

THE GAME

Week #1 of a New 9-Week Series

May 4, 2022

Rev. Richard Rogers

So last week I gave you an affirmation, and I want to start there: *"Every day, in every way, my life gets better and better and better."*

Together: [with congregation] *"Every day, in every way, my life gets better and better and better."*

One more time: [with congregation] *"Every day, in every way, my life gets better and better and better."*

So my question for you tonight is: Do you have a favorite game? Anyone have a favorite game? Well, in our family right now ... A couple of years ago, my in-laws gave all the adult children in their family a game of Farkle. Do you know what Farkle is? How many Farkle players do we have? Farkle players?

See, Farkle is a game of six dice. You roll the dice. It's kind of like Yahtzee, but more fun, 'cause you get to yell *"Farkle"* at people when they cash out. [Congregation laughs] And I cannot tell you how much I have yelling at my in-laws, *"Farkle! You farkled!"* [Congregation laughs] And my wife's mother doesn't even get mad at me for saying it, right? So I'm in the clear, right?

And it's just so much fun! You roll the dice. And in Farkle you get to see how many of us are high-risk rollers, and how many of us are just "steady Eddies." And my experience is the "steady Eddies" win about two-thirds of the time, and the high rollers come in strong about one-third of the time. But if you're a high roller, you want to roll for the moon, and us "steady Eddies" just take our numbers, add it to the game, and just keep base-hitting it down the road. Right?

So tonight I'm going to begin a several-week series based on *The Game of Life* by Florence Shinn. I love this book! It's an older book; it's been around for a long time, but it's just spiritually true.

And the first question that she asks in the book is: Do you feel like your life is a game or a burden? And I really want you to feel that: a game or a burden? Because some mornings we wake up [laughs], and it's like, *"The game is: can I get out of bed?"* [Congregation laughs] And sometimes it feels like, *"I can't wait to get out of bed!"*

So I really want you to begin to open a space to look at the games that you play in life. And the next question is: Do you feel like you're winning at the game of life? And the third question is: Is the game that you're playing actually the game that you want to be playing?

Because literally some of us are playing a game that's never been our game. It's never been our soul's work. It's never been what we came to do. But we start playing this game, and maybe we're really good at playing this game. Maybe we get a level of success playing this game. And we keep playing the game because we're good at it, darn it. And yet, it's never really our game. It's never really what we've come to do, but we keep playing the game.

You know, I had an opportunity last month ... You know, I do stuff outside of here. And I did a corporate training for executives from all over the country. It was a Fortune 500 company. And I was working with their HR department, and it was all their recruiters and their trainers and their HR professionals.

And what we began to look at through the course of this call was: What's the game that each one of them was playing in their life? And it was interesting, because everybody had a different game. When we slowed it down and really looked at it, each person could -- in their own way -- see the game that they'd been playing through the course of their life.

Like, some of us play the game of *"I've got to look good."* Have you ever played that game? That you had to look good? And that looks like a good game, right? Because I get to look good! But sometimes looking

good doesn't allow us to do the work that we're really here to do! Right? Sometimes looking good is not the most important thing! But if you have to look good, then some days you never really get to the juice of what you're really supposed to be about.

Some of us play the game, "*I can't fail.*" And that looks like such a great game, because in this game you never fail! Because you're committed to whatever you do, you never fail at it. The problem with this game is that sometimes you don't take any risk. You don't do what you really have come to do. You play small, little games, and you tend to play them over and over again, because you don't want to play a game that you could ever fail at. So you never really play the game that's big enough that allows your soul to really be its fullness.

Some of us play the game, "*I need to be right.*" Right? And you can always tell a person that's playing the "*I need to be right*" game, because they tend to get louder the more they're not right. [Congregation and Rev. Rogers laugh] Do you know anybody like that in your life? Who, the more they're committed to being right, the louder they get? Because they've got to prove to you that they're right, because they have to be right!

Or some people play the "*I have to be the smartest person in the room*" game. Right? And it's so much pressure if you've got to be the smartest person in the room. Because sometimes, honestly, you're not! [Congregation laughs] Right?

Or some of us play the "*I need to be needed*" game. And it seems like, "*Well, that's such a wonderful thing! You want to be needed, and it's so fabulous to be needed!*" And the problem with this game is that sometimes nobody needs you! [Congregation laughs] Right? That you're actually not needed! And the idea is that you spend so much time focusing on everybody else that you don't do your work. Because you keep looking at, "*Who's supposed to need me?*" And sometimes nobody's there. And your whole value -- your whole sense of success and accomplishment -- is based on being needed. And, honestly, sometimes you just aren't!

And it's such a blow to our ego when we realize that the whole world can get by without us. It's like, "*Oh, my gosh! How is that possible that my kids and my grandkids and the whole world can get by without me? What if I need to be needed?*" And that we don't really ever, then, do the work that we're here to do, because we just keep focusing on what everybody else is doing.

See, I believe that one of the things that is really profound is for us to look at what we -- and how we -- have achieved success in our life. And when I'm working with one of my coaching clients, I have them go back and look at their childhood: when they were 3 or 4. And say, "*When you were 3 or 4, how did you learn to be successful?*" And that question kind of blows people away, because it's like, "*Was I successful at 3 or 4?*" And it's like, "*Yes! You were! In your family -- with your parents, and your brothers and sisters, or wherever you were -- you learned a way to be successful that started very early.*"

And for most of us, we just keep doing what worked. So we take that success strategy, and we take it into school, and we see if it works there. And we keep doing it and we keep doing it and we keep doing it. But the reality is that life always gets us to a level where what we used to do no longer works. And we look at that as a tragedy or crisis point, but actually it's an opportunity for us to show up in a brand new way. To reinvent ourselves. To be more than we've ever been before. To play a new game!

And over and over again, I'm going to invite you to become very clear about what it is: the game that you've been playing in your life. Because two people never have the same game.

And if the game that we're playing we're unconscious to, we're still playing the game. We just play it unconsciously. We don't notice how we're using others or manipulating others or living in this game, because we're doing the game so automatically that we don't even notice what we're doing.

But the moment we begin to see the game -- we can begin to operate and see the game -- then there's an opportunity to actually change the game and to play a new game, a better game, a greater game that actually is our real purpose. It allows us to really express what's in our soul.

So before we get too much further talking about your game, I want to talk about the nature of the Universe. [Laughter] And this is where I'm going to kind of "science geek out" for a minute.

[Congregation laughs] Because we have to kind of understand how the Universe works.

The first thing is that **ENERGY IS INFINITE**. Now, if you look at the entire Universe -- all the stars and the black holes and the galaxies. If you look at everything, the Universe is so big that we cannot fully even conceptualize how big our Universe is. And in the Universe, the moment creation happened, there was an infinite expansion of energy. The first Law of Thermodynamics says that energy can be changed from one form to another, but it cannot be created or destroyed. The total amount of energy and matter in the Universe remains constant, merely changing from one form to another.

Now, that kind of almost contradicts what I said. Because it says that energy cannot be created. And if energy is infinite, then it has to continue to be able to expand. So what I want you to see is: by definition, energy is constant, but it's so big how big it is. So when I say energy is infinite, it is finite in that there are limits. But it's so massive, it presents in our life as infinite.

Now, why is that important? Why is it important to you and to your life? That whatever you're going through in your life right now, there's an infinite supply of energy for you to transform or heal anything. That only in our thinking can we limit the amount of energy that we have access to transform any aspect of our life. Whatever needs to be healed, whatever needs to be transformed, you have access to so much energy that it is mind-boggling. You literally cannot conceptualize how much energy you have access to. Okay? So that's the first premise: energy is infinite. And even though it's not, let's just assume it is. Okay? So just play with that.

The second one is that **MOST OF EVERYTHING IS NOTHING**. Okay? Most of everything is nothing. Now, when you look at this [pounds on podium], does this look solid? Right? It looks solid; presents solid; feels solid. The chair you're sitting in is solid. Everything we see -- it looks so solid. Right? If you run into a wall or if you stub your toe, it feels solid. Right? But we know that everything that we see is 99.999% nothing! Right? Because everything is made up of atoms, and atoms are made up of protons and neutrons and electrons. And most of every atom -- most of everything -- is nothing! So everything that you see is mostly nothing.

Now, why is that important? Well, because for most of us, we have obstacles or challenges. How many of you have an obstacle or a challenge or an issue or a need in your life? When we're in the obstacle; when we're in the challenge; when we're in the problem, whatever we're looking at looks so solid. It looks so scary. It looks so big. It looks so overwhelming. It looks so whatever. And what I want you to begin to see is that whatever you see is mostly nothing. Right?

Now, what's the advantage of that? The advantage of that ... Do you think you're capable of transforming nothing? Yes! Like, transforming a thing looks hard, because it's a thing, and I've got to change a thing into something else! But if it's mostly nothing -- if it's 99.99% nothing -- how much energy does it take to transform nothing? Not much! Right?

But as you believe things are things, it looks like it takes more energy to transform them. But when you realize that everything you see is 99.99999% nothing, how much energy does it take to have a day? It really doesn't take much energy at all! But the more solid -- the more you think your stuff really is "stuff" -- then it takes more energy to transform everything.

And what I want you to see is: not only do you have an infinite supply of energy, but everything you want to transform in your life is [blows out air] ... will just blow away if you actually see it the way it is.

Will you say with me, *"Everything in my life is mostly nothing!"*?

Together: [with congregation] *"Everything in my life is mostly nothing."*

One more time like we actually mean it: [with congregation] *"Everything in my life is mostly nothing."*

Now, does that give you comfort? Or does that put you into a panic attack? [Congregation laughs] Right? Because some of us want everything in our life to be so structured and full that it never changes. Right? That it just "is"; it will always be; we can count on it; we can depend on it; we can build a house on it. Like, we want our stuff to be permanent. We buy a new car; it should last us for 80 years. Right? Whatever it is. We want it to last; we don't want it to make a change. We want it to be solid.

And what I'm saying is: the nature of the Universe is you just bought nothing. Why am I spending \$40,000 on nothing? Well, it's the game we play! It's just the game we play! And when you realize the game, you then have the ability to create the game the most sense for you.

"I am one with infinite energy."

Say that with me: [with congregation] *"I am one with infinite energy."*

"And everything I create is mostly nothing."

Together: [with congregation] *"And everything I create is mostly nothing."*

I want you to get so excited about that! [Congregation laughs] Because everything becomes easy when you no longer resist that! Everything becomes easier when you realize that everything is soft. Like, how did Jesus feed the multitude? How did he turn water into wine? How did he do all the things he did if he believed that everything is permanent and lasting, and had to stay the way it was? You couldn't do that stuff! The only way you can move from one thing to another -- and change form and shape and all that stuff -- is if you believe and know the truth that most everything is nothing.

So you can heal your body. You can create a greater abundance. You can create greater love. You can create more meaningful work. You can do everything you want to do in your life if everything becomes soft. If everything is hard and rigid and scary, then nothing ever gets to change. And the only difference is what goes on between your ears. The only difference is when you see something, you realize it will be whatever you want it to be.

And that leads us to the third principle. The third principle of the Universe is that **EACH PERSON IS CREATING THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE**. Always -- 100% of the time -- each person is creating their own experience. Even if the person spends 24 hours a day with you, they are not having the same experience you are.

Have you ever taken somebody you didn't really know well -- gone on a trip with them or a vacation with them? And you're having the best time, and this person is miserable. And you're going, *"What????"* Right? Or you're miserable and this person's having such a great time! And you look at them and you go, *"What???? What is going on? Can't you appreciate how miserable I am?"* [Laughs] And they're going, *"No! This is fabulous!"* [Congregation laughs] Right?

Because two people never have the same experience. You watch a movie: one person says, *"That's terrible!"*; the other person goes, *"That's the sweetest thing I've ever seen!"* Right? And we're having our own experience.

And that is the true genius of the Universe: ***"As you believe, it is done unto you."*** By your intention, your reality is created. And all seven billion of us on this planet are having a different experience of life based on that energy is infinite and that matter is soft. And that whatever you choose to begin and experience -- whichever intentions you send out -- you create your reality, and it's the game you play.

And Scripture says amazing things. It says in Galatians 6:7, *"Do not be deceived; for God is not mocked. For whatever a man soweth, that shall be what he reaps."*

Or in Proverbs 4:23: *"Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."*

That within you -- your beliefs, your ideas, your intention -- you're giving form and shape to the Infinite constantly! And as you change your ideas, your beliefs, your understanding, your intentions, life springs forth from you in a radically different way.

And over and over and over again, you get to play the game of life you want to play. And the thing that's the kicker is: whatever you do -- whether it's consciously or unconsciously -- life's going to spring forth from you. And it feels so real. Right? It feels like this is so real, so permanent. And it's just mostly nothing.

Let's go to Florence Shinn:

And this is the first chapter from The Game:

A woman came to me one hot, summer day for treatment for prosperity. She was worn out, dejected and discouraged. She said that she possessed just \$8 in the world. I said to her, "Good! God bless your \$8, and let's multiply it as Jesus did. As he multiplied the loaves and fishes, he taught us that every man had the power to bless and to multiply; to heal and to prosper.

She said, "What shall I do next?"

And I replied, "Follow your intuition. Have you a hunch? Or is there anything or anywhere?" And then I described intuition to her.

And the woman replied, "I don't know, but I seem to have a hunch to go home. I just have enough for cab fare. And her home was in a distant city, which was experiencing lack and limitation. And the reasoning mind -- or the intellect -- would have said stay in New York and get work and make money.

And I replied, "Then go home! Never violate a hunch!" And I spoke the words of Infinite Spirit and prosperity. And I told her to repeat these words continually, and she left for home immediately.

And calling a woman one day when she reached home, she linked with an old friend of the family. And through this friend, she received thousands of dollars in a most miraculous way. She said to me often, "Tell people about the woman who came to you with \$8 and a hunch."

Okay? So here's the deal. I want you to begin to see that life is fluid; it is active; and it generates out of your internal compass. It goes on:

There is always plenty on man's pathway. But it can only be brought into manifestation through desire, faith and the spoken word. Jesus brought that out clearly -- that we must make the first move -- when he said, "Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and the door shall be opened to you.

So tonight I want us to look at our desires, our faith and the spoken word. Okay? So how many of you have ever had a desire that may have not been the highest desire imaginable? [Congregation laughs] Right? So when we talk about desires, for most of us it sometimes kind of gets down to a lower base desire. And what the promise is, is that every desire will be fulfilled. But sometimes I want us to move out of our human ego desire, and I want us to be curious about what's God desire for us.

Because it really shifts us out of our ego and into a higher conversation when we just open the door and say to Spirit, *"Spirit, what's the highest desire you have for me?"* Because with that, if you begin to listen to that in prayer and meditation, and really ask God to reveal the highest desire that Spirit has for you, there's a promise that, if it's God's desire for you, there's a way for you to make that desire possible.

And some of us are afraid, "Well, if I ask God for God's desire for me, I'm going to have to go to the nunnery," or whatever the fear is. "I'm going to have to be this uber great person, and I don't want to be that great person. I just want to be the scoundrel that I am." Or whatever the story is! Right? That there's a moment that, when we move from a ego-focused life to really a divine-focused life. And it really happens when we shift from our personal desires. And shift and say, "God, what is your highest for me? Thy will be done! I want to do that! I want to play in that level of life. I want to know that level of good."

So the first homework assignment that I have for you this week is: I want you to be in prayer about God's highest desire for you. I want you to listen for it. I want you to feel it. And the moment God begins to speak -- whether it's in words that you hear or a feeling or a knowing or just a deep understanding -- I don't want you to dismiss it. Because over and over again, if you look at Scripture, there's always that "Moses experience" ... Where Moses goes to the mountain top and he asks God, "What shall I do?" And he sends Moses on a mission, and the first thing that Moses said is, "I'm out!" [Congregation laughs] Right? "This is too much; it can't be me." Right?

That, when you actually begin to listen to God's desires for you, God's desires are going to blow you away. Because God's desire for each and every one of us is radically greater than most of us would ever believe for ourselves. God's desire for each one of us is infinite good, love, joy, peace and prosperity. And when you actually go to Spirit; when you actually go to the Infinite, and say, "What is your desire for me?" -- and you can really hear it; you can really hold it -- it is transformative. Because not only does God give you the desires, God also gives you the path.

But the desire also requires the second part of what she said. And the desire has to be met with a level of faith. That when you hear the desires that God has for you -- in your life; for your family; for our world -- when you hear those desires, you actually have to have the faith to be able to hold it. You actually have to be able to say, "Yes! If that's God's will for me, then I want that! I believe that that's possible. I believe that that can be." Right?

So the desire actually has to be held in a container of faith. And the faith is your responsibility. The faith is your responsibility to say, "Yes! I am willing to believe in that much. I am willing to believe that that much is possible."

And then that takes us to the power of the spoken word.

"Every day, in every way, my life is getting better and better and better."

Will you say that with me? [With congregation]: *"Every day, in every way, my life is getting better and better and better."*

That's the power of the spoken word! So maybe that affirmation doesn't really make your heart sing. So let's pick another one. How about: *"I am divinely blessed"*? Or, *"God's good fills my life easily and fully every day."* Or, *"Everywhere I turn the blessings of God shower me with good."*

But I want you to be using your word to focus your mind on a higher level of good that allows that infinite reservoir of God -- that infinite storehouse of energy -- to focus it and bring it into your life.

Today I want you to look at the game that you're playing in life. I want you to see the game that you're playing. And if you don't love the game that you're playing, I want you to change it. I want you to change it! It's your game; you made it up. You've been playing it for years, but it's not permanent. If you quit playing the game of Life, and you go on and play Monopoly, does anybody lose sleep over that? No! It's just your game. You change it; it's perfect.

The second thing I want you to do is: I want you to open your heart and your mind to truly all the desires that God has for you. I want you to begin to live your life based on what God wants to bless you with. And really feel your life being blessed.

And then I want you to speak the word in faith, knowing that all the good that God is is 100% available to you. That we are not here to live in lack and limitation. We're not here to be small and afraid. We are here to know the glory of God.

And anytime any one of us steps into a higher level of good, all of us are lifted up. Jesus said, "*If I be lifted up, I draw all people unto me.*" That, as any one of us is lifted up to a higher expression; a higher vibration; a higher possibility, it makes it easier for us all to be lifted up.

So will you join with me in prayer?

I want you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to the activity of God. That there is but one presence and power: God the Good. And tonight we are ready for a new expression; a new manifestation in our life. We are ready to take dominion and mastery over our world. We no longer need to be afraid. We no longer need to live limited. We are ready for a truly spiritual experience. And so it is. Amen.

Copyright 2022 Unity of Phoenix Spiritual Center/Rev. Richard Rogers