

GRATITUDE FOR MY SOUL

Week #5 of the 6-Week "Gratitude" Series

Nov. 18, 2020

Rev. Richard Rogers

Rev. Richard Rogers: Hello! I'm Richard Rogers, and I am so excited to be with you tonight. This is Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center; this is the Wednesday night service. And I think you're really going to be blessed. We're going to talk about your soul. And we're going to talk about how amazing your soul is, and all the ways that your soul was created to bless you and bless your life.

Couple of announcements. First one is: next week, Thanksgiving Eve Service outside in the courtyard. It's going to be fabulous! This is our traditional service; we've done this service for a hundred years. Come and be a part of it. Outside; social distancing. Wear a mask. And it's just going to be great for our Unity family. We're going to have all three of the ministers here. So come and be a part of this special service. We even have a skit, and we know you love skits! So we're going to have a skit next week.

I'm also going to be doing a video service afterwards that will be released. So you're actually going to get a "two-for-one": one live service, one video service. So, either way, you're going to be blessed next week.

Also, our Remembrance Service that we do once a year to remember all the people who have gone before us, whether it was just in the last 12 months or whenever. It's our way of acknowledging and remembering all the special people that have made a soul difference in our lives.

And our last one is that we are beginning to recruit new chaplains. You know, chaplains are an important part of this ministry. They are the ones that hold sacred space for each of us. They pray for us after services. They call us once a month – the members – to make sure that they can pray for us. So if you want to be a part of this important spiritual aspect of our community, we invite you to prayerfully consider it. If you want more information, call Rev. Lori, and she'll give you the "low-down" on what it means to be a chaplain in this time. It's so important that we have that spiritual support system in this ministry.

Alright; let's move into our time of meditation.

MEDITATION:

I want you to take a deep breath; I want you to feel the presence of God. And we're just going to breathe in for a minute, and feel God right here, right now. And our thought for this evening is "Let it be." Let it be! That no matter what's going on in your life right now, I want to see if you can just let it be. So many times in our life we get so controlling – we get so anxious and fearful – that we overdo, overreact. And we just need to let it be. Let it be!

Allow the Spirit of God to go before you and heal and bless and transform every situation. Just let it be. Let it be! When we come into this place of peace – when we come into this place of knowing; when we truly feel the presence of God in our life – we realize that we are always overdoing. That when we just give ourselves a breath – a moment – and let the Spirit of God go before us, God works out the details. God heals and transforms each and every situation. Just let it be. Take a minute and rest. Renew yourself. And let it be. Let God be at work in your life. Let it be. Let it be.

Whatever has been the concern or the upset, let it be. Let the activity of Spirit just work in your life as never before. Trust that there is one presence and one power at work in your life and in the Universe: God the Good. Let it be.

Take a deep breath. And as you exhale, let your life be. Be still. Be still! Let it be! And allow the activity of God to work on your behalf. God loves you so much – that you are so important to God – that every detail is being worked on. Sometimes we can't even believe how much God loves us. That the entire Universe is conspiring on your behalf. Let it be! We are not victims to this world; we are called to live in mastery. So just let it be.

Holy Spirit, go before me. Make my way smooth and straight. Open doors; bless me in greater and greater ways. Let it be. And I feel the presence of God going before me in every experience. In every moment. And I take on the sense of peace and joy, knowing that there's only one power at work in my life: God the Good.

So in the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

MESSAGE:

Rev. Richard Rogers: Alright! So tonight I want to talk about your soul. Because we're in this series on gratitude – 40 days of gratitude – where we spend 40 days giving thanks for all the aspects of our life.

And, you know, it may seem kind of funny to say, "Thank you, God, for me," so I want to kind of expand that definition. I want you to really see the role that your soul plays in your life. Because, as we're giving thanks for all the things we get ... Last week we gave thanks for, you know, difficult people. Challenging people. Cranky people. You know, we gave thanks for all the blessings.

But today I want to give thanks for what I think is the most important aspect of you. And it's your soul. So let's get to it.



So, here's the deal. *[Draws circle on easel paper]* This is your Spirit: this is God's Spirit. This is the Spirit of God. This is your essence. This is your core. This is the most important part of you. You are the Spirit of God expressing! Now, the difference is that you don't have a spirit; you really are the Spirit of God expressing. There's only Spirit. There's only one God. There's only one presence of God. And that presence is within us all. So the core of who you are – the essence of who you are; the center of who you are – is God. It's light.

Now. *[Draws another circle around the first one]* The next level of you is soul. Right? Now, what's

interesting about your soul: that, when you were given life – when you were given manifestation; when you individualized out of God – your soul was the natural human expression. So what's interesting about your soul is that your soul is the sum total of all your human experience. Sometimes we call this consciousness. So in your soul – or the aspect of your soul – is all the things that you've been through, all your memories, all your experiences. It is your belief system. It's all your understanding. It is your consciousness. Right?

[Draws a third circle around the other two] And then the third level of who you are – that we're all familiar with – is this idea of body. So we are Spirit, soul and body. Now your body: that is your three-dimensional vehicle. It is the vessel that your soul wears for a time. And, as a vessel, it is energy, but it's not permanent. It is here for just your earthly experience. Alright?

So when we look at your Spirit – your essence ... When we look at God, one of the aspects that we know of God – that I'm going to talk about a little bit more next week – is the idea of God as Light. And so your Spirit is Light. So, as Light, that Light shines through your soul and shows up. Anything that's in your soul – your happy face; your sad faces; your wounds; your successes; your beliefs: everything. As that Light shines through your soul, then everything that is created in the three-dimensional world for you to see the manifestations of your soul – the manifestations of the content of your soul – in three-dimensional form. Because everything is shining – the Light is shining – through your soul, and you see it all around you.

And why that's important is that we can't heal what we can't see. And so, if we're going to heal anything in our life, we actually have to see it. So, as the Light of God shines through you, everything that's within your soul then is reflected in the world around you so that we can heal. So I want to talk today about six aspects of your soul that play a role in this.

And the first aspect of your soul that I want you to see is: **YOUR SOUL IS TRANSFORMATIVE.** Your soul, by design, is always in the process of being transformed. And it's either moving closer and closer to the Light, or it's moving more and more toward more denseness, more darkness, more fear. And so, as we do our soul work at this level [*points to the "soul circle"*] – as we heal anything in our soul – our soul transforms. And, as it transforms, it transforms our life. It transforms anything in our life.

So you can't really change anything in your life without first having it be a transformation at the level of your soul. And I want you to think of an experience maybe you've been through in your life that you've had more than once. Right? That, some of us can name experiences, you know, where we dated the same person, even though they had a different face and a different name. Where we might have dated the same person more than once. And like, "*Why do I keep drawing this kind of person to me?*" Or, "*Why does this condition keep happening in my life? Why do I keep having this moment and this experience?*"

And what I want you to see is that, if you don't heal it at the soul level, you're going to continue to create that experience over and over and over again until it heals at the soul level. So the soul has to move through a time of transformation, or life never changes. It continues to express in the same way. Because life is designed to get us so that this level – the level of our soul – is actually transformed into pure Light.

When we think of a high soul – when we think of somebody who's truly expressing God – the reason they're expressing God at such a pure level is that their soul has done all its healing work, and the soul then is just a clear vessel for the Infinite.

I don't know if you ever saw the movie, *Gandhi*. When I was about 18 years old, I saw the movie, *Gandhi*, where Ben Kingsley plays Gandhi. Love that movie! Love that movie! And I remember sitting in the theater watching that movie with just tears streaming down my face. And I realized after I walked out of that movie that the reason that it touched me so deeply is: even in Ben Kingsley's portrayal of Gandhi, I felt like I was looking at the face of God. That his Spirit – his soul – was so clear, that he just radiated God. He was God's radiant presence!

And what I want you to see: that your soul is always in a transformative state. It's always in the process of healing and transforming so that it becomes clear and able to express more and more God in your life.

So the first aspect of your soul is: It's transformative. It is always in a place of being transformed.

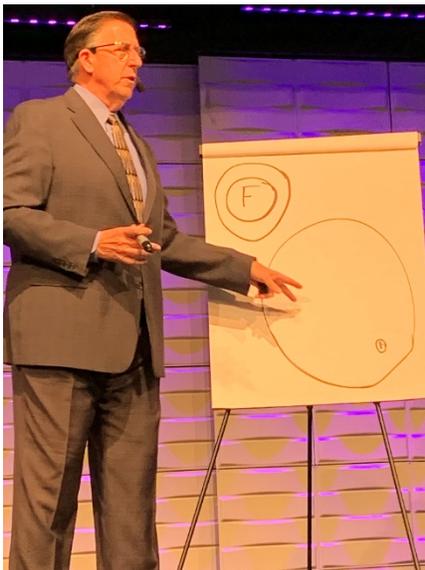
The next aspect of your soul that I want you to see is: **YOUR SOUL IS PIVOTAL.** And what that means is that your soul can either focus on God, or it can get focused on the world.

Now, when the soul gets too focused on the world, it actually can actually feel like it's lost its connection with Spirit. And that's really ... that's a dangerous time. That's a difficult time. You know, sometimes that happens when we get really involved in addictions, or we get really focused on our fears or our worldly events. That our soul gets so focused on the three-dimensional world that it really misses its connection to the Divine. It misses the connection to Spirit. And, really, the soul – in its ideal state – really spends the majority of its energy focused on God. Because the focus, over and over, has to be on God.

And that's why, in Unity, we teach prayer and meditation. That's why we practice going into nature, or having those moments that bring us – moments of great beauty. That bring us back. Because the soul longs for God. So when we hear great music, or when we have an experience with a loved one, or looking at a child or a grandchild, and tears just begin to well up in our eyes, it's because our soul has this ability to pivot. And sometimes what we notice is: When we're living in a great deal of fear or anxiety, our soul has just spent too much time focusing on the things of the world, and not enough time focusing on the things of Spirit.

And so, in spiritual community, we want to continually invite you back to the things of Spirit. Back to your experience of God. Back to the things that are the most important. Back to the things that are most powerful, so that you really get a connection with a deeper level of God in you. Right? A deeper level of really feeling God.

The third aspect – and this is where it really gets fun for me, as well. So not only is the soul transformative, not only is the soul pivotal, and where the soul focuses on is so important ... **THE SOUL IS ALSO INFINITELY EXPANDABLE AND HAS THE ABILITY TO CONTRACT.**



So imagine – I'm gonna draw a fear. *[Draws a large "F" surrounded closely by a circle]* So this is actually the same fear, but I'm going to represent it in two ways. So this is the same fear: the same size. But I'm going to draw over here as one size. *[Draws tiny "F" surrounded by a circle]* But actually it's the same fear. Right? Imagine it's the same size, and the same fear. This is going to be like a map, right? This *[points to the large "F"]* is where you're up close like in a microscope. And this *[points to the tiny "F"]* is where you're far away. This is the same fear.

Now, imagine. In the presence of fear, does your soul tend to expand or contract? Right? In the presence of angry people, do you tend to expand or contract? In the presence of conflict or uncertainty, do you tend to expand or contract? And what happens for most of us – as a soul – because our soul has this ability to expand and contract *[draws a second circle tightly around the large "F"]*, for many of us, what happens in the presence of fear

is that we actually contract around the fear. And the difficulty with that is that that becomes all that we really see. That we become so contracted around our fears – so contracted around our insecurities – that that's all we really see. All we experience life is from that place.

And what I want you to see that, when we're contracted at this level, our fears look so big. And the room that our soul has for God – for solutions, for a transformation, for a healing – is really limited, because the fear is really all that we see.

Now, imagine *[draws a large circle around the tiny "F"]* ... again, it's the same size fear. But this time you expand your soul. Right? From this model, look how much more room you have! Look at how much more space there is for good! For solutions! For God! Look at how much more!

And what I want you to see is that we spend so much time trying to remove our fears. Like, there's such a belief in our culture that all fear is bad. But what I want you to see: With the expandability of your soul, if this fear [points to both "F" diagrams] – or if they're both actually the same size – and the only thing that is different is how expanded your soul is, we actually don't have to worry about our fears!

What we actually need to do is learn how to expand in the presence of our fears! We actually learn how to expand to become bigger. So instead of contracting around your fears, we actually have to learn to expand! Because [points to the diagram of the tiny "F" within a huge circle] this fear is no big deal for this big of a soul. When you're living this big, little fears – no matter what they are – Woo! Who cares? Like, they have no power over us! A fear that takes up this much room [points to the diagram of the large "F" surrounded closely by a circle] – takes 80 or 90% of the space in our soul – this is problematic! This does not work! This is all-encompassing. [Points to tiny "F" again]: This is no big deal! This is easy!

Now, I want to move this fear to a goal or a desire. Now what I want you to see is – because your soul is also expandable – no matter what the goal or the situation is, your soul has to become bigger than that. And this is where it gets exciting, right? Because sometimes people will say to me: "Richard, this goal is so much bigger than I am." And I say, "Well, if that's true in reality – that this goal is bigger than your soul, you'll never have it in your life." Because whatever goal or desire you have, your soul has to actually expand to become bigger than the goal.

So if you have a desire ... Like, say we have a desire for world peace in our world. Right? I want you to see that, collectively, our collective soul on this planet would have to become so much bigger to hold world peace. Like, right now we're contracted in the possibilities, so that world peace actually doesn't fit in the collective consciousness of our planet. So if we really wanted world peace, we would have to actually expand so that that possibility would actually fit in the collective consciousness of our collective soul.

So whatever the desire is, what I want you to see is: The solution is always expansion.

Now, say you make a mistake. Not that you would ever make a mistake! But we all do, right? When you make a mistake, and you go into shame about your mistake ... Can you remember a time when you made a mistake – like, maybe a big mistake – and you go into shame about the mistake. Now, when you go into shame about the mistake, is your soul usually expanding in shame? Or contracting in shame? So what happens when we make a mistake and we go into shame is that we contract around the shame. What I want you to begin to learn to do is expand, even in the presence of mistakes. And I want you to feel how transformative that is!

And it doesn't mean that we're denying the mistakes. Because sometimes we hear a narcissist or somebody in our culture deny that they even made a mistake ... That's not what I'm teaching! That's not a spiritual process. The spiritual process is that you can acknowledge your mistake, and still expand. You don't have to go into shame and contract. You can actually say, "Yes; I made that mistake," and when you acknowledge the mistake – and you expand into it – it allows all this room for solutions. It allows all this room for greater possibilities. It allows us all to actually have greater good than the negative impact of the mistake.

But as soon as we go into shame, right? There's no solution. There's no room for a solution. There's no room for God.

So whatever you're feeling – whether it's a fear, whether it's a goal or desire, whether it's a mistake – what I want you to see is the solution is always expansion. And I hope you can see this in this illustration. I know it's crude, but I hope you can see it.

The next one is ... One of the things that I want you to see today is that, whatever spiritual idea you focus on [*draws the word "LOVE" within a circle*] ... When you focus on one of the archetypal spiritual ideas like love or peace or joy ... When you focus on soul on any of the archetypal or the fundamental – what we call them in Unity – divine ideas ... When you focus on any of the divine ideas, those ideas are so large, that if you begin to meditate every day on love ...

Now love just seems like a cute little word: "Love," you know. And so you begin to meditate on this cute little word, "Love." And before you know it, you realize that – because love is an aspect of God – this word is infinitely large.

Charles Fillmore, the co-founder of Unity, said that we could become "*pregnant with divine ideas.*" Right? And the idea is – like a pregnancy – one little cell becomes two, becomes four, becomes eight, becomes 16 ... And, as we begin to meditate – as we begin to focus on any archetypal spiritual idea – that idea is so large that it always causes an expansion of our soul. It causes our soul to expand in ways that we can't even imagine. Like, we think we're just dealing with a little concept called love ... and that has ramifications on our soul that are tremendous! And we expand because of those ramifications. So the fourth aspect is that: **WHEN YOUR SOUL FOCUSES ON ANY TRUE SPIRITUAL IDEA, IT EXPANDS YOU GREATLY.**

The fifth aspect. The fifth aspect of your soul is that sometimes, as a soul, **EVERY SOUL HAS A LIFE EXPERIENCE THAT IS UNIQUE TO THEMSELVES.** So sometimes we look at other people and we think, "*Well, I wish I was living her life*" or "*I wish I was living his life.*" You know, "*They've got such a great relationship*" or "*Work's so easy for them.*" "*They always have more money*" or "*They always have ... they just look beautiful. Look how perfect they look!*" Right?

And what I want you to see is that every soul has the perfect life experience to heal whatever their soul needs to heal. Right? So you could say, "*Well, I wish I had their life.*" But they're working on their own issues. They're working on their own soul healing. And your life – exactly the way it is – is exactly the way it's supposed to be for your soul healing.

So I want you to really open a space to really move in the direction of really acknowledging that your life – exactly the way it is – is perfect for your soul healing. That, if you needed a different life, your soul would create a different life. But exactly what it is – "*Well, why did I get sick?*" or "*Why did this happen?*" or "*Why did that happen?*" – and it's like, this is exactly what your soul needed for your soul's perfect evolution to a higher level. To a higher possibility. So we can just give thanks for your life exactly the way it is! "*No; I don't want to give thanks for my life exactly the way it is. I want my life to be different.*" Well, if you want it to be different, then accept your life exactly the way it is, heal it, so you get to move on. Resistance doesn't help! Heal it so you get to move on.

And the sixth point that I want to make today is – and I hope you've heard this from me already this evening – **ALL HEALING – ALL TRUE HEALING – HAPPENS AT THE LEVEL OF THE SOUL.** Like, if you want to heal your body, heal it at the soul level. You want to heal your finances? Heal it at the soul level. You want to heal a relationship? Heal it at the soul level. All healing – all true healing – has to happen at the level of the soul.

Because at the level of Spirit, you are perfect and complete and lacking in nothing. At the level of the soul, we're evolving. At the level of the body, it's just out-picturing what's happening at the soul level. So all healing happens at the level of soul. So anything you want to heal or transform, it's going to happen at the level of soul.

So what I want to do now is: I want to go into a little prayer time. I always like to close with prayer. I have a little prayer that I've written. I'm going to invite you to close your eyes. We're going to kind of go over these six steps, and really anchor them into our souls.

So close your eyes.

And we just begin by saying thank you, God. Thank you, God; thank you, God; thank you, God! Thank you, God, for this moment. Thank you, God, for this day. Thank you, God! And we give thanks for the deep level of transformation that's going on within us. And we ask for a greater transformation. We ask to be changed at depth; we hold nothing back from God – from Light – in this moment. God, transform me at depth; heal my soul. Transform any condition, any situation, any thought, any belief, any wound, any story, any drama that is keeping me from your infinite goodness. Holy Spirit, transform me at depth. And I keep my eye focused – I keep my soul focused – on the infinite goodness of God. On the one presence and the one power. I focus on God over and over again, no matter what the need is. No matter what the situation. No matter what is going on in this moment, I know that I have one source: God the Good. And I keep my spiritual life focused on God, and all things are possible. And I allow my soul to expand in this moment: to be greater than I've ever been before. I no longer contract into fear. I no longer contract into shame. But I expand! I expand to become greater than this moment, greater than this situation, greater than this challenge, greater than this need. I am an ever-expanding expression of the Divine. I am expanding to know more and more of the goodness of God. I am expanding to live in greater and greater levels of good. I am ever-expanding. And I focus my attention on good, and only good. I meditate on the spiritual power of good: of love, of peace, of joy, of infinite abundance. And I trust God that right where I am is right where I'm supposed to be. That divine order truly is in charge of my life. That I live in the grace of God. I live in the perfect grace of God. And today I give thanks that I am healed at depth. I am healed at every level of my life. My spirit is whole; my soul is clear; and my life is blessed. In the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

COLLECTION

Alright, I'm going to invite you to hold your gifts – whether you give electronically, whether you send a check to the church ... However you bless this church, I want to thank you for all of your support. Especially during this critical time in the life of our ministry, when so many people are searching for spiritual solutions to problems, Unity is there every week giving people a spiritual hand up into a greater life. So our offering blessing is: *"Divine love, through me, blesses and multiplies all that I give and all that I receive."* Together: *"Divine love, through me, blesses and multiplies all that I give and all that I receive."* And so it is. Amen.

CLOSING

God bless you all! Have a great week! Thanks for being a part of Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center, and I

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