

DO YOU REALLY DESERVE A PROSPEROUS LIFE?

June 12, 2022

With Guest Minister Rev. Dr. Michele Whittington

I'm so delighted to be here this morning; thank you so much for inviting me; allowing me to be with you and to share a few thoughts with you this morning.

Last week, Rev. Jimmie charmed us with his talk around Eric Butterworth's book, *In the Flow*. And I want to talk today about being in the flow; I want to kind of continue that conversation about being in the flow. But this morning I want to talk about a very specific kind of flow: being in financial flow. Being in the flow of financial good.

I want to give a specific definition to being in the financial flow. And what I mean by that is having a constant, regular flow of prosperity -- financial prosperity -- in our lives to that we can do three really important things.

The first thing is to have the freedom to share our gifts, our talents and our passions with the world.

The second thing is to have the freedom to be, to do and to have anything our hearts desire.

And the third one -- which is almost my favorite -- is the freedom to give away as much of it as you want.

And I would encourage you to freely give it to this amazing spiritual community! How's that? I'll make that little plug right now! Right?

Because here's the deal. When we are struggling to make ends meet; when we're trying to figure out how to get the rent paid, the mortgage paid, the groceries paid; oh my gosh, the gas paid. Right? When that's a struggle -- when we're just barely squeaking by -- or even when we're in flow sometimes, but not all the time, we don't have the time or energy or focus to be able to express ourselves in the way we came here to express. Right? We don't have that in us; we don't have what it takes. We don't have the financial abundance to live, be, do and have that which brings our heart great joy and makes us sing. Forget about sharing our good! We don't have any good to share.

So I want to talk today about being in the financial flow. But before we go into it, I want to share a quote from Sir Frances Bacon. Because it will tell you/give you a perspective for this morning. And he once said, "*Money is a good servant, but it is a bad master.*" Money is a good servant, but it is a bad master.

So I'm not talking here this morning about making money our master, making money our God. I'm talking today about making money our good and faithful servant so that we can be about God's business through, in and as us.

So with that groundwork laid, I want to do a little demonstration.

[Holds up a \$100 bill] I have here a crisp, pretty new, real -- not counterfeit -- \$100 bill. Anybody want to test it? Make sure it's real? [Congregation laughs] Has a little blue strip through it; it's real.

I want to ask you a question. Now, I have to tell you that, in the first service, somebody got the answer wrong. [Congregation laughs] We had a little conversation about that. But this is kind of a "Grant's Tomb" question; who's buried in Grant's Tomb? How much is this worth? [Congregation shouts out answers]

You aren't certain?!? Come on! [Laughs] How much is this worth? [Congregation shouts out answers] Thank you! It's worth a hundred dollars! This is worth a hundred dollars, right? Here it is; right here!

But what if I took this and I went ... [Crinkles up the dollar into a tiny ball; spits on it] [Congregation laughs] [Drops the dollar on the floor; stomps on it; picks it up again and spits on it]

Now what is this was of paper worth? [Congregation shouts out, "*100 dollars!*"] Oh, it is? Even though I stomped on it and was mean? Okay.

Well, how about this. [Speaks to dollar]: *"You suck!"* [Congregation laughs] Can I say that word? Can I say that word here? I guess I did, so there it is!

[Speaks to dollar again]: *"You're terrible; you're horrible; you will never make anything of yourself; you're really quite ugly; and you should never have been minted. It was a mistake! It was a mistake that you were ever minted."*

Now how much is this worth? [Congregation shouts out, "\$100!"] Oh, wow. So no matter what I did to it; no matter what I said to it; still worth 100 bucks?

Alright, let's just ... Let's see now. What if I told you that this has done some pretty frightful things? It's been used to bribe a politician. Some of you are like, *"Oh, that's not so bad."* Right? [Congregation laughs] It'll get worse.

It's been used to buy a hotel room so a spouse could cheat. [A congregant laughs] That is not funny! Who's laughing at that? [Congregation laughs] That's not funny! You're ruining my little gig here. Now; alright.

So what if I told you that it's been used to buy gun that shot somebody. Yeah; oooh.

What if I told you it was used to be rolled up to teach a 10-year-old to snort cocaine?

What if I told you that? Those are the things it's done. How much is it worthy now? [Congregation shouts out, "\$100."] Oh, for goodness sakes. It's had horrible things done to it; it's had horrible things said to it; and it's done horrible things. And yet, it is still worth \$100. Hmm.

You know, I bet if it could talk, it would say, *"I don't feel very valuable. I don't feel very worthy. I'm not very deserving right now."* And I'm sure it would say, *"I feel guilty and shameful, dirty."* All of those things. And yet, the truth about it is that its' inherent worthy and value -- no matter what all that was -- is still \$100.

And when I put this in the offering plate -- I'll straighten it out before I do ... Later this morning, Unity of Phoenix will get \$100. Yeah; that's good. Right? That's good!

So if this bill is worth \$100 no matter what -- if it has intrinsic of \$100 no matter what -- why don't we think that of ourselves? If we can know that about a piece of paper, why cannot we know that about ourselves? That we have intrinsic value and intrinsic worth and intrinsic deservability, regardless of what has been done to us; what has been said to us; or what we have done.

We tend to think that we're not valuable; we're not deserving; and we're not worth anything because of all of those things. And when we diminish our worth and value and deservability by thinking that we're not that. We absolutely short-circuit the divine energy that wants to flow through and as us, known as financial abundance.

Think for a moment about one of the most majestic trees there is, which is an oak tree. Right? Oak trees are quite majestic. What if the oak tree said, every time it had the urge to put forth a new branch ... It has those urges all the time! What if every time it had an urge to put forth a new branch it said, *"Hm. I don't think I'm worthy to do this. I'm not sure I'm good enough to have more than just a certain number of branches."* And what if it really wanted to have more branches, and so it was feeling kind of forlorn and bemoaning the fate that it couldn't. It couldn't allow itself to be so lavishly adorned.

And so every time the tree said, *"I'm not worth it; I'm not worth having another branch,"* it blocked off the possibility to draw up from the soil that which it needs to grow and blossom and, shall we say, prosper. If an oak tree ever thought like that, you would grow no more than 10' high ... maybe not even that tall!

But that's not what oak trees do! They don't do that! When they have the urge to put out another branch, they simply put out another branch. And they let that divine force of life simply flow through them to allow them to become the magnificent expression of life that they are meant to be.

So today we're talking about and asking the question: Do I deserve a prosperous life? Do I deserve a prosperous life? And I just want to stand here and say unequivocally, 100%, without any doubt or hesitation, the answer to that is *"YES, YES and YES!"* YES, YES and YES. [Congregation applauds]

I do and you do. And why is that? Why is that? Why do we deserve it?

The answer is not because of what you've done or haven't done. The answer is not what has been done to you or hasn't been done to you. The answer is not what has been said or not said about you. The answer is way easier than that. The answer that you deserve a prosperous is simply because of who you are. That's it. You deserve it simply because of who you are.

Take a breath and breathe that in. Down into you: simply because of who you are.

Our question, of course, is: Do you believe that? Do you really embody that belief? Do you know that at your core?

I want to give you a true example. I love this example. I'm looking out and seeing a lot of people from my former congregation, and you guys have heard this story before. Bear with me, because it's one of my favorites.

So first I want to ask: Does anybody know who Frank Szymanski was? Oh, my gosh; no? I love it! So I'm not a football fan at all, or person, but Frank Szymanski happened to be a center for the Notre Dame football team in the '40s. So okay; you're all off the hook for not knowing who he was. But he was a witness in a civil case in Indiana.

And he was on the witness stand and the judge said to him, *"So; are you on the Notre Dame football team this year?"*

He said, *"Yes, Your Honor, I am."*

And the judge said, *"What position do you play?"*

And he said, *"Your Honor, I play center."*

And the judge said, *"How good a center are you?"*

And with that, Frank kind of squirmed a little bit in his seat, and he got a little red in the face. And he hesitated, and then finally his shoulders went back and he firmly said, *"Sir, I am the best center Notre Dame has ever had."*

After that, the coach -- who was in the courtroom -- was surprised, because he knew Frank to be very humble and never did toot his own horn. So he said to Frank, *"I'm really surprised that you said that. Tell me, why did you say that?"*

And he really blushed now; he turned bright red. And he said, *"Well, Coach, I hated to do it. I really hated to do it. But after all, I was other oath."* [Congregation laughs]

I asked first service if I should save that and give it to Rev. Richard for him to tell you later, so he could get moderate applause, as well. And they said, "Yes," so I will give it to him! [Laughs]

The spiritual truth is that you deserve to live in the flow of financial prosperity simply because of who you are.

I want to turn that into a personal statement. I want to turn that into an affirmative statement. So this is how it's going to go, and then you're going to say it with me.

"I deserve to live in the flow of financial prosperity simply because of who I am."

That's not too long is it? Okay; one more time I'll say it: *"I deserve to live in the flow of financial prosperity simply because of who I am."*

Here we go! [With congregation]: *"I deserve to live in the flow of financial prosperity simply because of who I am."*

Okay; that wasn't horrible. I think we could do better than that. So I want you to say it like you're under oath. [Congregation laughs] And actually, I want you to act like you're under oath. Raise your right hand; put your hand on the Bible. Alright; are we ready? Do you remember it? *"I deserve to live in the flow of financial prosperity simply because of who I am."* Here we go!

[With congregation]: *"I deserve to live in the flow of financial prosperity simply because of who I am."*

Yeah! That was it! [Congregation applauds] Nicely done!

This is a core belief -- a core belief -- of our New Thought teachings. Fundamental to our teachings: that we are deserving.

And I love a quote from Eric Butterworth in a different book from what Rev. Jimmie used. It's his book, *Spiritual Economics*. It's a great, great book, if you haven't read that one. Fantastic book! And he writes at page 23, in case anyone has the book and wants to go look this up later:

"Let go of the ... feelings of unworthiness -- attitudes that have such a detrimental influence upon human consciousness. Claim your entitlement: I am a child of the Universe, endowed with the fullness of All-Good. A child of the Universe! Can you get that into your consciousness?"

I love how Eric was being a little in our face with that one; I like that.

"You're not just the offspring of your parents or a product of the times, but a child of the Universe. You are an expression of the infinite creative flow, entitled to as [much] constant support as the lilies of the field."

And he's referring there -- when he says *"the lilies of the field"* -- to a great prosperity teaching that the Master Teacher, Jesus, taught us. It shows up in a couple of Gospels: Matthew and Luke. I happen to like the Luke version better. And he shares this. He's talking to his disciples. This starts Chapter 12; it begins at Verse 22.

And before I read this, I want to say that you may not -- it may not sound exactly like what you're used to hearing, because I'm quoting from the Lamsa interpretation or version of the Bible. And the Lamsa version is the closest that we're going to get to what Jesus actually said, because it is translated straight from Aramaic into English. Other versions of translations of the Bible have been translated from Aramaic to Greek, to duh duh duh duh duh to get to English. This one's pretty pure. So if it doesn't sound quite the same as your ear is used to, that's why. Here it goes:

"Do not worry for your life, what you will eat, nor for your body, what you will wear ... Observe the ravens, for they do not sow or reap and they have no storehouses or barns. Yet God feeds them. How much more important are you than the birds? ... Observe the flowers: how they grow; for they do not toil nor do they spin. But I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like one of them. And if God clothes in such fashion the grass of the field (which, in other versions of the Bible, is lilies of the field) ... Grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is thrown in the fireplace, how much more is he to you, O, ye of little faith?"

I had a spiritual teacher once tell me that was Jesus' way of saying, *"O, you knuckleheads! Don't you get it?"* [Congregation laughs] Rev. Jimmie used that word ... Don't you get that, O, ye of little faith?

And then he says:

"Do not be anxious about what you will eat or what you will drink, and let not your mind be disturbed by these things ... Your Father knows that all of these things are necessary for you. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you. Do not be afraid, O, little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom."

I love that promise at the end: *"Do not fear, little flock, for"* ... We're used to hearing, *"It is God's pleasure,"* right? This version said, *"God is pleased. Your father is pleased to give you the kingdom."* That's such a powerful, powerful promise!

And I want to go back to a previous line. The line that I want to enforce this morning and focus on this morning is: *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you."*

So where is the kingdom of God? Where do we seek it? Well, later in Jesus' ministry, when he was being quizzed and harassed, really -- questioned -- by the Pharisees ... They wanted to trip him up with things they were asking. "So where is the kingdom of God? Where is the kingdom of heaven?"

And those of you who know this passage, or know this piece of the Bible, *"It's not there; it's not there; it's not there; it is within." The kingdom of God is within.*

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God." Seek ye first the Divine within you!

There's another version -- not out of the Bible -- but another version of God within. And it's the story of a Sunday school teacher who, one day in her Sunday school class, said, *"Okay, children. Tell me: Where does God live?"*

And Johnny popped up his hand. The teacher's like, *"Oh no; not little Johnny. Here we go!"*
[Congregation laughs]

"Anybody else -- any other kids -- want to answer this question?"

No. Little Johnny said, *"I want to answer!"*

So she said, *"Okay, Little Johnny. Tell us: Where does God live?"*

And he said, *"God lives in my bathroom."* [Congregation laughs]

The teacher is a little perplexed; she's not quite sure about that. She says, *"Okay; I'll bite. Why, Johnny, do you think God lives in your bathroom?"*

He says, *"I know he lives in my bathroom, because every morning my Dad goes to the bathroom, pounds on the door and says, 'Good Lord; are you still in there?'"* [Congregation laughs]

It doesn't deserve clapping. Don't clap. [Congregation laughs]

But the truth is: God is still in there. [Laughs] The Good Lord is right in here!

So I pose to you this morning that you will know that you are worthy, valuable and deserving of a prosperous life simply by beginning to get the understanding and accepting this Truth of your being.

You know, it says in Scripture: *"Above all things, seek understanding."* Understand who you are. That's why we're here every single Sunday, right? That's what we come here: to be reminded of who we are.

So I want us to say again, like we're under oath, *"I deserve to live in the flow of financial prosperity simply because of who I am."* Are we ready?

[With congregation]: *"I deserve to live in the flow of financial prosperity simply because of who I am."*

This is the Truth. Embrace this Truth. Believe this Truth. Know your worth; your value. know that it is just as inherent as the worth and value of this \$100 bill. And when you begin to live from this Truth; to embrace this Truth; to believe it; to know it, you'll step more fully into that consistent, regular abundant flow of financial prosperity, which gives you (as a reminder):

- The freedom to share your gifts, your passions, your talents with the world;
- To be, do and have that which your heart desires; that which makes your heart sing; and
- The freedom to share your good as much as you want.

That, my friends, is a pretty good gig. And so it is.

[Congregation whoops and applauds]

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