs]

You know **[laughs]**, there's a part of me that thinks, "You know; I don't really like cliché's..." but I'm really worried that I use them a lot. You know? And then, I thought my talk title of "20/20 Vision" was kind of novel in September/October, when I came up with it. But in the last couple of weeks, *everything* is called Vision 2020 or 20/20 Vision... right? So, apparently it wasn't as imaginative as I thought it was at the time. Right?

So tonight I want to talk about this year and the next decade. And I want to talk about your vision for your life in going forward.

But before we do that, I want to talk about your last year. Because, do you ever kind of move into a new year – so excited about a new year – and you just kind of just cast the last year away? But one of the ideas that I believe is that, if we don't kind of learn from the last year, we tend to repeat it. Has anybody lived the same year more than once?

[Congregation laughs]

Have you ever lived the same decade more than once? And so what I don't want to do is just get everybody all fired up to go have the same year one more time, and one more time, and one more time... I really want to see if we can create a change.

So when you look at the last year – and if you haven't really taken an honest review of last year, I invite you to take some time and have a really honest self-review of last year. Because there's a couple of ways that last year could have gone for you. So last year could have been kind of, you know, more of the same. And there's nothing wrong with that. There's nothing inherently right about it, but there's nothing wrong with it if you just keep living the same year over and over again. It's kind of like *Groundhog's Day*, the movie, where you just kind of live the same day/the same year over and over again.

Now, for some of us, we can see that we made some nice, radical, wonderful, constant improvement, and that we're actually in a better place than we were a year ago. Right? And for some of us, if we tell ourselves the truth, we can see, well, it didn't really turn out like I wanted it to. I don't think I've moved my life forward; I think I've kind of... I'm not there. And then, for *most* of us, I think our year kind of looked like this **[draws squiggly line that goes up and down]**.

[Congregation laughs]

Now, how many of you – if you had to pick one of the four – how many would pick that one as the way your year looked? That there were a lot of consistent ups and downs? Right? And so, I want us to really look at how your year went, because I'm interested in creating change. I love the fact that I get to facilitate change. And when I looked at my own life this year – for me, anyway – this was kind of a sleeper year. It was much better than I realized! And have you ever had a year like that, that you're kind of going through things, and you're going through things, and you're taking steps and you're taking

action, and you're making things happen? And it's not 'til you get to the end of the year and you look back, and you think, "That was a fairly good year! That was a great year!" And as I made the list of my life over the last year, it was full! I developed a new workshop, and it may be one of my best workshops I've ever done! I tested it out of town; I took it to Naples, and it was a huge success. My finances took a click up. And if it sounds like I'm bragging, I am! Right?

[Rev. Rogers and congregation laugh]

Right? I am! Because I absolutely believe that we need to be bragging the good stuff that God is doing in our lives! Can I get an "Amen"?

[Congregation: "Amen!" and applause]

We need to be bragging the good stuff that God's doing in our lives! We need to be talking about it! My finances are better; thank you, Jesus! Right?

[Congregation laughs]

My daughter bought a house, moved back to Arizona, and now my grandbaby is in the same state I'm in! That's huge!

[Congregation whoops and applauds]

My son bought a house here with his fiancé, and he's getting married next year. That's huge for us! My brother – the riff raff are coming from far and wide, man...

[Congregation laughs]

My brother moved into town, and at Christmas we had my brother, his wife, my niece, my kids, my grandkids... It was fabulous, right? We found a great place for my mom; she's doing great! Jill is getting better, and we found her a new doctor, and that's going great. For the last three months, I've served as the interim minister in Prescott, and that has just been fabulous! I had a couple of great real estate deals this year. And the thing that was my biggest goal for last year was that I dropped a ton of weight. I dropped a ton of weight!!!

[Congregation cheers and applauds]

That was my big goal! That was my big goal! I wanted to be healthier. And so I'm healthier now. You know – not that you need to know this – but I don't snore anymore.

[Congregation laughs]

That is radical! In fact, the first night that I went through the night without snoring, my wife put her hand over my mouth to see if I was alive!

[Congregation laughs]

It took her, like, a week to learn how to sleep again in quiet, because she was used to this buzz saw hanging out next to her! My blood pressure is back to the level it was when I was 20. Isn't that fabulous?

[Congregation applauds]

On Monday night I pumped off 30 jumping jacks without even trying, and it was actually fun! And there weren't body parts moving in different directions!

[Congregation laughs]

It was fabulous! **[Laughs]** It was actually fabulous! Walking, hiking, moving is easy. You know, for the last five years, I have been a caregiver. And the thing that I've learned about being a caregiver is how to pump the brakes. Because my life was moving at 90 miles an hour. I did my whole life at 90 miles an hour. And being a caregiver, you cannot do that at 90 miles an hour. And I had to learn to pump the brakes. And so, for the last five years, I have slowed down to a pace that I never recognized. That I could get that quiet. That still. That – even the word – calm.

And when it came to last year, I intuitively knew – that, as my mom got a new place to live, and as Jill was doing better – it was time to turn the jets back on. And, honestly, I didn't know if the jets would come back on. You know what I'm saying? I'd been moving so slow for the last five years, I didn't know – if I ignited the jets – if I had any jets left in me. Does that make sense? And what's happened is, as the jets – and this is a daily practice for me – as the jets came back on, the fat burned off. Does that make sense? As I came back into who I am...

And I need you to know that being my wife and my mom's caregiver – for the last two-and-a-half years for my mom and five years for my wife – was my greatest honor. Now, I really want you to hear that; it was the hardest thing I've ever done, but it was my greatest honor to be in service to both of those ladies in ways that... I mean, who would pick me as your caregiver?

[Rev. Rogers and congregation laugh]

Really! Like, anybody who knows me is like, *"Is there anybody else in the house that is willing to do this, 'cause this guy is not cut out for this!?! What? You want him to cook and clean and take care of all the details? Please! We can hire this out, right?"*

But it was my greatest gift. And Jill and I had a conversation. She said, *"It's time. It's just time for you to turn your jets back on. It's time for you to be the best version of you. And thank you for all that you did, but it's time for you to be the best version of you."* And it literally was a game-changer for me. Because I wasn't sure.

Has anybody ever had that feeling where you know what Spirit's calling you into, and you're not sure if you've still got it? Or if you can still do it? Or if it's even there anymore? I mean, I literally did not know if it was there anymore. Because being quiet and moving slow; got that one. Right? I had it! But turning the jets on... And, yet, there was a part of me that... It sounded so incredibly fun to turn the jets back on. It's like, *"What if they're still there? What if they still work? Let's go find out!"*

So this year, I want you to really look at the way you're entering into this year. Because for many of us, we might sit down and we might write our goals, or we might create a vision board. We might do the things that we want to accomplish this year, or even this decade. But I want to make sure that we clearly understand the creative process. Because when we understand the creative process...

There's two levels to the creative process. The first one is – where we tend to focus on – is DOing. Like, what am I going to do this year? How much do I want to make? What do I want my career to look like? What do I want my relationships to look like? We tend to focus on all the DOing pieces – all the outer

pieces. All the external pieces. But we know – and what we teach over and over again, right – is that the DOing come from what? BEing! Right? That who we are BEing really drives the DOing. And so when you are looking at this year – as you’re moving into the next level of you – you might not say it like you want to turn the rockets back on... But I really want you to focus on who do you want to BE this year that allows you to create your DOing. Are you with me on that? Because the BEingness comes from inside. It is the thing that changes everything. And I want us to look at some of the ways that we can stay focused on our BEingness, not just on accomplishing the outer things.

Because is there anything wrong with accomplishing great things in your life? No! No, no, no! Right? But I want you to really see what drives that. Because if we’re just focused on driving the externals, we’re not living a spiritual life. Right? We’re really just living an external life. And, again, there’s nothing wrong with that... but that’s not what we’re here to teach. Right? I’m really here to show you how to accent the greatest possible life, and do it from a spiritual perspective. Of how to live your spiritual life in such a fabulous way that you live your greatest possible external life, as well.

Because what I love about this place is that we’re not talking you out of having a great life. Right? Does that make sense? We’re not saying that, if you want to be spiritual, you really can’t have “this.” We’re saying, actually, that the more you’re “this,” the better this *[gestures to indicate external elements of life]* gets. Over and over again. The more you live the power of God within you – the more you live your spiritual truth – the better this gets.

Now, does that means that there aren’t going to be bumps along the road? No! Because even the bumps along the road are those things that call us to live a deeper this: to live a deeper spiritual experience. So whether we’re winning or losing, both of those are invitations to go deeper into our spiritual life, and to call forth more God. Over and over and over again, the path is always: go within to shine out. Jesus said, “*Let your light so shine...*” But to let your light so shine, you actually have to know you have a light! You actually have to know how to access the light! You actually have to know how to go in and touch your core, because your core is light. And as you go within – as you touch your own inner greatness – then that greatness rolls out in all directions.

How many times... Has anybody ever experienced the time when you kind of lost yourself in your own life? Has everybody had that experience? Where you don’t recognize yourself in your own life? Right? And that is a spiritual problem; it’s not a physical problem. Because you can be making bucu money, and living a wonderful outer life, but you don’t even recognize yourself in the midst of it! So the inner life is really the place where you find your essence, you find your power, you find your light. And then you shine! But you can’t shine just in your personality.

[Sighs] This is going to sound like a judgment.

[Congregation laughs]

Because it probably is. Alright. For a while in my life, I was coaching young ministers, because they wanted to know how we got here... how I got here. And one of the ministers that I worked with had this great schtick. He had this great stage persona that he would show up with. And he wanted to know why it wasn’t working. Because on the surface, it looked like it should have worked. Does that make sense? And I said, “*Okay; well, the problem is, it’s just not real.*” *[Chuckles]* And literally everything came to a stop within him. He said, “*What do you mean it’s not real?*” I said, “*It’s just a façade; it’s ego. It looks*

great, but everybody can tell it's not real." And he said, "Well, how can they tell it's not real?" I said, "Because we have an internal spiritual 'BS' meter."

[Congregation laughs]

Right? Right? I mean, we do! Right? I think we all do! I mean, every child does; every dog does! Right? We all have it. Dogs know who's good and who's not; they growl at people who are not. Right? I mean, kids know who they can trust and who they can't trust, right? We just know! And for a year, we worked together 'til he could show up as his authentic self, and from there, he could shine. Right?

And over and over again, what I want you to see, is that we have to go deeper. We have to go to the next level of our core to call forth a greater life that is more profound than we've ever lived before. And I want to talk about that.

Do you guys have the slide that we should have up there? Okay. This is it.

Myrtle Fillmore, the co-founder of Unity, had what she called her "I AM" statement. And every night before she would go to bed, she would read her "I AM" statement. Now, why is that important? Because your "I AM" statement – if you choose to have an "I AM" statement – your "I AM" statement is... Every night or every morning, you're actually declaring how you're going to show up that day. You're actually speaking yourself into existence. You're actually using the word of God to create the highest and best version of you... or at least the highest and best version of you that you're consciously aware of.

And so she would speak these "I AM" statements every night before she went to bed. And the way that I invite you to do it is: I invite you to speak it every night, and then again when?

[Congregation murmurs]

Every morning. And, do you have to use her "I AM" statements? No! I want you to write your own! I want you to decide every night, every morning... And I don't want you changing it every 10 minutes!

[Congregation laughs]

Right? I want you to make a personal commitment to your "I AM" statement for the whole year. You can make it for a whole decade! So I want your "I AM" statement big enough that it can handle... Okay, you ready? I want you to put on your best "I AM" voice. Are you ready? Okay, here we go!

[Rev. Rogers/Congregation read Myrtle Fillmore's 'I AM' Statement]:

"I AM.

I AM health, strength, peace, happiness and prosperity.

The Spirit of God, who is active in me, flows through my body in a purifying, cleansing, healing stream that removes all obstructions and brings peace, health and harmony to my body.

I AM well, strong and vital.

I AM beautiful, peaceful and poised.

I AM eternally youthful.

I AM buoyant, happy, free.

I shall rise in the morning, filled with energy, radiance and the power to accomplish whatever I find to do."

Do you like that?

[Congregation murmurs]

Now, are those *your* words? Probably not! Right? But I want you to see her words, because I believe that there's enough juice in those words that it's going to get you close to who you want to be. Now, do you have to do this? No! You don't! But I believe that, if you're hungry for a greater life, if you start with your core, everything becomes possible. If you just spend another year just working on the details...

Has anybody ever had that experience? Where you're doing all the hard work – you're busy, busy, busy – but you never really get the life that you're hungry for? Because it has to start from within!

So let's say it one more time. You ready? Here we go!

"I AM.

I AM health, strength, peace, happiness and prosperity.

The Spirit of God, who is active in me, flows through my body in a purifying, cleansing, healing stream that removes all obstructions and brings peace, health and harmony to my body.

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I AM buoyant, happy, free.

I shall rise in the morning, filled with energy, radiance and the power to accomplish whatever I find to do."

Now... **[Mimicking someone talking to him]:** *"Richard, I'm too busy for that kind of stuff. I've got to get to Starbucks..."*

[Congregation laughs]

"... and spend five bucks for a cup of coffee! I don't have time for that nonsense!" So here's the deal: who's going to create you? Are you either going to do it unconsciously or you're going to do it consciously? And when we move into conscious co-creation, everything in our life begins to change, because we are no longer a victim of circumstance. We are a powerful co-creator with God to the next level of who we are.

Anybody read Emmet Fox's *Around the Year*? Love this book! Lesson #1, Jan. 1; I'm taking you back to the beginning:

“There exists a mystic Power that is able to transform your life so thoroughly, so radically, so completely, that when the process is completed, your own friends would hardly recognize you and, in fact, you would scarcely be able to recognize yourself.

It can lift you out of an invalid’s bed, and free you to go out into the world to shape your life as you will. It can throw open the prison door and liberate the captive.

This Power can do for you that which is probably the most important thing of all in your present stage: it can find your true place in life for you, and put you into it.

This Power is really no less than the primal Power of Being, and to discover that Power is the divine birthright of all men.

...“the kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21).

...“seek ye first the kingdom of God... and all these things shall be added... (Matthew 6:33).”

So here’s what I’m asking for today. I want you to have a significantly greater life this year and in this decade. Now, you don’t have to! You can just play the year that you had last year over and over and over again until you’re even tired of complaining about it! Right? Or you can actually do the inner work necessary to redefine yourself... to recreate yourself. To be a new creation. But then you have to get conscious. You have to get really conscious! And you have to decide, every day, how you want to show up: who you want to be. And I invite you to write it down.

I want your “I AM” statements to be your foundational work: to be the thing that you rise and fall on. To be the thing that, every day, wakes you, gets you out of bed, and allows you to live the greatest life. And I don’t care what those “I AM” statements are; they can be about health. They can be about wholeness. They can be... But they’re not about DOing! They’re about BEing: how you’re going to BE in the world. Alright?

Are you willing? So guess what your homework is?

[Congregation shouts out answers]

I want you to write – and I invite you to keep it less than seven sentences. Right? If it’s longer than seven sentences, you’ll never memorize it. It’ll seem like more work to do it. It will just sit at your nightstand or it’ll sit in your bathroom mirror, and you’ll never read it. So you get seven “I AM” sentences. Can they be complex sentences? Yes. Can you use “and”? Yes. But I want them to not be more than seven sentences that, within the next 30 days of doing it every day, you’ve quickly memorized.

So when you’re sitting in traffic, or you’re sitting in the elevator, or you’re waiting for your doctor; whatever you wait for... I want you to be able to recite those seven statements, and I want you to be able to take them into prayer on a regular basis, so that you become the living embodiment of the person you want to be. “I AM.” “I AM truth; I AM light; I AM abundant; I AM capable; I AM strong; I AM wise; I AM holy; I AM sacred; I AM divine.” I want you to write these statements – whatever your statements are – and I want you to commit to them. Are you willing?

[Congregation: “Yes!”]

Let's take it into prayer:

I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to the activity of God that is right here, right now. And this year we make a commitment to unleash the full power of who we are: to be the greatest version of ourselves. And to do it in the simplest, yet most profound, way: to come back to ourselves. To come back to our center. For me, it was lighting my jets, and just remembering that it was 100% okay to be the way that God created us. To be the best version of ourselves. To ignite the truth of who we are, and to let it shine. I AM alive with God! Will you say that with me?

[Congregation: "I AM alive with God!"]

And so it is. Amen.

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