

CHRISTHOOD

Week #10 of a series on "Unity's Foundational Teachings"

Wednesday, March 27, 2024

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So I want to talk about Christhood. Because I think it really is the point. Right? If we don't really understand the point, then we can spend years and ... I was going to say lifetimes, and that just gets into a whole other conversation ... But we can just spend a lot of time thinking that what we're doing is the most important thing. But until we realize what is the most important thing, you know, we just ... We have so much drama.

So the question tonight is: What does it mean for you to accept -- for you to live -- in the Christhood of your being? In that divine presence?

The Merriam Dictionary said it's, "*the quality or state of being a Christ.*" Christhood is the quality or state of being a Christ. And then it went on; like, I was blown away by this: "*The ideal type of humanity.*"

I mean that's a huge statement! "*The ideal type of humanity.*" How many of you were raised in a church that said Jesus was the exception, not the rule? Right? But I want you to hear this! This is radical spiritual thought, right here in Merriam's Dictionary! [Claps hands] "*The quality or state of being a Christ; the ideal type of humanity.*"

I mean, that's a big statement! It is a big statement! That that's now the norm; it is the ideal. It's what we are shooting for. That Jesus wasn't the exception; he is the possibility. Right, and it goes on. It says, "*Christian Science says the ideal truth that comes as the divine manifestation of God to destroy incarnate error.*" It is the full expression of God in us.

So Jesus lived the Christhood. This week we celebrate that spiritual process.

You know, there's an old joke that says that Jesus: Christ isn't his last name. It's not the Christ family that lives down the street, right? [Congregants laugh] That we invite over for barbecues on Saturday afternoon. But it was the acknowledgement of the divine presence of God that he fully lived.

So how do we live that Christ nature within ourselves? How do we call forth that higher expression of God? And I believe that Jesus gave us the model. And I don't believe that we really believe that the model that he gave us actually works. [Congregants laugh] Right? Because his model is pretty simple.

I'm going to read from the Gospel of John -- John 10 beginning with Verse 11. And I want you to just ... It's one paragraph. I want you to just kind of join with me as we go through this, because this is not a Scripture that's really usually connected in any way with Holy Week. But I believe that this Scripture reveals Jesus' methodology of expressing the Christ. And he goes in and talks about it. Here we go:

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. He who is a hireling and not the shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees. And the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is the hireling and cares nothing for the sheep.

"I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold; and I must bring them also, that they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I laid down my life that I may take it up again. For no one takes it from me."

Did you hear me say that?

"No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. And I have the power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

Okay, so what does this mean? Well, I believe that Jesus is giving us the methodology for expressing Christhood. And it's right there! And it's this idea that we have the power and the ability to lay anything down.

And you think, *"Well, what's the big deal? Like, yeah, we know that."*

But that really is -- over and over again -- the spiritual process of expressing the glory of God: is that you lay it down over and over again until there is nothing left but the glory of God. God. You lay down every problem; you lay down every state of consciousness or every idea; every belief; every wound; every disappointment; every frustration. You just keep laying it down. And the more you lay it down, the more your soul expands and experiences more and more of the glory of God.

And yet we are so heavy-laden, so burdened by states of mind and worries and fears and conditions and anxieties. And, as a society, we are more and more worried -- maybe than we have ever been before. And yet the process is you've got to lay it down.

And when you lay it down, it takes a great deal of faith to believe that you can put anything at the altar of your soul -- that you can give anything to God -- and that it will be okay. And in fact, not only just okay, but that it will actually be better than you can imagine!

But we want control! How many of you know that sometimes you might have slight control issues? [Congregants laugh] Right? How many of you believe that you can do it better than anybody else, including God? God's getting old, you know; he's tired. [Congregants laugh] You know, and you can do it better!

And what if you would be willing to lay every burden down so that you can know yourself as a divine being?

Because what if you can't hold both? What if you can't be a magnificent expression of God and still hold all the burdens of your life? What if you can't see yourself in the mirror clearly when you are overwhelmed by the heaviness of life? And that you actually have to practice this every day, over and over and over again: laying it down; putting it at the altar; giving it to God. And then you watch that every time you lay it down, your spirit goes "Poof!" Like, you get a little bigger. You get a little brighter. You become a little bit more empowered. You become a little bit more free.

And you think, *"Well, that was good! I'm glad I never have to do that again."* [Congregants laugh] Right? It's like we lay one burden down, and it feels so good. But our other 99 are safely tucked in. And what if Holy Week, Jesus demonstrated the faith to put it all on the altar? [Congregant: "Amen."] He put everything on the altar. He put everything on the altar so that he could reveal the fullness of who he was. Everything went on the altar. He gave it all away, right

And because it was done in such a big way, we've kind of lost sight of that. Like, for you in your life, putting things on the altar will probably never be as dramatic or as overwhelming or as many people involved or as messy or as gory as it was for Jesus. And we hear the story of Jesus' crucifixion and we hear the stories and the gore and the stuff and we think, *"Oh, my gosh; that's too much!"*

And yet for him to demonstrate the fullness of who he was as the living expression of God, it actually had to be that big so that the people would actually see the transformation into the body of light. It had to be that big so that he could reveal himself in such a way that he could reveal himself in such a way that it would last for generations.

But for you and me, our process of laying it down is much simpler; it's much easier; it's much more beautiful. You just lay it down. You just turn it over. You just let go. And it's like: your soul gets to breathe. You actually get to know another level of freedom.

So my question, I guess, tonight, as we move into Holy Week is: Does anybody got a burden? Does anybody have an upset, a disappointment or frustration? Does anybody have a thought or a belief about yourself or your world that's no longer serving you?

And would you be willing to, tonight, just to lay it down? To give it to God?

And what Jesus said is: I can pick it up again. If I lay it down, I could pick it up again. But what happens is: as you lay it down, it's instantly transformed. Because God is the only thing in the universe that cannot be polluted. So whatever you give to God -- no matter how nasty or no matter what it is -- the moment you give it to God, it is instantly purified and comes back to bless you as Grace.

So, yes; you can pick it up again. But you don't have to! That once you place it at the altar; once you let go of it; once you give it to God, it is instantly purified and comes back to bless you as Grace.

Richard Rohr wrote in *The Universal Christ*:

"The Divine Mind transforms all human suffering by identifying completely with the human predicament and standing in full solidarity with it from beginning to end."

I want you to hear that! **Like, the Divine Mind is so committed to each and every one of us -- that God loves us so much; that God loves us so much -- that whatever you place at the altar out of the abundance of God's love for you, it is instantly transformed and comes back to bless you as infinite goodness; as pure grace and love. love.**

He goes on:

"This is the meaning of the crucifixion. The cross is not a single event. It is a statement from God that reality has a pattern ... We are indeed saved by the cross more than we realize. The people who hold the contradictions and resolve them in themselves are the saviors of the world. They are the real agents of transformation, reconciliation and newness."

Right now we are living in the world that is hanging on deeply to old patterns that aren't serving us. Is that true? [Congregants: "Yes."] And as we are willing to place those at the altar -- as we are willing to let go of them, as we're willing to give those up -- those old patterns break up; are transformed; are lifted higher vibrationally; and come back to bless us as Grace and ease at a whole 'nother level of living.

And that, over and over again, as spiritual people, we have a deeper letting go that we need to challenge ourselves with. Like, we are so used to thinking of ourselves as capable. Like, we're so capable; we're so smart; we're such rugged idealists; and such so independent that we hold on to so much that we could just place it at the altar and be wildly blessed.

So is there any heaviness that you're holding on to in your life? Is there any pain from the past that you still hang out with? Is there any stories or any drama or any upset or any fears of the future that you're holding on to that, tonight, you could actually place at the altar and watch it be transformed? And that your life could be easier than it's ever been before? And that you could actually live a more blessed life than you've ever known before? And out of God's infinite love for you, would you be willing to set it down?

Now, you have a God-given right to be miserable! [Congregants laugh] We have free will! God will just give you forever to finally let it go. You can outlive your friends, your family, everybody with how miserable you are. So that you get to be right over and over and over again. Or you could just decide,

tonight, that you'd be willing to lay it down. And watch your soul get lighter. That you could actually be free. You could actually move into this Holy Week and say, *"I don't want any of this anymore. There's no part of my suffering that makes sense anymore. There's no part of this disappointment or this pain or this frustration that makes sense anymore. It never made sense. It was never enjoyable. It never made me feel better. And tonight, I don't know who I'd be without it. I don't know who I'd be without that story or that drama, but I'm going to put it down. I'm going to just discover who I'd be if I was free."*

So how do we do this?

The first one is, as we talked about last week ... The first one is that I really believe that the prayer for God's will -- and the simplest way is, "Thy will be done" -- is actually the most profound way. That if you want to be lighter; if you want to move more fully into your divine self; if you want to express the glory of God, then **ASK THAT YOU UNDERTAND THE WILL OF GOD FOR YOU**. Ask that you experience the will of God for you. That we actually lay hold of the will of God. That we pray for the will of God. That our affirmation is, "Thy will be done."

Two: that you **WRITE DOWN THE ISSUE THAT YOU'RE RELEASING**. And what I mean by ... Why write it down? Is because I think that we need to spend some time discovering the feelings; the concerns; the issues; the ideas; the story; the drama. And by writing it down, I think it helps us clarify many of the significant ramifications of what that would mean to you to lay it down.

And as we write it, this situation -- this problem, this challenge, this person, this moment, this fear -- and we write it down. Well, what is that? What's the fear? What's the concern? What's the feeling attached to this situation? We write it down, just so that we get a higher level of clarity; so we actually know what we're laying down.

Three: then we **RELEASE IT**. Imagine placing it at the altar. Maybe you want to burn it. Maybe you want to flush it. Maybe you want to just wad it up and throw it away. But it's the act -- the symbolic act -- of releasing it. We started this whole thing for Lent with a Burning Bowl, because it all begins with that level of release.

Four: **FEEL THE RELIEF**. Like, this isn't just a head thing. This isn't just an activity. This is: feel the relief of turning it over to God. Feel that situation unfolding in you and through you.

And then, five: **ASK FOR YOUR NEXT STEP**. As you let it go, then ask, "What's my next step? What's the next step? What's the next thing I need to be about as I let go? What's the new thought? What's the new idea? What's the next step?"

And then, six: I want you to **GIVE THANKS**. I want you to give thanks that you don't have to carry one more thing one more day. If it hurts, let it go.

You know, the thing that always amazes me is how wise our bodies are. If you try to hold a hot pan, how long can you do that? Split second; maybe two seconds. Maybe 10 seconds if, you know, a child or a dog is in the kitchen, and you make yourself carry it over to the sink, because you're afraid somebody else is going to get hurt. I mean, that is a heroic act just to hold a hot pan for five seconds to get it to the sink to let it go, because you're afraid the dogs or the kids or whatever are going to get burned by it. That's a heroic act!

And yet, when it comes to our emotions, 10 years is barely getting warmed up. [Congregants laugh] Right? We can hold on to painful things for 10 years and think, *"Oh, that's the new stuff!"*

And what if, tonight, you decided that your soul was too sacred, too precious, too holy to let all that pain live rent-free in you anymore? That you were going to do a serious inventory this Holy Week, and you were going to look at everything that you're holding on to that isn't helpful; that isn't necessary; that

isn't moving your life forward. And all those things you were going to put on the altar and give them to God. Would you be willing?

Will you pray with me?

And I invite you to open your mind your heart your soul to the activity of God. And I want you to feel that divine activity of deep profound release. That God is right here, right now: within you and all around you. Let it go. Take a breath and let it go.

God, I give you all that I am; all that I have been; all that I hope to be. I give you my story; my drama; my upset; my disappointment; my hopes; my dreams. I give it all to you; I hold nothing back. Search me, God. If there's anything that isn't for my highest good, this Holy Week I give it to you. I hold nothing back from you, God. Take it all that I may know the glory of God within me. In the name and through the power of the living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.

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