

EXPONENTIAL GAINS

Feb. 5, 2020

Rev. Richard Rogers

Rev. Richard Rogers: Okay; I want to talk about exponential gains tonight. And I want to do a little math lesson, just to make sure we're all on the same page, okay? How many of you – when you were in school – math was your favorite subject? It was mine. It literally was mine. It was the only thing about school that made sense to me.

So, if your salary doubled, would you be happy about that?

Congregation: "Yes!"

If the value of your doubled, would you be happy about that?

Congregation: "Yes!"

Right? So, if 10 represents a monetary number and we add 10 more, what does that equal? Twenty. Now, if we were making twice as much... if we had twice as much... if retirement was twice as much... your Social Security was twice as much... most of us would be happy with that, right? We would think, "Woo hoo!" Right? That's not what I'm talking about tonight.

[Congregation laughs]

Because that's not enough! Exponential growth – or exponential change or exponential blessings is written like this: **[writes "10²"]**, which works out to not 10 plus 10, but 10 times 10, which is 100. Okay? So if they offered you a raise, and they walked in and said, "We're going to give you two choices on your raise today. We're either going to double your money" – and you think, "I don't need to hear any more! Yes! Sold!" – "or we're going to multiply your salary by itself." Which would you take?

Now, if you're not making anything, zero times zero is zero!

[Congregation laughs]

But if you're making pretty much anything above two... Right? Because mathematically, two plus two and two times two are both four. Good. So if you're making anything above two, you don't want to just double it... you want to increase it exponentially. And increasing your life exponentially is better than increasing your life linearly.

So what I want to talk about is exponential growth: exponential gains. Now, if you were a tree – this is my last analogy before I actually get to my talk. **[Draws tree on easel pad]** This is a tree. Can you see it? That's why I'm not an art major? Right? So this is a tree. Now, if you were a tree, and you wanted to grow exponentially, would you focus on the branches or the roots?

[Congregation shouts out answers]

Oh, my gosh, you guys are geniuses!

[Congregation laughs]

Right? Because, for a tree, the source of everything is where? The roots! And if we focus on the branches, we're focusing on the wrong end.

Now, as spiritual people, do we ever do that?

[Congregation murmurs]

Right! So that's what I want to talk about tonight. I want to talk about – because, if we want exponential growth – I want to talk about how we get there. And for most of us, we tend to focus on the wrong end. We tend to focus on the way it looks instead of the way it is. And if we want exponential growth, we have to start with the foundation of everything.

We had some friends who remodeled their house; they wanted to put a second floor on top of their garage. They got a contractor in who said that the foundation of their garage was sufficient to put a second level over their garage. Well, after about a year of having the second level over their garage, guess what began to happen to their garage? It began to sink... and not evenly. Right? Can you imagine that's a problem when your kids are now sleeping above the garage, and the room is starting to look like the Leaning Tower of Pisa. It's a problem, right?

Because what we always want to do – the way we want to grow our life – is we want to go bigger. We want to go up. We want everything in our life to go up, up, up! But if we don't focus first on the foundation, then what happens as we're growing up, we don't have the infrastructure to support the new spiritual understanding and the next level of good that we want in our life. So we have to start in the foundation.

So tonight we're going to deal with the foundation. We're going to deal with the roots. We're going to deal with where you really live, because I'm 100% committed to you living a bigger life. But we can't just focus on the show; we've got to focus on the foundation. Okay?

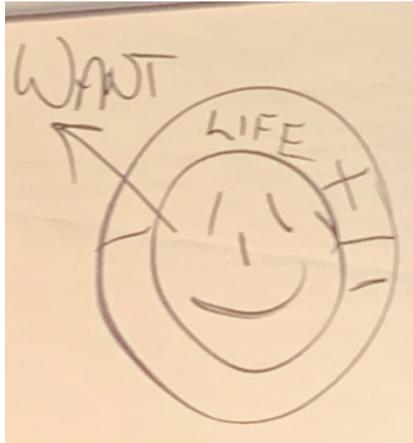
You ready? You still with me? So if we were going to work on life, can you imagine that we kind of have to answer the question: What is the purpose of life? Right? If you ask yourself the question – What is the purpose of life? – how would you answer that? Because really, life is asking you that question over and over and over again. And whether we're conscious of it or not, we've really made up an answer. And I want you to really be conscious of what you think your purpose in life is. Right?

And I'd like to suggest one tonight. And you may not agree with me, but I think for most people, their unconscious purpose in life is to get what they didn't get enough of as a child. So, if they didn't get enough love or respect or money – or whatever it was – I think that there's this purpose that we have that keeps driving us to finally get enough. And that we keep unconsciously moving in the direction so that we can know our wholeness... We can know the fullness of who we are. So whatever we didn't get at some point in our life, we keep going after that until we finally feel like we've had enough. And we see people who didn't get enough of whatever it was: love or respect or attention, or whatever it was. And it almost seems like they're never gonna get enough. Like, there's such a story within them that, either they're not worthy of it or they can't have it, that they keep driving to that place. And no matter how much money they get, or how much love or respect or acknowledgement they get, it's almost like it's never enough.

And so, what I want us to look at today is a different foundational way of being in the world. Would you be willing to do that? Right? Because I want you to see that, if we go back to ourselves, everything makes more sense. Okay?

[Draws a smiley face on easel board] Who is that?

[Congregation murmurs]



It's not me! Well, it is me... And it's you... And it's all of us, right? That's your happy little self. Right? So the way that most of us learn to be in the world. **[Points to smiley face]** That this is us. And all around us is what? **[Draws circle around the smiley face and labels it "LIFE."]** All around us is life. True? And so what most of us learn is that I'm here; I'm surrounded by life. And life is either helping me or hindering me from getting what I want.

[Points to smiley face] So this is me; I'm going to give myself a nose. And I'm trying to get to what I want. **[Draws arrow pointing outside the circle and labels it "WANT."]** Does everybody get that? And that life is either helping me **[Draws plus sign]** – and those are

all the happy people who are helping me – or it's getting in my way **[Draws negative signs]** – and those are all the negative people.

So in this model, where is the good that you seek. It's outside of you! Is it in you? No! It's outside of you! You actually have to go out into life and get your needs met, and everybody in your world is either helping you or hindering getting what you want. But you know that all the goodness that you desire could not possibly be within you, because if it was in you, you'd already have found it. Right?

So we go out into the world, and then we begin to tell ourselves a story... Did anybody ever see that OJ commercial about a hundred years ago: the OJ Simpson commercial? Anybody old enough to remember that? It came out in the early 70s? Where OJ Simpson's running through the airport, and he's doing the moves to try to get to the Avis rental car counter. And he's jumping over things and he's dodging people. He's doing all this stuff. And the idea is that everybody around him – life itself – is getting in the way of getting his needs met.

And I want you to see how prevalent that is unconsciously written into our soul. That here I am; here's the world around me. I want to get my needs met; my needs could never be met from inside here. My needs can only be met when I finally get what I want: the piece that I'm missing. And everybody around me is either helping me or hindering me from getting what I want.

And so what happens is, we never really get exponential benefits. Because everything that we're doing tends to be very externally focused. So we never really discover that the Kingdom's within, because we're too busy sizing up everyone around us to see who's friend, who's foe, who's helping me, who I can manipulate, who I can outcharm... And we all then develop a strategy for getting our needs met. Okay?

So one more thing I want you to become conscious of is what is the strategy that you use to manipulate your world to get your needs met. Because we all have a strategy! Right? How many of you used being cute as your primary strategy?

[Congregation laughs]

How many of you in high school? Let's just go back to high school, because we have less attachment. How many of you in high school used being attractive as your strategy to get your needs met? Three. Okay, great!

[Congregation laughs]

I think some of you are lying, but okay!

[Congregation laughs]

How many of you used being smart as your strategy to get your needs met? How many of you used being sad as your strategy to get your needs met? That you were so sad that you hoped people would take pity on you, and you would get your needs met? You don't have to raise your hand... How many of you used being an athlete, and being attractive that way? As an athlete?

So what I want you to see is that we all came up with a strategy of how to get our needs met, but the strategy was never to go within! We learned how to manipulate, how to control, how to be happy, how to be sad, how to be whatever it was to get our needs met... But we spent so much time manipulating and controlling the situation... Because nobody can admit that they have control issues!

[Congregation laughs]

Right? But our control issues are 100%, *"If I can just control my life, then I can get my needs met!"* But over and over again, what happens is: we're so externally focused that we never access the Infinite that's within us, because we don't really believe it's within us!

Now, we come to a church or we come to a spiritual community, and we hear that God's within. And we go, *"Okay."* So we say, *"Well, that's the right answer: God's within!"* But we don't really believe it! Because we still manipulate the world around us to get our needs met! We still don't spend any time actually going within, even though Jesus said over and over, *"The Kingdom of Heaven is within you!"*

We don't really spend the time necessary to access the Divine... Because we don't have time to pray! Because we're so busy manipulating our outer world! It would actually take 10 minutes a day! Who's got 10 minutes? That would be like... I couldn't manipulate enough of my world if I stopped for 10 minutes and actually prayed!!! If I actually spent 20 minutes meditating, and accessing the Divine within myself, that would be 20 minutes that I couldn't be banging on the people around me!!! Or showing them how smart I am, or reading a book so that they can all think that I'm wise and intelligent and spiritual and cute – whatever it is! Whatever your thing is!

And what I want you to see over and over again: I know that you are working really hard to get your needs met. I know it! You're just working on the branches instead of the root! And no matter how many years you spend trimming your branches – and making sure your branches are the best-looking branches in town... If we just spent a little more time fertilizing our roots – and making sure our roots

are deep and healthy – and accessing the infinite goodness of God within us, we would actually get our needs met.

And I know that we've said this in a million different ways. And you just don't believe us! You really have so bought into the idea that you need to go out in the world and get your needs met, that you don't take the time to have an exponential change.

So guess what your homework is for this week. I want you to get smarter, cuter, faster, better athlete. I want you to go lift more weights. I want you to lift more weights at the gym. I want you to take the *Wall Street Journal*. I want you to do whatever it's going to take so you can manipulate your world better than you're doing right now. Because you're not doing a good enough job.

And the thing that I definitely don't want you to do is to spend more time in prayer. **[Scoffs]**

[Congregation laughs]

Because it will never work. Don't even try it! The enlightened masters who have been teaching it for thousands of years are idiots! Because you know the Kingdom of Heaven is out there, and you're going to find it and get it. And you don't care if you have to cross continents or scale rivers or go across oceans. You know that when you find it, you're going to plant your stick in it, and you're going to call it your kingdom, and it's going to provide you with everything you want. And you're on your way! And then you die.

[Congregation laughs]

And it's such a ticker! It's like, *"I spent so much time doing all the wrong things! And I'm so disappointed that it didn't work!"*

And Jesus just keeps kind of calling you over, and saying, *"Stop! Just stop! Stop the craziness; stop the madness. Give me 20 minutes. Give me 20 minutes every day where you just quiet your mind and unlock the infinite. Twenty minutes! You don't have to. But just give me 20 minutes."*

And the first 20 minutes your brain is going to rage at the injustice of having to be quiet. Because you know there's a TV somewhere in your house... Or there's a radio... Or there's music... Or there's a project... Or there's laundry... Or a refrigerator you could clean out... And so your mind rages against the injustice of it. But you make yourself sit there.

And for the first week, nothing happens. It was a total waste of time. And then the second week you actually feel something. The second week you notice you're getting happier. You feel more connected. You feel more at peace. And you spend more and more time connected to your Source. You feel more powerful. You feel more like the doors are opening and you have a higher level of wisdom and understanding. And everything gets to be a little bit easier and easier. And before you know it, you're living a very different life.

And it wasn't because you worked harder, or are smarter, or read more, or all the things that you've done. It's because you're actually more connected to yourself.

So tonight, here's my request. And it's just a request. Here's my request; here's your homework. I want you to actually look at the reasons you don't take 20 minutes a day to connect with the Power within you. What's your story? What's your justification? *"Well, Oprah's on at 3."* Or used to be, anyway! *"You*

know, I've got to get ready for Oprah at 3! So I don't have 20 minutes before Oprah comes on, or 20 minutes before this or that or work..." Or whatever it is! But I guarantee once that 20 minutes is your top priority, you will not sacrifice it for anything. Because there's 20 minutes in every 24-hour period that you could do it.

Really, truly: your path to a greater life is not found out there. Because you'll just get disappointed. It won't work. But the more you come back to yourself – the more you feel connected to the Divine; the more you know the Kingdom is within you – everything in your life is going to begin to change.

So would you be willing to spend 20 minutes a day? And the first month, it's going to feel like agony. Because your mind is used to being hyper-vigilant, hyper-aware, hyper-alert. Would you spend 20 minutes a day just getting quiet, turning within, and feeling God? Let's see!

Will you join with me in prayer?

I invite you to just open your mind, your heart, your soul to the activity of God that is right here, right now. And I want you to really think and feel about a bigger life. Like a level of peace and love and joy that is greater than you've ever known before. And how much work you've put in trying to create that life. And what if, tonight, you realize that it can only truly be found – that that much peace and love and joy and infinite blessings – could only be found if you went within? If you put the full focus of your attention on God for just 20 minutes a day? What would it feel like if your full focus and attention was purely on God? And on your sacred center? I think it would change everything. So, today, we turn within. We open the inner door to the Divine. We move past our intellect and our busy-ness and our ego and our stories and our drama, and we get to our center. And we find that there is a place of peace that passes all understanding. And we give thanks! And we decide to go there again tomorrow. And the day after and the day after and the day after. And it doesn't mean that life instantly becomes perfect; but we learn how to access a Power greater than life. That is the Source of life. And we feel empowered beyond our wildest dreams. So in the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

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