

GUIDE ME

Week #4 of the 6-Week Lenten/Easter Series, "Space for Grace"

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So how many people ever made a poor life decision that actually made your life harder instead of easier? Anybody ever? [Congregation laughs] How many have ever had a problem -- whether it was in a relationship or at work, with your finances -- and you just had no idea what to do, or how to make it better or change it? Anybody? And how many people could use a little more wisdom, insight, clarity-- and a little guidance -- in how you live your life and make your decisions? Anybody?

It kind of reminds me of these three guys who were trekking through the jungle ... [Congregation laughs] And they came across this violent, raging river. And they had no idea how to get across. So they prayed for some guidance.

The first guy prayed, *"God, please; give me the strength to cross the river."* And all his arms got all muscular and strong; his legs -- he looked like a powerhouse! And he swam across against this raging river. It took him two hours. He almost drowned a couple of times, but he made it over.

The next guy saw this and he saw guidance, as well. And he said, *"Please, God; give me all the tools I need to get across."* And appeared a boat and all the equipment he needed. He sailed across. He was getting tossed around; almost capsized. But he got there in just one hour.

The third guy saw this and gave the prayer for guidance. *"God, please, give me the wisdom to cross this river in the best way."* And poof! He turned into a woman, looked at the map ... [Congregation laughs] Walked a hundred yards down and crossed the bridge in 10 minutes. [Congregation applauds and whoops] And so ... It got a rousing reception the first service, too! I just, like! [Laughs]

You know, Oprah Winfrey, referring to one of her Oprah magazines -- her "O" magazines -- said that, if you were only to buy one Oprah magazine ever, this would be the issue, because this topic is paramount to lasting success. And here's what she said; this was the topic:

"Learning to trust your instincts -- learning to use your intuitive power and tuning in to that deeper wisdom within -- is the absolute most important thing you can do to have lasting peace and happiness and clarity and guidance in all that you do."

And so the reason she said this is that we have a reservoir of unlimited genius and wisdom and creativity and inspiration and guidance that we could ever seek, and it is within us. Unfortunately, we don't always tune into it. We don't always use it. Sometimes we hardly ever even think of it!

Instead of tapping into the divine intelligence within us, when we don't know something, we turn to panic, and we run around like chickens with our heads cut off making rash decisions, snap decisions, and impulsive decisions that all end up in a category that I call, *"It seemed like a good idea at the time."* [Congregation laughs]

I mean, when we don't know, the first thing we try to do is think and reason and analyze. Maybe write the pros and cons. And then we start seeking advice in books and courses, or we watch "Dr. Phil" or "Dr. Oz" or "Ellen" or "The View." We go to horoscopes; we go to psychics. We talk to hair stylists, bartenders, therapists ... [Congregation laughs] Even to strangers! Sometimes, I mean, we'll go up to strangers and say, "Hey, what do you think about this situation?" rather than tuning into our own intuitive power.

Albert Einstein said the intellect -- trying to think things through -- has little to do on the road to discovery. He said there comes a leap in in consciousness, and you can call it intuition or whatever you want to call it, but then the solution comes to us. We don't know why. We don't know how. But it comes to us.

You know, I read some articles that talked about Mozart, Michael Jackson and Chris Martin from Coldplay. And each of them, in their own way, said that their music came from a place that was beyond. They tapped into some level of genius that almost just flowed through them. It not just guided them, but it flowed through them. That they think that's where music comes from; it's not just them. It comes through them from some higher place. Some higher place of intelligence and genius.

And I would say that that same genius and intelligence that created this world -- the stars, the sun, the mountains, the ocean ... That same intelligence created us, and we have access to that same intelligence to guide our lives. To lead us. To show us. To inspire us. To help us and support us.

So today what we're going to look at is: How do we seek divine guidance? And how do we access that wisdom and genius and unlimited possibilities within us?

So we're in Week #4 of our six-week Lenten series called, "Space for Grace." And we are looking at that Lenten period -- those 40 days of spiritual preparation -- to see what kind of spiritual preparation we can do to prepare ourselves spiritually to allow something greater to come forth from us.

"Space for Grace." The grace of God is the unconditional love of God that is always flowing and moving in our favor, in our direction. Sometimes we don't recognize it. Sometimes we want to swim up against it. But that love and unconditional love and support of God is always with us. And this series is about: How do we create more space within ourselves to allow that grace of God to lift us and help us break through to a greater life.

The previous weeks have been "Use Me," "Heal Me," "Open Me." And today it's "Guide Me." How do we tap into that infinite wisdom within ourselves?

And the first thing we need to do is to TRUST. To trust that guidance. Trust that it is there. In the Book of Jeremiah, it says this: *"For surely I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord, 'plans to prosper you, not harm you; plans to give you hope and a future.'"*

And in Isaiah it says, *"The Lord will continually guide you and satisfy your desire, even in the scorched places, and give you strength for your bones. And you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters never fail."*

Isn't that incredible? It says God has a plan and purpose to prosper your life, and God is always guiding you, even in the "scorched" places. Even in the tough places, you'll be like a garden that's constantly watered. Isn't that beautiful?

But the question is: Do you believe that? Do you absolutely trust that? How many people would say that you trust that God has a plan and supports you? Okay; four people. Good, good, good. [Congregation laughs]

And so here's the sign that I say how much we really trust that God has a plan to prosper us, and God has wisdom to guide us. And it's by these three things: how much we live in fear; how much we worry; and how much we try to control our lives.

How many people ever allowed fear to guide your life or a decision? How many people ever worried a lot about something? And how many people ever tried to control everything? Or something?

And that's the thing! Here's what it says in Proverbs. This is a human tendency! It says, *"Since the Lord is directing your steps, why do you try to figure out everything as it happens along the way?"* And so what this is saying is: we need to lean into trust. Remember when Proverbs said, *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart; and lean not to your own understanding, but in all ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your path."*

So what we need to do is not just say we trust; we need to what I call "practice trusting." Tell me: What do you think it would feel like -- and I'm talking feeling -- if you absolutely trusted that God loves you?

Everyone take a deep breath. And can you just feel what it would feel like to absolutely trust that God loves you? And what it would feel like to trust that God has a plan to prosper your life? And what would it feel like to know that God is always there for you?

You now, we need to practice trusting. And the truth is: We know how to trust! Like, right now ... you're not even thinking. You trust that you'll have enough air for your next breath. And more and more after that. You're trusting the chair you're sitting on isn't going to collapse on you. And I'll bet if it were raining right now you'd trust that the sun will come out tomorrow. The question is: Can you trust God at that same level with your life?

"I trust God with all my heart."

Let's say that together: [with congregation] *"I trust God with all my heart."*

"I trust God to guide my entire life."

Together: [with congregation] *"I trust God to guide my entire life."* Deep breath.

So the first step for seeking that guidance is to trust. Is to trust.

And the second one is to UNIFY YOUR MIND. To unify our minds. Paul said two really powerful things about the mind. The first one he said was, *"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind,"* and the second one was, *"Let the same mind that was in Christ Jesus be in you."*

Let's look at the first one. *"Be transformed by the renewing of your mind."* You know the reason he said that? It's because our minds need renewing a lot! [Congregation laughs] We get distracted a lot! Ever have your mind wander in meditation? Ever, like, over obsess or overthink about something? Can never shut your mind off?

I saw a quote and it said, *"My mind is like my Internet browser: 19 tabs are open; three of them are frozen; and I have no idea where the music is coming from."* [Congregation laughs]

If we want to seek God's guidance, we need to unify our mind with the mind of God. Because the mind can wander and do a lot of freaky, counter-productive things.

There is a fabulous prayer -- an AA prayer -- and here's what it says. This is a wonderful prayer to renew and to relax your mind, and get it away from being distracted by negativity. It is called "The Set Aside Prayer." Here's how it generally goes: *"God, help me to set aside all I think I know about myself; what I think I know about this person, this situation, and even you, so that I may open my mind and have a new experience of all of these things. Help me to see the Truth."*

See, the first step to unify our mind is: we've got to renew it. We've got to relax it and open it and have it not be distracted.

Then we go down to the deeper level, which is the next one: *"Let the same mind that was in Christ Jesus be in you."* Jesus was constantly bringing his mind back to God: immersing his mind in the mind of God. Remember when Jesus said, *"The Father and I are one"*? This is what he was talking about! Being one in consciousness. Being so connected, being so aligned, being so immersed. Thinking upon God at such frequency that his mind was immersed in the mind of God. And we unify our minds by sitting in the silence or contemplating or meditating on God. Of being still.

Could you imagine if we spent as much time unifying our minds with the mind of God than we did worrying? Or controlling? Or overthinking things?

You know, the word intuition in Latin means "into you." Into you. So often, we are looking outside of ourselves, but intuition is about looking into you. When Jesus said, *"The kingdom of God is within you,"* he means that all of the answers you could ever seek; all of the guidance; all of the solutions and inspiration -- the kingdom of God -- is within you!

Intuition is to go within; to tap in. And the more we align ourselves with the mind of God, the more we are in alignment with all the wisdom and guidance, our purpose. All the things we could seek are already within us.

The thing about is that: the more we unify with the mind of God, the more we trust. And the more we trust, the more we practice unifying. Because everything that God is -- everything that we seek -- is already within us! The question is: Are we aligning our minds with it? We've got to trust. And then align our minds.

And then the third step is to ASK. *"Ask and ye shall receive." "Whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it."*

I think we underestimate sometimes the power of asking. The ability to ask is an incredible power! It is an incredible gift! To ask is a creative ability. To ask is an intention and a desire. To ask is an act of faith. To ask is to claim, to call forth and to clarify that which it is that you want in your life. To ask is to open a channel for the flow of God's goodness and abundance. To ask is to expand your awareness to richer and greater things that are beyond what you're currently experiencing. The power to ask is a powerful thing and an important thing!

In the Book of James it says, *"If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives generously to all."* So I ask you: What wisdom would you ask for? What guidance would you ask for? What clarity what you ask God for right now?

Asking, in a way, is also a willingness to receive. Because to ask, there's a pretty good idea we are willing to receive it. To ask is a belief there's some will, and there's some plan and idea that's better than ours, and that we want to open ourselves to allow it to come forth.

You could ask God, *"God, is this the right decision for me?" "God, what is the way?"* Or, *"What could I do to help heal my family or my relationship or myself?" "God, what is it time for me to let go or to change?"* I mean, we could ask any question we want! The question is: What wisdom are you willing to seek and ask?

Sometimes we could just ask for a sign! *"God, show me a sign and confirm that this is my right path."* Or, *"God, show me a sign that maybe I need to head in a new direction."* *"God, is this the best thing for me; show me a sign!"* This is how powerful asking is! And the question is: Are we using this power?

Here's the interesting thing. That, in this same thing -- *"If you're lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives generously"* -- here's the next line: *"But ask in faith, never doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is tossed by the wind. And for the doubter, he is double-minded and unstable in every way, and should never expect to receive anything from the Lord."*

It's a little harsh, but it's got a good point. [Congregation laughs] Don't mamby-pamby, throw out some questions there! Go to your heart! Go to your soul! Go to that place and ask something that is sincere. Ask something that you know that that power of God that has a plan and purpose for your life will respond to it!

There's a Cameroonian quote that I love, and it says, *"He who asks the questions cannot avoid the answer."* So be careful what you're asking for, and give it some thought and consideration. Go to your heart and say, "What is it that I want to ask? What is the guidance and clarity that I am seeking?" Ask!

And then the final one is to LISTEN. Is to listen. Ever have that little voice in your head say, *"Hey, take an umbrella!"* and you didn't listen? Or ever say, *"Don't date that person!"* and you didn't listen? You know, *"You should make that investment!"* and you didn't listen? The next thing you know it's tripled?

You know, we have all kinds of things where we sometimes get a little inner voice -- a little tap, a little nudge of the intuition -- and we don't always follow it. We don't always listen.

In the Old Testament it says over 400 times, *"Listen to God."* *"Listen to the still, small voice."* *"Listen and obey."* *"Listen and follow."* Four hundred times! Why? Because listening to Spirit -- listening to that wisdom and guidance -- will always lead us to the highest and best. We need to listen!

Now, first question we're going to think is, *"How do I know what I'm hearing and listening to is the right thing?"* Well, it takes practice, and needs to be honed. And it comes in different ways to different people. Some people it comes as a picture. Some it comes as a feeling. Some it comes as an affirmation by someone in our lives saying it. But we will know! But we need to keep ... You know, just like we have to practice trust, we have to practice listening! We're not great at it, but we will get better at it. Our intuition will get ... We will hone on it better; it will become clearer and easier to us the more we practice it. The more we use it.

You know, Oprah practiced intuition. She actually credits her intuition -- and listening to that inner voice -- for that success. Steve Jobs practiced intuition, and said it was his intuition, not his intellect, that had him succeed. Jeff Bezos from Amazon said that it was intuition -- trusting it; listening to it -- that made the difference.

One of my favorite examples is Conrad Hilton of the Hilton Hotels many years ago was trying to buy this hotel. And it was a blind bid, sealed bids. And he put a bid of \$165,000 on it. And the night before they were supposed to open these bids, something in him felt like, *"Aw, that's not it; that's not it!"* So he put in a bid of \$180,000. They were willing to ... It was sealed, so they were willing to accept this second sealed bid. When they opened it up, he got the bid as the highest at \$180,000. The second highest was \$179,800. [Congregation murmurs] So within \$200! Because he listened to it.

My nephew, who does organic farming at the time; he needed a little extra money on the side, because there's not a lot of money in organic farming. That he was just working a co-op. Anyway, he was doing some tiling work with my brother. And they would work, and he would go for lunch. And he would go down the same street, eat at the same place every day. And then one time he said he had the guidance to not go there; to go two more blocks and then make a left. So he went down two blocks, made a left. There was a food place there. He was eating, and the owner out of the blue came up and said, *"Hey, do you know anybody who does any tile work?"* [Congregation laughs] He said, *"I happen to know! Me and my uncle! We could do a great job!"* And he ended up getting that. And it seems like a silly thing, but he tuned in!

From little things to big things, are you tuning in and listening to your gut? Listening to Spirit? Listening to your intuition?

Read something else about this woman. She went to Jamaica for a wedding. And while she was there, she decided to do a little volunteer work. She went to this orphanage. And there were kids there, and one in particular was smiling that she thought was adorable. And then she went to leave; the gate to the orphanage closed. She was getting in the cab, and a voice said, *"Go back to him."* And so it took a lot to get that gate open and go back in, but she did. And then she went to the little boy, who happened to be crying at the time. And she was hugging him, and she said something came over her, and she heard a voice say, *"This is your son."* And then, so, it took her six times going from New York and back to Jamaica before she got her son. And still to this day she tells him, *"You have always been my son."* She listened to her intuition!

Big things, small things -- there's a reservoir of wisdom and genius, creativity and possibilities in us! If we are willing to listen to it -- create space for that grace -- great breakthroughs will come, and our lives will get smoother, easier and more fulfilling.

Could you imagine if you had \$10 million in the bank and you never touched it? Is that ridiculous, or what? But could you imagine having all that genius in you -- which you do, and we do -- and really not tap into it and utilize it and turn to it in all things?

We all want better lives; we want breakthroughs. And it's like we're sitting on a goldmine. The question is: Are you willing to create some space for that grace to come forth? Are you willing to trust? Are you willing to unify your mind? Are you willing to ask and listen?

A greater life is available to all of us if we do the inner work. And the first thing we need to do and work on is to say, "*God, show me. Lead me. Guide me!*"

God bless you all! [Congregation applauds]

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