

CIRCLES OF INSPIRATION

March 11, 2020

Rev. Richard Rogers

Rev. Richard Rogers: Alright; you ready for tonight? So what do you know about steel? Steel?

[Congregation shouts out answers]

It's hard. Good! Good! It rusts. Yes. What else do you know about steel? It's strong. It's got a high tensile strength; do you know what that means? John, what's that mean?

John: *It's strong.*

[Congregation laughs]

Rev. Rogers: It doesn't bend, right? Good. Okay; so do you know why steel has high tensile strength? Because that's why we use it for appliances and cars and trains and buildings. Because if you're building a multi-story building out of steel, do you want it leaning after two or three months? No! You want tensile strength; you want it to stay put. Right? So steel is a very inexpensive way to build structures. And, because of its strength, we use it in all kinds of things. Almost everything! Like, you're sitting on steel chairs, right? So, over and over again, what I want you to see is that...

Steel was first discovered – architect... We found evidence of steel back 4,000 years! But you know what we used before steel?

[Congregation shouts out answers]

Well, yes... but there's another metal. Iron! Iron! You've heard of the Iron Age, right? So the Iron Age... But what's the problem with iron? It's heavy and it's also softer. Molecularly, the atoms actually shift in iron, and when they move around, it causes it to be malleable. Right? It moves, right?

And then, what did we put with iron so that it became steel? Do you know? This isn't really meant to be a science class, but I think it's interesting.

[Congregation laughs]

Do you know what it is? Do you know what the chemical is that you add to iron to create steel?

[Congregation shouts out]

Carbon! And do you know how much carbon you need to add for iron to become steel? That's it... that's all you got.

[Congregation laughs]

It's just over 2%. So when you add 2% of carbon to iron, it becomes – it changes the molecular structure, and it becomes steel. And it increases the tensile strength exponentially so that you can actually build things with it.

Now, why am I sharing this with you tonight?

[Congregant]: I don't know!

[Congregation and Rev. Rogers laugh]

The room has turned on me!

[Congregation laughs]

Not even five minutes in, and they've already turned on me. No more questions for you!!! Pooley, pooley!

So here's why I'm sharing this tonight. The reason I'm sharing this tonight is because I want to talk about what makes you stronger. Because what I believe is, the time that we live in right now, we need you to be your strongest self. And I don't need you bending this way and that way; I need you to be really strong to live your best life. And the area that I really want us to focus on tonight is self-doubt. Because I think self-doubt robs us of the incredible goodness that God offers us. And when we're swaying and all over the place in self-doubt, we're not living the best life that God has for us.

So I want to talk about that tonight because, with all that's going on in the world today, it's pretty easy for us to get freaked out. It's pretty easy for us to move into times of doubt and fear, and go through the whole gamut of human emotions. But I want to talk about, what are those things that allow us to be stronger than that? To be able to go through the events of life and stand strong in our faith? To stand strong in the power that allows us to move through one situation after another, knowing that God really is our Source? Standing in faith that we can say this mountain, "*Move from here to there*" and it would be done?

So, if you look at your life, how do you manage self-doubt? **[Mimics someone talking to him]:** "*Well, I go back to bed; I pull the covers over my head. And I hope when I get up it's gone.*" Right? Or, "*I just have a piece of chocolate cake... Or whatever I do.*" Right? Because I really want us to look at how we're managing our self-doubt. Because, for most of us, we have to manage our self-doubt. And I'd like to suggest, today, that we need a better method. Like, pretending it's not there – and living a smaller, little life – is not really the way to manage our self-doubt.

So how would you manage it in a different way that will allow you to feel your most powerful self? In Matthew 18:19, it says this: "*Again, I tell you; that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask, it will be done by the Father. For wherever two or more are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of them.*" See, here's my suggestion today, is: that, in the presence of self-doubt, we shouldn't be alone. Right? That we actually need people around us to believe with us in a way that's greater than we can believe for ourselves. And to have a support system around us, over and over again, that believes for us when we're in our self-doubt, so that we don't stay in our self-doubt. Because there's nothing like saying to another person – who's standing with us, who's believing with us, who's praying with us – "*Like, you believe that I've got this, right?*"

And even though, at some level, we don't even believe at all, hearing from another child of God that they believe for and with us gives us the strength to keep on keepin' on. We can actually learn to "borrow" each other's faith in critical moments when we need faith. Right?

So, let me tell you a story. Some of you know this story... But I was about a year-and-a-half out of college. And in the first year-and-a-half out of college, I just thought I had this great, wonderful job, I actually got myself a year's salary in debt, where I couldn't make the minimum payments on my life. But

I had a great stereo; I had a great new car; I had a great life. But I had so much debt, I could not make the minimum payments on my life. And if you've ever been upside down in debt, where you can't make the minimum payment, I think that's a very scary place to be. Where you're just over your head, and you don't know how it's going to be handled... How, on Friday, you're going to pay your bills. So, it's a scary place to be.

So, I was born and raised in Unity. I understood these principles: these prosperity principles. These spiritual principles. I understood them, but apparently I never really applied them. Have you ever had that experience where you know stuff, but you're not really living it? So it sounds good, but if it's not really applying to your life, it doesn't really help you. It doesn't really make sense. You're not really living it.

So I decided that being a year's salary in debt would be a good time to start applying the abundance teachings that I had heard my whole life.

[Congregation laughs]

I thought it'd be a good time, right? It's like, you've created a deep enough hole; let's see if this stuff really works. Right? Because, now, when you feel the whole is... Stop digging! So I thought this was it.

So I began by doing a few things. The first thing I did was, I knew that I needed to give more. I believed that. I believed that that's what I'd heard over and over again. That as you give, so shall you...

Congregation: Receive!

Rev. Rogers: ...receive. So I decided I needed to give. And I wanted to give back in areas where I really felt I had been given the most: where I was the most blessed. And so the first thing I did was I called Big Brothers, and I began to volunteer with a young boy whose dad was in prison, and I made a commitment to be a positive male image in his life. So I gave back there.

I started volunteering at the youth group, because I got so much out of YOU when I was in YOU. That I began to serve as a YOU sponsor. And, even though I was just a couple of years older than some of these people, YOU was such an important part of my life that I began to give back there.

And I also began to tithe. And, when you can't make the minimum payments on your life, making a commitment to give 10% of everything that you received looked crazy. I mean, it looked so scary; it looked so crazy. That I was actually going to give 10% of everything. And, at some level... like, if you can't make the minimum payments, what's one more payment you can't make? Right?

[Congregation laughs]

But I made this commitment: that the first 10% of all that I had received that week was going to go to God. And I began to tithe. And I began to tithe faithfully, regularly. Every week: tithe, tithe, tithe.

And the other thing that I began to do was: I looked at all the friends – especially the church friends – that I had, and I looked for the most successful one. And that was my friend, Tom. He was, by far, the most successful friend I had. And I said to Tom: *"Tom, I want to start a Mastermind group."*

How many of you know what a Mastermind group is? I know Richard talked about it a couple of months ago, and we don't usually do the same topic within the same year. And I'm going for it. I started a Mastermind group with my buddy, Tom.

Masterminding was created by Jack Boland, a Unity minister out of Detroit, Michigan. And he took the principles of Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich*; he linked it with the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, and he created these eight steps. And these eight steps really are the basis of a spiritual process. And me and my friend, Tom, every Sunday night we'd get together, and we'd go through those eight steps. And these eight steps are transformative! They actually create a change within us that actually empowers us!

And so, the steps in and of themselves, are transformative. But then when you link it to one of the steps where you actually say to your Mastermind partner what you're committed to – what you're working on that week – and they actually give it back to you in as close to the same words as you just said it. And you actually hear another child of God believing for you in a way that's greater than you can believe in yourself.

So I might say, *"Tom, I need to have all the money I need to pay my bills on Friday."* And I'd say, *"Tom, can you see that for me?"* And he'd say, *"Richard, I see that for you. I see you easily writing those checks on Friday to pay all your bills on Friday: to pay your rent, and everything you want, Friday."* And he'd say that out loud to me. And it would be like... I'd really want to say, *"Really? You really do? You really see that for me?"* And he'd go, *"Richard, I really see that for you. I see that things are going to happen in ways that you can't even imagine now – are going to begin to work in your life. And you're going to be able to pay all your bills on Friday."*

And then I'd share this, and I'd share that, and Tom would affirm it. And then I'd get into my place of fear on Wednesday or Tuesday or Thursday. And I'd call Tom back up and say, *"Tom, tell me again that you really believe this for me!"* And he'd say, *"Richard, I really believe this for you. I believe it."*

Because, can you imagine that, when you share a prayer request with me, that I never go into doubt for you? Does that make sense? We have the ability to have more faith for someone else than we have for ourselves. And when we link a process together – so that we're actually holding each other higher than we can stand on our own – it makes us stronger. That 2% "carbon" actually turns us into steel!

When we spend a certain amount of time – not even an hour a week – holding in prayer one another, it actually makes us stronger than we can ever be on our own. And I believe that, if you want to move your life forward – if you want to do greater good than you've ever done before – I think you need to have at least one other person that, every week, you're going through a spiritual process with, and holding up in faith. And you can actually believe for each other in a way that's greater than you can even imagine that you can possibly believe for yourself.

Over and over again, self-doubt robs us. It robs us of the goodness that God has for us! And to the degree that you've lived in self-doubt your whole life, you can actually transform it through the power of another human being standing with you as you walk through life, to live a greater life.

And, you know, when we started Masterminding, I never thought I'd be a minister. I mean, that wasn't even on my radar! I started working with kids, and I grew just this incredible youth ministry. And then they gave me the whole region of southern California and Nevada and Arizona. And I was only 25 years

old; I had to be 25. The legal limit – I mean, the age requirement – for that job was 25. I had to be at least seven years older than the oldest kid. So, at 25, they hired me. And I was doing such a great job with youth ministry that I actually quit my “real” job to work with kids! Because I liked putting on my jeans on the weekend and working with kids on the weekend more than I like putting on my suit and going to be a salesman. And then I went to ministerial school.

And what I see, over and over again, is that we began – in our 20s – creating a life that would be our life for our lifetime. We began to see for each other in such a way that would build a habit for our whole lives. He believed that I could be a minister long before I ever believed that I could do this stuff! He knew it for me! And I knew that he was going to be a radically, wonderfully successful business guy that he has been his whole life. We built a foundation together, over and over again. And over the course of my life, having a Mastermind partner has made all the difference in the world.

So let me share the steps with you. There’s eight steps. The eight steps of the Mastermind Consciousness. And I’m going to invite you to read it with me. And I invite you to just not read it from your head, but I want you to practice it as a spiritual process. Because if we were having a Mastermind group together, we would read that together, and we’d actually take on that step. We’d actually feel it together. So we’re going to read this together. And so we’re going to have a bit of a Mastermind group right here with each other. And when we get to the asking... I’m sorry, but we’re not going to be able to go around the whole room and let everybody ask. But what I want you to see is: I’m going to invite you, in the asking step, to actually ask, and let us support each other, even though we’re not going to be able to say it in words, to just support each. So let’s do it together:

[With Congregation]:

Eight Steps Into The Mastermind Consciousness

By Jack Boland

1. I SURRENDER.

I admit that, of myself, I am powerless to solve my problems, powerless to improve my life. I need help.

2. I BELIEVE.

I come to believe that a power greater than myself – God, True Source – can change my life.

3. I AM READY TO BE CHANGED

I realize that erroneous, self-defeating thinking is the cause of my problems, unhappiness, fears and failures. I am ready to have my beliefs and attitudes changed so my life can be transformed.

4. I DECIDE TO BE CHANGED

I make a decision to surrender my will and my life to God. I ask to be changed at depth.

5. I FORGIVE

I forgive myself for all my mistakes and shortcomings. I also forgive all other persons who may have harmed me.

6. I ASK

I make known my specific requests, knowing that God is fulfilling my every need.

Rev. Rogers: So I want you to think for a minute. If we were having a Mastermind group tonight, what is the request that you would make known to me. What is that desire in your heart that's so important to you tonight that you want to speak it out loud, and have me give it back to you, saying, *"I see you living that. I see this hope or dream or desire being fully fulfilled in your life right now. I see you living your greatest possible life. I see you living a life that is better and greater than you could even imagine."*

So I want you to think about what your "6" is: what's the "ASK." What's the thing that you want to put into this Mastermind Consciousness to live a greater life.

And then we go to 7 [**with congregation**]:

7. I GIVE THANKS

I give thanks to God and know He is responding to my every need.

8. I DEDICATE MY LIFE.

I now have a covenant in which it is agreed that God is supplying me with an abundance of all things necessary to live a successful and happy life. I dedicate myself to be of maximum service to God and those around me; to live in a manner that sets the highest example for others to follow; and to remain responsive to God's guidance. I go forth with a spirit of enthusiasm, excitement and expectancy. I am at peace.

Let's say that last paragraph together again:

[With Congregation]: *"I go forth with a spirit of enthusiasm, excitement and expectancy. I am at peace."*

And then we go home! We didn't spend a lot of time doing our drama, or talking about how hard it is, or this or that. We would just go through the steps. We'd check in for a few minutes; we'd through the steps; I'd speak my two or three desires; he would give them back to me; he would speak his two or three desires; and I'd speak them back to him; we'd finish; we'd go home, because we knew that it was done.

Years later, I would learn that all my debt was a sign of unforgiveness. And when I got to that forgiveness step, my forgiveness list was long. I had a story about this or about that. And week after week, I'd forgive; I'd forgive myself, and I'd forgive others. And I asked God to change me at depth. Every week, I'd give God my hopes, my dreams, my fears, my insecurities, my worries, my upset, my disappointment. I'd give it all away. And, every week, I would leave from that experience ready to live my greatest life.

See, I truly believe that, if you want to do something great, you can't do it alone. You can't do it alone! You know, we have this mythology in spiritual circles that we're the "lone wolf," right? You know, there's a PBS special out – and I've talked about this before – but in the PBS special, it said that the lone wolf is the sick or dying wolf. That wolves never work alone.

I want you to look at how much more support it would take in your life not to live in self-doubt. For you to really master and manage your self-doubt in a brand new way. And if you look at the last few days – the last few weeks – how much time have you spent in self-doubt? How much time have you spent worrying about your desires? And I want you to see that, as you have just a small group of people – two, three people – who stand with you and believe with you, your self-doubt actually goes away.

So, you ready? These eight steps – can we get them on our Facebook? Can we put them on Facebook? Because I want you to have these eight steps. I want them to be available to you. You can go online and look for them, because they are available. And I want you to see that, as you build this kind of spiritual support, everything in your life goes to the next level.

Will you pray with me?

I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to the activity of God. And I want you to just breathe it in. I dedicate my life and all that I am to God. I hold nothing back from God; I give God all my hopes, my dreams, my fears, my insecurities, all that I am, and all that I hope to be. And, tonight, I stand and allow myself to be supported as never before. In a greater way than ever before. So in the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

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