

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Week #1 of the Lenten/Easter Series, "I AM"

Feb. 24, 2021

Rev. Richard Rogers

INTRODUCTION

Rev. Richard Rogers: Good evening! I'm Richard Rogers, and this is Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center. I am so glad you're here! We're going to begin a new series that's going to run all the way through Easter. And I'm going to talk about the "I AM" statements that Jesus spoke. And I'm going to invite you to, not only hear what Jesus said, but really to look at how you can apply these powerful statements in your own life. So that's where we're going to go.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Before we get any further, I've got a couple of announcements for you. The first one is: you know, as a ministry, we've made a commitment to do what we can do to eliminate racism and social injustice. To really make a difference in the world. And we're doing really a profound program; we're inviting people in our ministry into two groups to really be in a conversation about the impact that racism has had on individuals in our ministry. That racism is active; it is a presence within our community. And we can make a difference. If you go on to our website – unityphx.org – you can read about this program. You can hear it's a five-week program that you can be a part of to really transform yourself, and to transform our community. If you want more information, call the office or just go online – unityphx.org – and read about how you can be a part of eliminating racism in our lifetime.

Alright; that's all the announcements. Let's join together in a moment of prayer, as we set the tempo – we set the focus – of tonight. We set the intention.

OPENING PRAYER

We just open our minds and hearts to the light of God. That there is only one Presence and one Power in our world and in our lives: God the Good. So we know that there is the power of light streaming into every aspect of our life. We see it in our ministry; we see it in our families; we see it in our community. We know that there is only one Presence and one Power: God the Good. So tonight we dedicate ourselves to the light: to being the greatest expression of light that we can be. And so it is. Amen.

SOLO

Guest artist Cassie Chilton sings, "All Good Gifts"

We plow the fields and scatter the good seed on the land ...
But it is fed and watered by God's almighty hand ...
He sends the snow in winter, the warmth to swell the grain ...
The breezes and the sunshine, and soft refreshing rain ...

All good gifts around us
Are sent from Heaven above
So thank the Lord; oh, thank the Lord for all His love ...

We thank Thee then, O Father, for all things bright and good,
The seedtime and the harvest, our life, our health, our food,
No gifts have we to offer for all Thy love imparts
But that which Thou desirest, our humble thankful hearts!

All good gifts around us
Are sent from Heaven above ...
So thank the Lord; oh, thank the Lord for all His love ...

I really wanna thank you, Lord!

All good gifts around us
Are sent from Heaven above ...
So thank the Lord; oh, thank the Lord for all His love ...

MESSAGE

Rev. Richard Rogers: Cassie, thank you! That was fabulous! We love it when you're here. We miss you, so we're glad you're here! Thank you so much for that incredible gift.

Alright; let's get to tonight. You ready? So tonight we're going to take on the "I AM" statements that Jesus spoke. Right? And we're really going to look at how we assimilate those statements into our own life. That the "I AM" statements are really our ability to claim our oneness with God. And that part of our journey is when we move from a sense of separation to knowing our oneness with God. That we are the living expression of all the good that God is.

So we're going to start tonight by the "I AM" statement that Jesus said: "I am the light of the world." And he said it twice. And we're going to focus all these "I AM" statements are in John. And he said it twice. He said it in John 8:12 and he also said it in John 9:5. Right?

And so when you hear Jesus say, "*I am the light of the world,*" there's a part of [laughs] that goes, "*Well, yeah; you're Jesus!*" Right? "*Like, that's not really a big stretch for you to say, 'I am the light of the world.'*" Right?

But in Matthew, he also said that you are the light of the world! Right? And I want you to hear the power that you are the light of the world: "*Let your light so shine that others may see your good works and give glory to God.*" So there was an understanding in Jesus' own experience that, not only was he fully the light – that he was fully created in the image and likeness of God – but that you were, too! That you're created in that same presence and that same power! Right?

And I want you to begin to really look at how you're living that in your life. And the role that the light plays in the transformation of your life.

Have you ever walked into a dark room and kicked something because you couldn't see it? Right? I mean, I think we've all had that! You know, maybe go to the bathroom in the middle of the night; we come back and we kick something, or we trip over a pair of shoes or whatever that was there. And I want you to see that this is so much an illustration of our lives. Because you cannot heal what you cannot see. You cannot transform an aspect of you that you've been unwilling to look at. And that part of our spiritual journey is allowing our eyes to be opened: the light turned on so that we can actually see the aspects of our life – the aspects of our world – that we haven't wanted to look at.

You know, it's like racism. We're taking this commitment in our ministry to really look at racism. And there's a part of us that – if you haven't been impacted by it – where you just don't want to see it. Like, "*Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah; you know, I don't want to see it!*" But when you actually allow yourself to see – when you allow the light to come into that situation – when you open your eyes to see what's right in front of you, it's like, "*Wow! That's awful! Like, that's awful that people have to live in that every day!*"

And just because it's not impacting you directly, it doesn't mean that it's not present for those that are involved. And what I'd like to suggest today is: I believe that there are things going on in your life right

now that are impacting you on a daily basis that you just haven't wanted to see yet. And the most powerful prayer that was in Genesis was *"Let there be light."*

Let me go to Genesis. Genesis 1: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form; it was formless and void. And dark covered the face of the deep. And while the winds of God swept over the face of the waters, God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. And the light he called 'day' and the darkness he called 'night.' And there was evening and morning of the first day."*

One of the most powerful prayers in any aspect of our life is, *"Let there be light. LET. THERE. BE. LIGHT!"* Let there be light in our politics. Let there be light in our finances. Let there be light in our healing. Let there be light in our relationships. That any area in your life that you want to participate in a transformation, I'm going to invite you today to claim the power of light. *"Let there be light!"*

And when we call forth the light in any area of our life, we begin to see things that sometimes we don't want to see. We want to judge it as bad or wrong instead of looking at it from a higher spiritual point of view, in that you have to see the way it is so that you can call it into a greater possibility.

So let's look at the Gospel of John. John:8, beginning with Verse 3. *"And the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman to him" – meaning Jesus – "that was caught in adultery. And making her stand before them all, they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.'" Notice that there was no man there, right? [Laughs] Like the first deal is: they bring the woman, the man just runs away and hides, right? Committed adultery.*

[Continues to read passage]: "Now in the Law Moses commanded us that we stone such a woman. Now what do you say?" And they said this to test him so that they might bring charges against him. But Jesus bent down and began to write with his finger in the dirt. And when they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let any one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And, once again, he bent down and began to write on the ground. And when they had heard this, they all went away, one by one, beginning with the elders. And Jesus was left alone with the woman standing there. And he looked up and said, 'Has anyone condemned you?' And she said, 'No one, sir.' 'Neither do I, so go and sin no more.'"

Right? So this idea is that ... And then it goes on, right? *"Then again Jesus spoke, saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.' And the Pharisees said to him, 'You are testifying on your own behalf! Your testimony is not valid.' And Jesus said, 'Even if I did testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, because I know where I've come from, and I know where I'm going. But you do not know where I've come from or where I'm going. You judge by human standards, and I judge no one.'"*

Okay; so why is this important, right? As you're calling forth the light in your life in greater and greater ways – as you're being an instrument of the light – what I want you to begin to see is that, as the light begins to reveal things, what happens for most of us is that we want to judge them. We want to judge them as wrong; we want to judge them as bad. And, more importantly, we want to judge ourselves as bad for having created this.

So that's why, for many of us, we don't really call forth the light in every area of our life, because there's so much of our life that we just don't want to become conscious of! We don't want to see! But when we do begin to become more aware – more conscious, more awake – we also have to grow in love and compassion. Right? Because our human part of us wants to judge ourselves. Like, *"Oh, this is bad; I did this wrong. I'm not very good."* Right?

And what I want you to see tonight is: As you turn on the light, you actually have to then begin to stand in a greater and greater level of self-compassion so that you don't judge the heck out of yourself. Because that doesn't move us forward. It just moves us back!

There's many things that we need to see in the world today, and we need to be able to see them with an open heart. We need to be able to acknowledge them. Because, with an open heart, we can then transform them to a higher and higher level of good.

So what in your life are you judging yourself that it is the way it is? See, when Jesus said, *"Let there be light ..."* I mean, when God said, *"Let there be light"* in Genesis, it was the beginning of creation. See, light is conscious creation. Out of the infinite darkness, God said, *"Let there be light,"* and there was light! Out of the infinite formless reality, God said, *"Let there be light,"* and out of the infinite potential came light!

And I want you to see how impactful that is! Right? That, when you look at your life right now, there is infinite potential all around you! But conscious creation – conscious cause – is when you speak the light. When you call forth the light, you are actually taking the darkness and transforming it into a greater experience of what could be in your life. When Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world,"* he was actually saying: *"I am conscious cause! I am creating the infinite possibilities! That that presence and that power of God is within me!"*

The power that God used to create light is within all of us! You have the power to create your next reality! But you have to be willing to see what you've already created. You have to be able to see the way you've already created, and not judge it, but see it, so that you can create it at higher and higher levels.

I AM the light of the world! Will you say that with me? *"I AM the light of the world!"* That God in me is pure light! God in me is conscious creation! God in me is the power of creative cause!

God in me is creative cause! I want you to feel that for a minute! That the power of God in you – the light of God in you – is creative cause. That, out of the darkness, creative cause has the potential to create anything. Anything! That God in you is the power to create anything.

Let's go to John. The second time Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world"* was in John 9:9. And this happened. *"As they were walking along, he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, who sinned: this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' And Jesus answered them, 'Neither! This man nor his parents. For he was blinded that the works of God may be revealed. We must work while the day is light, for we will not work at night. For as long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' And when he said this, he spat on the ground, created a little mud with his saliva, and spread it over the man's eyes, and said to him, 'Now go; wash.' And then the man came back to him, and he could see."*

See, what I want you to begin to see is his disciples, as they're walking along and this guy is born blind, instantly they want to move into judgement. *"Who's at fault here? Is it his parents that he was born blind? Is it karma; that he did it? Who's to blame?"* Because the human part of us wants to find who's to blame. Right? And we actually feel better when we're thinking in our head and our heart, *"Well, it's this person's fault, or it's this person's fault, or it's this person's fault."* And what Jesus said is: Every limitation is here so that we can reveal the potential for God. That we can reveal the infinite goodness of God that is all around us.

As we begin to call forth the light in our life and in our world in greater and greater ways, we can get stuck in pointing fingers at what's wrong. Or we can call forth the light. And when we call forth the light, we are going to see some of the situations that are just, you know: they're just limited. They're broken.

They're sad. They're wounded. But we don't get stuck there. We actually continue to call forth the light as creative cause to move into a higher and higher manifestation.

"I AM one with creative cause. I AM the light! I AM one with creative cause; I AM the light!"

Alright. So now I want you to look at your own life right now. Okay? I want you to look at your life; what's one aspect of your life that you're ready to transform? That you're ready to be blessed in?

The I AM statement, *"I AM the light of the world,"* invites us to turn on the light right there. Now, trust me; when you turn on the light, you're going to see it just the way it is. You're going to see the good and the bad. And our shame wants then ... usually wants us just go back to sleep. Just make it dark again. Shut the door. Hide the, you know ... *[laughs]* Have you ever ... Have you ever walked into a closet, or maybe if you have a junk room in your house, or a junk drawer? And you open the door to the junk room or the junk closet or the junk, and you just shut the door *[laughs]*, because it's so overwhelming *[laughs]* that you just don't want to see it? Right? It's like, *"Just shut the door."* You know. *"Just ... I don't want to see it; just shut the door. It's too overwhelming; we'll deal with that another day."* And we just never get there. Right?

And the spiritual process in this is that we actually go in the room, we open the door, and we call forth the light of God. But not just to see the mess, but then to also expand the love, so that the love and the light begin to transform every situation in our life.

You know, when we look at racism right now, right? As we call forth the light and we begin to see all the ramifications of racism in our world today, we actually have to call forth greater love, or we'll get stuck in just blaming each other for the problem. As we call forth greater light, and can see the situations – the challenges – that are before us, we then have the opportunity to expand in love so that we can build bridges of connection that we may know that we are all one.

Today, whatever area in your life you want to heal – whatever area in your life you want to bless; whatever area in your life you want to transform – call forth the light. You are the light of the world.

"I AM the light of the world. I AM creative cause." And when you really feel that power within you – when you feel the fullness of God; when you know that creative cause is within each and every one of us – then we move into those situations that are limited or broken or wounded, and we call forth the presence of God. As light and as love. To do a mighty work to transform our lives.

Let's take a deep breath, and let's move into a time of prayer.

MEDITATION

I want you to take a deep breath, and I want you to feel the transformation that the world is asking for right now. With all that's going on in the world today, I want you to feel the deep wound that we experience often in our world today. And I want you to simply say with me, *"Let there be light."* Let everything that needs to be healed and transformed come into the light. Let us see it in a new way. Let us be able to hold that situation with the fullness of who we are. That God is creative cause, and that creative cause is in us. And as we begin to see it, we can no longer allow the limitations of the past to keep us from the glory of God.

Today let our eyes be opened. But let our hearts be full. Let there be enough love within us and all around us so that we cannot stay in our stuck places. Where we cannot stay in our broken places. That we no longer stay in our wounded places. Let the light of God in us move us forward.

Take another deep breath. Let there be light. Let there be light!

And as you begin to claim that light within you in greater and greater ways, you become a light unto the world. You become a transformative power for wherever there is darkness — wherever there is

limitation – you become the light of love that shines forth in every nook and cranny to transform our world. You are the light of the world.

Today, no longer be afraid of the darkness. No longer be afraid of the limited or the broken or the hateful or the wounded. Let your light shine. Let the power of God in you bring forth greater light that – no matter what the need; no matter what the situation – that you bring the full force of who you are as a spiritual being. That you bring the full force of God at work in every situation in your life. You are the light of the world!

Jesus knew who he was. He claimed his oneness with the light. *"I AM the light of the world."* And he went forth to be the light in every situation. That that same power is within each and every one of us.

Take a deep breath. Feel the light within you. Feel the power within you. Feel that creative cause within you: that creative power. That the moment we light a match – the moment we flip the switch – the darkness is gone. We no longer fear the darkness, for we know the power of the light that is within us.

Thank you, God! Thank you, God, that I am one with the light. Thank you, God, that I AM the light! I AM the light sent forth into the world. May my light be bright today. May the power of God's light be in me fully expressed. That, every day, I become brighter and brighter in my expression of God. And so it is. Amen.

COLLECTION

I hope you enjoyed today's message. You know, I really, truly believe that you were created in the image and likeness of God ... that the light of God is within you. And as we learn to express it in greater and greater ways, it transforms every area of our life. That there is the power of creative cause within you that wants to express in greater ways.

So let's hold together our affirmation: *"Divine love, through me, blesses and multiplies all that I have, all that I give, and all that I receive."* Let's say that together: *"Divine love, through me, blesses and multiplies all that I have, all that I give, and all that I receive."* In the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

CLOSING

Alright; let's affirm together our Prayer for Protection:

The light of God surrounds us;
The love of God enfolds us;
The power of God protects us;
And the presence of God watches over us.
Wherever we are, God is! And all is well!

God bless you; have a great week! We're going to go out with the choir singing our "Peace Song." But I want you to have a great week! God bless you, friend!

Unity of Phoenix Choir sings:

Let there be peace on earth
and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth;
the peace that was meant to be.

With God as Creator,
family all are we.

Let us walk with each other
in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me;
let this be the moment now.
With every step I take,
Let this be my joyous vow:

To take each moment
and live each moment
in peace eternally!

Let there be peace on earth
and let it begin with me!

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