

STANDING ON FAITH

March 25, 2020

Rev. Richard Rogers

Rev. Richard Rogers: Hello! I'm Richard Rogers, and I am so glad you're with us today! This is the second week of our virtual Wednesday Night Service! We virtually have just the five of us here today, so we're so excited that you're with us! I think you're going to enjoy today's talk!

Today's talk is all about faith. And it's really helping us to live our greatest life, right here, right now. So let's begin with prayer.

MEDITATION:

I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul during this time of prayer and meditation. To feel the activity of God that is right where you are. That is right there. Sometimes in our lives we feel so disconnected: disconnected from ourselves; disconnected from the people around us; and, most importantly, disconnected from God. And from that place where we feel disconnected, we have to remember to come back to ourselves: come back to our center, come back to our heart, come back to our soul. So, right now, wherever you are and whatever is going on in your life, I want you to come back to YOU. Because you are your way home! You are your way to a greater life. You are your way to living a happier, healthier, more alive existence. Come home! Come back to yourself! Come back to your center! Come back to your core!

During this time – when we're watching, maybe, too much TV or we're worried about this or that – I want you to come back to your center. Because right now, the purpose isn't just to be entertained; it's really to go deeper. Deeper into yourself. Deeper into God. Deeper into your Source. So take another deep breath, and feel the glory of God right where you are. Feel the presence and power of God that is the core of who you are. You were created in the image and likeness of God. You were created for all that God is. Take another deep breath. And whatever you've been worried about – whatever you've been afraid, whatever level of anxiety you might have – we just give that all over to God. Simply say, *"Thy will be done... Thy will be done in greater and greater ways. Thy will be done, that we may be more blessed than we've ever been before. Thy will be done to the highest level of good... that we claim the kingdom of heaven right here, right now. We claim all the good that God is!"*

The moment you come back to yourself – the moment you stand in faith: in the power of who you are – every possibility becomes available to you. Every good thing is available to you! So open your mind, open your heart, open your soul, and stand on the foundation of your relationship with God. Stand in the truth of who you are. Thank you, God; thank you, God; thank you, God, that whatever I am, you are! Whatever I'm walking through, you are my Source! That you will guide me and direct me in every situation. That there is greater good within me than any need, any challenge, any problem. That you are my God... That you are my Source! And we live in that goodness. We celebrate that goodness. And we give thanks for that goodness. And we dedicate our lives, again, to the goodness of God. That only God – only good – dwells within me now. And so it is. Amen.

SONG:

Rusty Ferracane: 'Bridge Over Troubled Water' (accompanied by Craig Bohmler on piano)

When you're weary, feeling small
When tears are in your eyes, I'll dry them all
I'm on your side, oh, when times get rough
And friends just can't be found
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down

When you're down and out
When you're on the street
When evening falls so hard
I will comfort you
I'll take your part, oh, when darkness comes
And pain is all around
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will lay me down

Sail on, silver girl
Sail on by
Your time has come to shine
All your dreams are on their way
See how they shine
Oh, if you need a friend
I'm sailing right behind
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will ease your mind
Like a bridge over troubled water
I will ease your mind

[Light applause]

MESSAGE

Rev. Richard Rogers: That was fabulous! Gentlemen, thank you; thank you; thank you! Craig and Rusty, thank you; thank you, thank you! Fabulous, fabulous! Thank you!

Wasn't that fabulous? That was fabulous! Yay! A standing ovation of one! There you go; there you go!

Alright, you guys; how are you doing with your life right now? We miss you! I miss you! We want to hug you! Consider yourself virtually hugged at this time! I just want to just love on you! So, know that – even

though you're not in the room tonight – that we just absolutely love you! We miss you! We want to see your little faces as soon as possible! I hope that you are well and safe, and that you're absolutely taking care of yourself, because you are so important to me and to this ministry. And know that I just absolutely love and adore you, and that I miss you!

Alright, so let's go! Are you ready for tonight?

So tonight is all about faith. And I want to start with a snarky comment. Do you ever make snarky comments? You know, the comments that are just kind of, you know, they're just snarky? And one of those snarky comments that we often hear is the idea: What world are you living on? Or: What world do you live in? And the idea is – when you're saying that snarky comment – you're kind of harassing someone... that their life, or their experience, or what they're saying or doing is not really realistic. That they're not really living in the real world. That they're kind of exaggerating or they're not really being relevant to this moment.

But that's where I want to start today. Because I want to start with this idea about: What world are you living in? Because the reality is that we don't all live in the same world. You know, that each and every one of us – out of the infinite possibilities of life – each and every one of us is living a different experience. You know, when it comes to financially, in our relationships, in our work... That each and every one of us – out of the infinite possibilities of God and the infinite possibilities of good – each and every one of us is having a different experience. And the problem with this is that we have spent so much time in our experience that we think that our experience is the only experience: that our experience is the only possibility.

And, so, it's only when we can really take a step back and really look at that, that we can actually move forward and change it, and go deeper.

And, so, what I want us to talk about tonight: I want to talk about the kingdom of heaven. Because I want to talk about that – whatever life experience you're having right now – I want to talk about the higher possibility. I want to talk about the kingdom of heaven, and the possibility it has for your life.

Reading from Luke 17: *“Once Jesus was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, and he answered them, ‘The kingdom of God is not coming like things that you can observe; nor will you say, ‘Look here or look there.’ For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.”*

In some versions it says it's within you. And I want you to think about that for a moment with me. That the kingdom of God – this infinite possibility, this possibility for greater good, or even absolute good – is totally available right here, right now, right where we are. That there's really only the kingdom of God and our current experience, right? So this kingdom of God is fully present.

In the Gospel of Thomas – an uncanonized Gospel that many Bible scholars believe are the actual words of Jesus – the third verse, or the third teaching in the Gospel of Thomas, says this: *“The kingdom is inside you and outside you. When you come to know yourself, you will be known. And you will realize that you are the sons of the Living God.”*

And what Jesus is trying to say, over and over again, is that there's a reality – a higher reality – even though we may not see it with our human eyes, or we've experienced it in our past. There's a possibility

– there’s a reality – that’s higher than we’ve ever known before. And, as we open our mind, our heart, our soul, we can actually tap into a life that’s greater than we’ve ever experienced before.

And then we read in John 14; it says – and I want you to really hear this. It says, *“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”* That, whatever you’re going through right now – whatever the situation is in your life – I want you to hear the words of Jesus saying, *“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”* Believe in God!

Like, right now, whatever’s going on in your life, are you believing in God more than you’re believing in circumstancing? Are you believing in God more than what’s going on in the world right now? Are you believing in God? That God is greater than anything that’s going on in your life? Do you believe in God?

And then he goes on and says, *“Believe also in me. Believe that I am the living expression of God. Believe in me!”* Because the same Spirit and power and presence that Jesus lived and moved through is available to each and every one of us!

So do you believe in God? And do you believe that he was created in the image and likeness of God? And do you believe that you are created in the image and likeness of God?

And then he said, *“In my Father’s house, there are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you, for I go to prepare a place for you.”* And I love this imagery! That – in the Father’s house – are many mansions. In the Father’s house, there are many rooms. In the Father’s house, there are infinite possibilities. There are higher levels of good than any of us have ever obtained. But there are these higher levels of good! And as we open our mind, our heart, our soul, our spirit, that we can actually move into a higher level of good than we’ve ever known before.

You know, spiritual people tend to say three things about life. There tends to be three levels of understanding life.

And the first line goes something like this: *“It’s okay; this isn’t our house. Life is not our house. Our home is in heaven, and we’ll get there after we die.”* Right? And most of us have heard this in one form or another. It’s okay: no matter how bad your life is – no matter how hard it is; no matter how yucky this moment may be – it’s okay! Because this really isn’t your home. Your home is in heaven, and you will get there after you die.

The second thing we’ve heard is: *“It’s okay; this is all just an illusion anyway.”* Right? And I’m not sure what you’re supposed to do with that statement, but we hear that over and over again. It’s okay; this is all just a big illusion; this isn’t real. I’m not sure what you’re supposed to do, or how that’s supposed to help you cope with today, but it’s an underlying belief: that, over and over again, *“Eh. Don’t worry. It’s an illusion.”* It doesn’t feel like an illusion, but that’s what they say.

But the third path – or the third thing that people say – is that life is a path of transformation. This is what Jesus taught; this is what Unity teaches. And it’s this idea that, if you’re not loving the experience that you’re having, that we can transform it. That it’s okay to transform any condition in your life to something that’s greater good. And I think that’s why Jesus taught the kingdom of heaven: because he knew that people were having an experience – whatever that experience was... That some people were having a great experience; some people were having a very unsatisfying experience. And he wanted to invite people into higher level of good. He wanted them to transform their life from this to something higher. So he taught the kingdom of heaven.

So, today, I want to talk about the path of transformation. I want to talk about faith. Because it takes a degree of faith to be willing to transform your life from what it is right now into what you want it to be. Because there's really two underlying things that faith requires. The first one is an underlying belief that it can be better. You know, sometimes we live in our life experience for so long we believe that this is all that's ever going to happen. And it really does take a degree of faith to believe that your life can be better. That, whatever's going on in your life right now, that there's a higher possibility. That it could be better. And, you know, we can see that other people are having a better experience, and then that takes us to the second point.

We have to also believe that it's possible for me. That it's not just enough to believe that a better life is possible; but it also has to be possible for me. Because I also have to have the faith to believe that I can do it: that I'm capable of it. That – through the power of God in me – that I can create a better life!

So I have to believe that a better life is possible, and that it's possible for me. Because those are the two positions that are actually a requirement to build a better life! That, if you don't believe it's possible, you won't do anything. You won't take your next step. You won't change. You won't transform. You won't make any new choices. And you also have to believe that it's possible for you. That, if other people have built a better life, that you can, too. That – through the power of God in you – you can absolutely build a better life.

So today I want to give you five points. And I believe that these five points are the basis of really transforming any situation to a higher possibility. And what I want you to hear me say – and I hope you hear it – is that transformation really is about taking “what is” and moving it to something greater. That transformation is about taking your life exactly the way it is, and moving it to something greater.

And so the first step in this transformational process is **ACCEPTANCE**. You literally have to accept “what is.” Now, for most of us, that's a difficult place. Because our mind always wants to go to the, *“It shouldn't be this way; this isn't right. This is wrong! They shouldn't be doing this to me.”* We get into those mental positions that thinks it shouldn't be this way, so then we move segments of our life – or maybe even our whole life – outside of us, and we stand in this place of resistance. And we won't accept what is. But until you accept what is, you can't transform it! If there's a place in your life where you've pushed it away – because you haven't accepted “what is” – then we can't transform that. So that situation is actually stuck; we are actually suffering because we are in resistance to our own life. And what we know is: what we resist tends to persist.

If you want to take a trip to New York today, and you believe that you're in Florida, but you're actually in Phoenix, Arizona... You're actually going to go... You're going to head in a course that's not your course! That you literally have to accept where you are. That life doesn't begin to move forward until you accept exactly where you are.

So I want you to think about anything in your life that you've been in resistance to. It could be a stack of bills; it could be a healing. It could be a painful relationship; it could be a situation at work. It could be what's going on in the world today... I want you to think about what you've been in resistance to: what you've actually been pushing outside of you. And what would happen today if you just accepted it? Accepted it fully? And really got your arms around it?

What if you were okay with the way it is? Now, that doesn't mean that we're not going to transform it; we are! But you have to get your arms around it first, because you can't change anything you're not willing to see. You can't heal anything that you're not willing to embrace.

So what would it look like today for you to get your arms around it?

Now two. After you accept it, then you have to **RECEIVE** it. And if we were resistant to accepting it, we're actually even more resistant to receiving it. Because what happens when we receive something is: we actually take the energy that's been out there in that situation and that moment, and we actually bring it into ourselves. And there's a part of us that, when we bring that energy into ourselves, we actually resist it. But it's that energy that we need to transform our life! You can't transform your life when you're segmented! You actually have to gather that energy and bring it into yourself. And, in that experience, then we can really receive the blessings. Because I guarantee that, whatever that situation – it could be, again, a stack of bills; a healing; a work situation; a relationship situation... I guarantee that situation has a blessing for you. And it's not until you receive it that you get the power. It's not until you receive it that you actually empower yourself with the energy in that situation.

I want you to see today that there's as much spiritual energy in a stack of \$100 bills as there is a stack of bills. There's as much spiritual energy in both of those situations, and it's not until you receive them that you actually get the blessing from them.

So, first I want you to ACCEPT; now I want you to RECEIVE it. And the third step is, I want you go **GIVE THAT ENERGY TO GOD.**

Because the moment that you receive that energy, you can then begin the transformational process by actually giving it to God. About turning that energy over to God. *"Thy will be done."* You actually surrender that energy; you give it to God. And the moment you give it to God – whatever you give to God in that moment – is spiritually purified. God is the only thing in the Universe that cannot be polluted. That whatever dark, cranky, ugly energy you give – no matter how bad it feels – whatever energy you give to God is instantly purified, and comes back to you as Grace. That you don't need to be afraid of the pain or the darkness of the past. You don't need to be afraid of the disappointments of the past. Accept it! Receive it! But then give it to God; don't sit in it! Don't dwell in it! Touch it long enough just to give it to God. And the moment that you give it to God, it is instantly purified, and comes back as Grace.

It's at that moment that you actually begin to move your life forward. It is that moment you're no longer stuck in the past. At that moment, all things are possible. And then that takes us to four.

The moment that you give that old, stuck energy to God, and it comes back as Grace – as it comes back as a pure Source of possibilities – then you need to **HAVE A HIGHER VISION FOR YOUR LIFE.** You actually have to have a vision for where you want to go. And that vision needs to be as high and as beautiful and as loving and as wonderful as you can imagine! Because that is the next version of your life!

So I want you to have that higher vision. Because this is where you use the power of your imagination to create the greatest image that you have for your life. And I want you to use the power of your imagination just to go like a half step beyond what you believe. I want you to create a life that is just on the edge of what you think is impossible! I want you to have a life that is so good... that you have a vision!

Now, can we ever use our imagination incorrectly? Yes! Yes! And I want you to hear this! Because right now so many people are dwelling in fear. And fear is just using your imagination to imagine what you don't want! And so right now we've got millions of people who are in a place of fear, who are actually using their imagination – not to create a higher vision for their life – but to actually create a lower vision for their life. Fear is actually taking that energy that you've now transformed and given to God, and actually creates something that's actually worse for it!

And so I absolutely don't want you to be doing that! I want you to have the highest vision that you can have for your life. What is the greatest amount of good that you can imagine? What is the most loving, the most prosperous, the most wonderful, the most beautiful life you can imagine? That, as you give the old situations to God, then all that energy then becomes available for you to create what's next.

And the fifth and the final part of this process of transformation is when you're willing to say to God: **THROUGH ME.** Because most of us want our life to be different, but most of us want somebody outside of ourselves to save us. We want the "knight on the white horse" to ride in and save us from our own calamity. And that never happens! It never works that way! It actually happens when we say to Spirit, *Through me. Thy will be done through me. Thy greater good be done through me.*"

And when we move into the life of "through me," then we're willing to be open and receptive. We're willing to be transformed. We're willing to be changed. We're willing to be guided. We're willing to be directed. We're willing to wake up every day and take that step that we need to take this day. Because we know that the kingdom of heaven is only going to happen through me. It's not going to happen because somebody "out there" saves you and gives you the kingdom of heaven. It happens when you're willing to claim it. "Through me." When the power of God through me is guiding you and directing you, then you can create anything. You can create a life that is so fabulous, because it's happening through you!

Over and over again, what I want you to see is that your life can absolutely be greater. That the time that we're living in right now does not have to define you; it's just a moment. And it's a moment with a huge amount of energy. And as you transform that energy – and you actually give that energy to God – then that energy becomes the very source of the greatest life that you could ever live. And that's what I want for each and every one of you. I want you to be feeling the presence and power of God in your life like never before. I want you to be free!

So let's take that into prayer:

I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul – right here, right now – to feel the presence of God. That, wherever you've been in resistance, I want you to accept: whether it's your finances; your health; your relationships; your work; your family... Whatever the place you've really been in resistance to, I want you to get your arms around it. And I want you to receive all the energy in that situation: all the upset; all the disappointment; all the fears; all the frustrations. I want you to receive it all. And then I want you to give it to God; I want you to lift it higher. I want you to give it to God: *"Thy will be done. Thy will be done!"* And then I want you to have a vision for your life that's even greater. So, as the Grace of God is showering upon you – as the glory of God is filling your soul in amazing ways – that you actually know where you want to go. And then I want you to say, *"Through me. God, through me. This is the life that I want to live through me. Let your Spirit flow through me."* And as we allow the glory of God to move us in greater and greater ways, we can live a life that totally and completely is the fulfillment of God's promises. We stand in the faith of God. We stand in the infinite possibilities. And so it is. Amen.

God bless you all! I want to thank you for being a part of our virtual Wednesday Night Service. And your support right now is critical to the health of this ministry. So you can give online; you can send a check to the ministry. There are so many ways you can support this ministry! But we want to thank you for being committed to the health and the success of this ministry, because our time of serving this community is actually so important right now. That this is a time for us to make a huge difference in the spiritual life of our community.

God bless you, friend, and I look forward to being with you next week.

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