

I DON'T KNOW

Week #3 of a 4-Week series inspired by the don Miguel Ruiz book, "The Four Agreements"

June 23, 2021

Rev. Richard Rogers

MEDITATION

As we move into this time of prayer and meditation, I want you to take a deep breath. And I want you to let go and just surrender to the activity of God that is guiding you and directing you in every facet of your life. There's really two ways to live our life: we can try to figure it all out, and we can try to get really smart and look at all the options, and try to figure everything out. Try to figure everyone out, try to figure out what our plans should be. Or we can get still and listen to the guidance of God within us, and have the courage to act from the highest and the best.

Today we give thanks for all the ways that God guides us. All the ways that Spirit is calling us higher. All the ways that we can learn to trust life -- trust the moment, trust the guidance -- and just say, "Yes!"

Tonight we feel the presence of God within. Can you hear the voice of God whispering your name? Can you feel that activity of God beneath all the fears, beneath all the thoughts, beneath all the upset? It's just guiding you, directing you, showing you the way, and opening one door after another.

Tonight you don't need to figure it out. You don't need to be smarter than everybody else. You just need to feel the presence of God within you, and trust it. And take your next step. Living a spiritual life isn't always easy, but it truly is simple. You just listen to God. You either listen or feel the activity of God within you, and you just do what you're told. You gather up all your courage and all your faith, and you take your next step. And sometimes it doesn't make sense! And sometimes it's not what you want to do! And sometimes it challenges you all the way to your core! And you take the next step anyway. And then in a day or a month or a year, you look back and you think, "*That was exactly the right move.*" And there was no way I could know that at the time, but that was exactly what I needed to do. And it seemed crazy, but my life is getting better and better and better. As I put God first -- as I trust that spiritual presence that guides me and directs me -- my life gets better and better and better.

We can live from our ego -- we can live from our personality, we can live from our intellect, we can live trying to figure everything out -- or we can surrender it all: trust God and take the next step. God is in charge of my life. God is in charge of my life! And I trust that one presence and one power to guide me and direct me, to lead me, to bless me, to heal me, to provide for me. Everything I need is God's good will to provide it and more. Thank you, God; thank you, God; thank you, God! In the name and through the power of the Living Christ, I give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

MESSAGE

Rev. Richard Rogers: Alright,

Alright; we're going to talk about stories. How many of you have a favorite story that -- when with you're with friends or family or a party -- you have a story; it's your "go to" story. Right? And it could be about anything, right? It's just your "go to" story.

Well, I want you to make up a story about this orange ball. Right? And it can be as interesting as you want it. Right? Or it can be as boring as you want it! The story that I tell about this ball is: this ball was my sister's. And she was a captain on a cruise ship ... not a captain. An officer on a cruise ship for many years. And this ball has traveled all over the world. And some of this story is true, just like some of your stories are true, Right?

And we think that everything that comes out of our mouth is, of course, 100% true. And what's interesting is: there's always this gap, right? In every bit of life, there's this gap. And what we tend to do is fill it up, because we don't like that gap very much. Right? And the gap is all the things that we make up so that our stories seem rational. So they make sense. So they hold our life together.

And if you look at our history, from really the beginning of time we made up stories. We made up stories about thunder and lightning. We make up stories about where we came from. We made up stories about where we're going. We tend to make up stories. And especially those things that are the most important to us.

And so my question for you tonight is: Who would you be in the presence of a gap? You didn't have to fill it in with a story? Who would you be if you could live with the gaps in your story -- in your history -- and not make up a story to fill it in?

And you say, *"What are you talking about, Richard? There's no 'gaps' in my history! There's no 'gaps' in my story! It's all unified! I've colored in all the color, and I've filled in all the dots, and I've filled in all the spaces!"*

And what I want you to see is: yes, you have! But who would you be *[laughs]* if you allowed there to be gaps? Right? Who would you be if you didn't need to know? What if you hadn't figured it all out? What if you could just be in the unknown? Would it actually accelerate your ability to be blessed, or would it get in the way of it?

See, I have this idea here today that I'm presenting to you that I don't think we need to know as much as we think we need to know. And I think that, from our wounded place -- from the place where we were originally wounded in life -- many of us have had this concept that, if I can figure everything out, that I won't be wounded again. If I can just be the smartest person in the room, or have the best story, or figure everything out, then I can become untouchable; nobody can hurt me again.

And I'd like to suggest tonight that I'm not sure that's true. And I actually don't think it's true at all! I think that sometimes our mind is working so hard to figure everything out, that it simply doesn't need to work that hard. That we can actually slow down a bit mentally, and be in the unknown, and still be safe. And, in fact, as we heal, I'm really going to suggest today that we actually need to know much less than we think we do. Would you say with me? *"I don't need to know?" [With congregation]: "I don't need to know."*

Because, if you've ever been part of an organization -- really, almost any size organization -- there's always that person that doesn't feel like they're in the loop. It sometimes happens even in families ... like, everybody's doing something, and you feel like, *"I wasn't in the loop! Why didn't I know that? I should have known that! Everybody else knows that; why don't I know that?"* Right? And it almost brings up a level of panic that they don't know!

And what I'd like to suggest tonight is: that's life! Life is mostly unknown! And because we're in resistance to not knowing ... Because we're afraid that we should know -- that if we don't know, it actually scares us -- we actually make up stories to fill in the gap. And what would happen if you actually just allowed yourself not to know? Could you trust that the Spirit of God at work in your life knows enough to get you from Point A to Point B from the beginning of your life to the end of your life? And that you could actually not know how to do it?

See, one of the things that happens when we really engage in our ego and our personality is that our ego feels like its only job is to make sure that we know: to figure everything out. Not only to figure you out, but to figure out everybody in your life. So if you figure everybody out, then you're going to be safe. And what if you just don't have to work that hard? What if you just wake up every day and listen to the voice of God within you that guides you and directs you? And you keep everything so incredibly simple?

"Well, Richard, if I didn't figure it out, I'd be vulnerable. Like, the only thing that keeps me safe is being the smartest person in the room or trying to be the smartest person in the room. Like, so, if I don't figure it out, then they could hoodwink me." Don't you love that word? Hoodwink? "They could hoodwink me! They could take advantage of me! I could be robbed or cheated or I would be vulnerable. And, God knows, I don't like to be vulnerable! I don't want to really have to trust God. I want to figure it! I want to be in my ego! I want to be in personality! Because if I stay in my ego/my personality, then I don't have to be vulnerable. And if I really just trust God and stay in the moment, heaven could break loose! It could all fall apart in a minute!"

You know, Daniel Nahmod has this song. Oh! Will you hand me my notes? 'Cause I don't need to know.
[Congregation laughs]

[Rev Rogers laughs] Daniel Nahmod has this song entitled, "I Don't Need to Know":

*When things go wrong, it's natural to wonder
What celestial rule did I break?
When things go right, it's logical to ponder
What credit can I take?
But the truth is so much easier; I don't need a master plan
I can stay here in this moment, 'cause my life is in good hands*

*I don't need to know, where the wind blows, 'cause God knows
I don't need to know, what the future holds, 'cause God knows
I need never know how pain ends, how my heart mends
I can just let go, 'cause God knows*

*But still I find I'm crying out for answers
Guess I'm still craving control
And still I find I'm afraid of taking chances
As if I could damage my soul
But at this moment, I remember; it comes so clear to me
The minute I surrender, I'm as safe as I can be*

*I don't need to know where the wind blows, 'cause God knows
I don't need to know what the future holds, 'cause God know
I need never know how pain ends, how my heart mends
I can just let go, 'cause God knows*

Have you heard that Scripture from Psalms 1:19 that says, *"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light upon my way"*? Right? Now, when you think about that Scripture, it is: the Word of God is like a lamp unto my feet. Now, if you're walking down a path holding a lantern -- or holding a light, right? How far ahead of you can you see? Can you see a mile down the road? Can we all agree you can't see a mile down the road? Right? Can we agree that you can't see a half a mile down the road? Right? So, if you're holding a lantern and you're kind of swinging a lantern as you're walking through the woods, or whatever ... You remember camping as a kid, or whatever? You could probably see three -- maybe six feet -- at the most. Right? Do you agree with that? Right?

So one of the things about our spiritual life is that sometimes we don't want to take our next step until we know how it's all going to work out. Like, we're afraid to take the action that is right in front of us to take, because we don't see how the action all lines up to the finish line. And faith says that we just take the two or three steps that we have in front of us, knowing that -- as we take those two or three steps --

the light will continue to shine, our path will be revealed. But it's never going to be revealed a hundred miles down the road! You're actually never going to know how it ends until you get to the end!

Faith says that I have the courage to take the next step in front of me not knowing how it's going to work out, but trusting that God is in charge. That my life is divinely designed. That there is a level of good that works, and all I have to do today is take the next step and the next step and the next step. But if I sit here and wait for it all to be revealed, I never get off my duffus. My tukus. My rear end. *[Laughs]* I never move my life forward, right?

And what I want you to see is that there's this natural conflict, if you will, that knowing creates. Because our ego says to us: *"We should know."* And our spirit says to us, *"Trust the process."* And how much time and energy have we spent in utter anger, frustration and disappointment that we didn't know how it's going to work out? Right?

But if you read a novel or if you go to the movies, and you've already got it figured out how it ends, how much do you like that book? How much do you like that movie if you've got it figured out within the first two minutes of the movie? Right? It's not very interesting! It doesn't really get your attention, because we actually want to be surprised from time to time. But our ego hates it! Right?

Our ego thinks that we're not safe if we don't have it figured out. And that, not only are we not safe, but we are bad or wrong or dumb or lazy or "fill in the blank" if we don't have the plan that at least is better than God's. *[Congregation laughs]* Right? Because God's plan is always like Plan C. Like, my ego's first plan; my ego's second plan; alright, God's plan. Right? And some of us are so determined, God's plan doesn't get implemented until we're like M or Q or R, right? *[Congregation laughs]* So we've gone through A and B and C and D plan. *"I thought D would work!"*

And we go through them all, right? Until we get to the very last end of the movie, and we think: *"Okay; I finally give up. I'm willing to allow Spirit to be in charge of my life."* And we are willing, I want you to see how much easier it is when you don't need to know.

Will you say with me one more time? *[With congregation]: "I don't need to know."* I don't need to know! I don't need to know.

Now, just feel the inner conflict that that creates. Because it makes us all of our inner woundings scream for control. It makes us all the places where we don't feel safe in life scream for control. But the reality is: as we heal -- as we do our inner work; as we release the pain of the past -- our mind gets quieter, because we don't need to know. One more time: *[with congregation] "I don't need to know."*

Okay, so we've been doing don Miguel's book, *The Four Agreements*. And the first week we talked about **being impeccable with our word**. We talked about how that moves us into an accelerated path for our life. And that, when we use our words with clarity and power, we create the next version of our life, and it's transformative. We talked about that last week ... I mean, two weeks ago.

And then last week we talked about **not to take anything personally**. Right? And that is, by far, for me the hardest one. Right? Because when I bump into somebody -- when somebody bumps into me -- how many of you, your first response is to take it 100% personally? Right? *"They said this; they did this."* Like, *"Poor me."* Right? We take it personally. And it just creates more drama and more pain and more frustration.

And then get into the third agreement. And the third agreement is **make no assumptions**. I'm going to read from this book. Chapter 4: The Third Agreement. Don't Make Assumptions.

"The third agreement is don't make any assumptions. We have the tendency to make assumptions about everything. The problem with making assumptions is that we believe they are true. We could swear they are true. We make assumptions about what other people are thinking or doing -- we take

it personally -- then we blame them and react by sending them emotional poison with our words. That is why when we make assumptions, we are asking for problems. When we make assumptions, we misunderstand, we take it personally, and we end up creating a whole big drama for nothing.

All the sadness and drama you have lived in your life was rooted in making assumptions and taking things personally. Take a moment to consider the truth of this statement. The whole world of control between humans is about making assumptions and then taking things personally."

So what I want you to see, right? Is that, for most of us, as we suspend our judgements -- as we suspend our assumptions -- there is a calm that happens within us. He goes on in Page 67:

"It is always better to ask questions than to make assumptions, because assumptions set us up for suffering."

So on Saturday, my wife has been wanting to redo our bedroom. And as a guy, like, I never need to move that bed again. [Congregation laughs] Right? I don't need to move the sofa; like, the sofa's fine. The bed's fine. It's been there. Like, I don't trip over it. I know where it is. I can get to the bathroom and back to the bed in the middle of the night. There's, like, no problem. Like, I like a level of ... it's the way it is. Right?

But apparently, it was time to make some moves. It was time to make some things. So Saturday morning I know that we have this project, and I have been known to be a little resistant on home repairs. [Congregation and Rev. Rogers laugh] Anybody else? I have been a little resistant in the past on home repairs.

And so, Saturday morning I get up, and I don't even have to be asked. It is home repair time; I have dedicated this morning to this. And I've got the bed up on its side; I'm moving the couch. My lovely wife comes in and says, "What are you doing?" [Congregation laughs] I said, "It's Saturday! It's home repair day! We're moving everything around; we had this vision of what we were doing. I signed off on it, and I'm doing it!"

And that's what I love about my wife! And it's what I love about our relationship, is that: when it comes for a vision for our life and for our future, we share very similar values. The problem is: how we get there. [Congregation laughs] She consistently goes left, and I consistently go right. If you could pick two people that are gonna -- dedicated to getting the same place -- but go about it in categorically different ways, that is us. That is literally us! If she says she wants to go to the mall, I think we're going to Glendale; she thinks we're going to Scottsdale. [Congregation laughs] Right? You say, "mall," you know, or whatever it is! You say this: I'm going this way; she's going that way. And somehow we always end up at the right spot, even though we go in two different ways.

And so, she says, "What are you doing?" And I said, "I'm ... I'm ... I'm doing everything we agreed to!" And she said, "No. That's not it at all. We were going to do it this way." I said, "We were"? She said, "Yes, we were!" [Congregation laughs] And I said, "Okay; so how are we going to go from this point on?" She said, "Well, if you would have asked me in the beginning, it would have gone ..." What? "Easier." Right? And it's like, "Ohhhhh."

Like, there is a part of all of us that we think we know. Is that true? We think we know. We have a mindset how it's going to work. Right? And as long as we stay in our mindset, there's not a lot of opportunity for movement, for change, for growth, for expansion.

You know, I did a series of talks a couple of years ago called, "The Fixed Mindset or the Growth Mindset." And there's a lot of work at Stanford University now about these two mindsets: about a fixed mindset or a growth mindset. And they took executives, they took athletes, they took kids, and it's this idea: if you think you know, it actually gets in your way of getting to where you want to go. And especially if you think you should already know, even though you don't know. And they found the

individuals who had the most difficulty moving forward in life were people who thought they should already know. Because there's this mindset that happens where people believe they should already know whatever it is that they don't know. And so they don't ask questions; they just act out and actually make things much more difficult.

And the whole growth mindset is that: really, we never know. We really never know what somebody else is thinking, or their desires. And that we actually have to ask somebody multiple times ... not because they're not communicating, but because our fixed mindset can't hear them. Do you see the distinction there?

So have you ... Has anyone ever given you directions to whatever it was? And you simply couldn't hear it because, in your mind, it was going to go like this. And it took multiple times before you realized: *"Oh, we're not even speaking the same language here!"* Right? We think we're speaking the same language ... We think we're on the same page ... We may ultimately get to the same place, but the journey is nowhere close to what we're each talking about it. And it's ... And it's ... [Laughs] It's ... It can be aggravating. Anybody else? It can be aggravating, right?

And so where we're going tonight is this idea that the moment you think you know, most communication stops. And it actually takes us a little bit of time to actually stop our own inner process to really hear what somebody else is saying.

Now, if it takes three questions to really slow our own mental process to hear what somebody else is saying, how many times do you think we need to open to Spirit to stop our mental process to really feel the guidance that God wants to offer us? Because do you think there's times when Spirit just wants to do a fist plant [hits himself in the head]? [Congregation laughs] Like, I could never be God! [Congregation laughs] I would be so annoyed with all of you; it would be beyond words. [Congregation laughs] I would! [Laughs] Straight up, I would be so annoyed with myself! I would be so annoyed!

Because it's like, *"I'm trying to help you here, people! Just pay attention! I'm guiding you! I don't get to use words; I just get to use this little feeling within you. There's this little nudge I get to give you. Sometimes I whisper when you're almost awake. And I just whisper in your ear. That's all I get, people; work with me here!"* [Congregation laughs] Right?

And everybody's wounded selves say, *"Don't pay attention to the old guy whispering in your ear! Let me be in charge of your life!"* And then we get to these places, and we wonder why we don't do relationships. Or why life is harder than it needs to be. Or why it's so frustrating. And it all really starts the moment we stop assuming that we know.

I don't know. Will you say that with me? [With congregation]: *"I don't know."* And if you are in a committed relationship, or even a fairly uncommitted relationship ... If you are in a relationship, I want to say that to your partner, and just watch the joy spread against their face! [Congregation and Rev. Rogers laugh] Right? When you say to them, *"I don't know."* And it's like, *"Finally!"* Right? We now get to move forward.

Because the moment we admit that we don't know, there is every possibility for good! Right? That, whatever you want to create in your life -- whatever your thing is: whatever the greatest desire, the greatest need, the greatest want -- the moment you say to Spirit, *"I don't know how to get there, but I am open and receptive. I have this huge desire for this or for that,"* or whatever it is. But the moment you say to Spirit, *"But I'm not sure how to get there,"* Spirit takes a breath and says, *"But I can get you there! In fact, I could have got you there 20 years ago!"* [Laughs] *"But I'm not holding it against you."* Right? *"I don't have resentment."* Right?

So here's the deal. You ready for your homework? So your number one homework this week is: I want you to practice, in every situation, starting from, *"I don't know."* I don't know! How are you going to get

from here to there? "*I don't know.*" How are you going to transform your life? "*No idea.*" How are you going to get up and get to work on time tomorrow? "*Clueless.*" Right? And the moment you can really entertain "*I don't know,*" I want you to hear the voice of Spirit say, "*But I do! But I do!*"

Whatever the need ... Whatever the desire ... Whatever the wound ... Whatever the longing ... Whatever the situation may be ... The moment you can say to your own ego, "*I don't know,*" everything becomes possible. Because, at that moment, you've moved out of your fixed mindset, and you're in a growth mindset. The Buddhists call it "Beginner's Mind." Because the moment you entertain that, there is every possibility for good. There is every desire to be fulfilled. But the more that you think you should know -- the more you feel bad that you don't know, the more time and energy you're spending on, "I wish I did know," -- it actually keeps you from knowing.

Will you pray with me?

I want you to take a deep breath. And I want you to feel those times in your life where you almost feel the shame that you don't know. Where you feel wounded, or where you feel scared that you don't know. That you feel that your ego is right there, and it's working hard, and it will guide you and direct you. And, for just a moment, entertain the idea, "*I don't know.*" And not only do I not know; I don't need to know. That I literally don't have to know. That I can just ask. I can open my mind, my heart, my soul and just ask. I can ask Spirit. I can ask the people around me. I can ask, and a whole new level of wisdom is revealed to me. Whatever the need, whatever the situation, you don't have to know. You never have to know. You can ask, and everything will be revealed. In the name and through the power of the Living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

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