

## SURRENDER

Week #12 of an ongoing series on "Unity's Foundational Teachings"

Wednesday, April 10, 2024

Rev. Richard Rogers

Okay; are you ready for tonight? So my question for you is: How? [Voice cracks] Oh, my voice is already breaking.

How do you manage your ego? When you think about managing your ego, how do you do that? Because I really want us to kind of dive into this whole thing about our ego. And my experience is: either we're managing our ego or our ego is managing us.

Has everybody had that experience? Where your ego got a little far out ahead of you? Where you were like saying things and doing things and acting in a way that may not have been as becoming as a child of God as you thought would be appropriate in that situation? Anybody ever had to make amends to someone because their ego got too far out ahead of them? And it was like, "*Wait; I've got to back that dog up.*" [Congregants laugh] Right?

And some of us, we've been living this spiritual life for a long time. And we're not always sure what role our ego has in this spiritual journey. Some people say we're supposed to eliminate our ego. Some people think it's a fight with our ego. Some people think we're going to control our ego. And I just think we're supposed to manage it, like a parent that manages a child. That we're actually supposed to be able to have a relationship with our ego: to see it, to celebrate it, to acknowledge it and to acknowledge that we have an ego.

One of the greatest things Sigmund Freud said is, "*The ego is not master in its own house.*" I love that quote, right? That our ego is not supposed to be the master of this house! It's not even the ego's house! That my personage, my beingness -- my who I am as a child of God -- is not driven by ego ... most days. [Congregants laugh] On good days, right? On good days, God is in charge of this thing that we call "me," right? On dark, scary days, my ego runs rampant. And you've all seen it and it's not pretty! Right?

And Bill Moyer said, "*I own and operate a ferocious ego.*" And I think we've all experienced that from time to time, where we see the power of our ego to do whatever the heck it pleases, whether it makes sense or it works or not.

Two of the issues that I think that we have -- that our ego uses -- is the ability to underinflate us and overinflate us. And usually when we think about our ego, we think about that activity of the ego that is always overinflating us: telling us we're bigger, we're more, we're this, we're that. But our ego also has the power to underinflate us: to tell us we're less than or broken or wounded or unacceptable.

And so the job isn't to just allow our ego to go too far in one direction or the other. Because we're not awful, terrible; and yet, we're also not perfect. That we have to find the middle ground so that we can live in this context. And I believe that the middle ground is being able to celebrate your imperfections and still find them wonderful and adorable.

Will you say with me, "*My imperfections are adorable!*"?

Together: [with congregation] "*My imperfections are adorable!*"

One more time: [with congregants] "*My imperfections are adorable!*"

Now feel your resistance to that statement. First of all, your ego says, "*Don't ever say that you're imperfect out loud.*" [Congregants laugh] "*They'll never figure it out on their own.*" But the reality is that, the people that love us, love us even though we're imperfect people. They think we're adorable most of

the time. [Congregants laugh] Even with our imperfections. And what we have to really do is just make room for who we really are. The middle ground is to say, *"Yes, I am imperfect. Yes, I have things; I have issues; I have situations. I act out; I fall; I make mistakes. But in God's eyes, I'm still adorable. In God's eyes, I'm still perfect, whole and complete and lacking in nothing. Even though from time to time I can be a piece of work."* [Congregants laugh]

So how do we manage our ego? Well, I think there's two things that allow us to manage our ego and make sense out of all of this. And the first one is love. And the second one is surrender.

I believe that we have to find a way to learn to love ourselves, even though we're imperfect people doing the very best we can. And I also believe that we have to learn to surrender to God. That if we're to manage our ego, we have to make peace with both of those: that we have to love ourselves in our imperfections, and we have to surrender in every moment to God that is in charge of our existence.

Love yourself: all your mistakes, all your issues, all your foibles. Isn't foibles a good word? [Congregants laugh] I love foibles. I love that word, right? Then we have foibles. It doesn't sound ... there's no shame in the word foibles. *"I have foibles."* It's like, *"Well, isn't that cute?"* [Congregants laugh] Right? *"Isn't that adorable? You have foibles? I have foibles!"* Right? That we can actually just make peace with that. That we can learn to open our heart; we don't have to go into our shame. We don't have to hold our foibles in a dark place. We can just see them as adorable.

But also, surrendering to God in the moment. Also moves us out of ego stand and into a freedom.

How many of you can think of something -- and maybe even in the last week -- where your life didn't go the way you wanted it to? Like how many of us can think of something -- maybe in the last month -- where it really didn't go the way you were hoping it would go? And there's a human part of us that absolutely believes that we know the best way in every situation. And if you ask us, we will tell you the best way that our life should go.

And if it went that way, this would be a very easy trip through life! Is: you call it, it goes that way. And at the end of your 70, 80, 90, 100 years, you look back at all the ways that you created your life, and you see that it matched perfectly.

And I hope that, at least from time to time, you have an experience where you actually want it to go a certain direction and it actually goes that way. But if we tell ourselves the truth, that is not the majority of the time! Life doesn't always pay attention to the way you think it should go.

And that's where surrender comes in! Is that, no matter how it goes, there's two things that we need. We need love: we need to be able to love ourselves no matter how it goes. And we need to surrender into the moment exactly the way it is.

Life goes the way it goes. And our ego has an opinion about that. Our ego has a desire about that. Our ego has a way that we think it's supposed to work. And to manage our ego effectively, we have to surrender in the moment to exactly the way it is.

Michael Singer said it this way. And Michael Singer; I think he's written ... *The Surrender Experience*, his latest book, is one of the great books on the process of surrender. And he writes about his meditation practice and how he moved into surrendering every day into meditation. And how one thing after another led to a greater thing. And he writes this thing that his life went in a direction that he never would have expected, because he was willing in every moment to surrender.

And one of the great quotes in that book is, *"I let go of myself and allow what is meant to be to be."* I love that quote! *"I let go of myself and allow what is meant to be to be."* Because for many of us, we're holding on so tight that we aren't allowing what is meant to be to be. That life isn't always about getting

what you want. And I want you to hear this! That **life is not about getting what you want. Life is about becoming who you're meant to be.**

And that is a very different reality! Because if life was about getting everything you want, it would just be like ordering from Amazon. Right? And they could have it delivered in four hours or less. It'd be an extra \$2.99, but you know ... if it's everything you want, \$2.99 is not that big of a deal!

But life is not about ordering what you want. It's becoming who you were meant to be. And I believe that happens through the deep act of surrender.

If there's one thing that I can guarantee: the more you love yourself and surrender into the moment, the happier, the more well-adjusted you will be in every aspect of your life.

Love is about embracing our dorkiness. Again, another term! Our woundedness, our imperfections. And your ego wants to hide all of that. But Spirit sees you and loves you just the way you are. Sees your wholeness and your completeness, no matter how it's showing up. And the moment we practice greater self-love, it opens the door to greater and greater good. And as we learn to surrender into the moment - and love and surrender become our path.

So can you see one area of yourself that you're still resistant to loving? Does everybody have an aspect of their personality or their body or a situation in life where you're in resistance to loving yourself exactly right there? And would you be willing to open the space to love yourself just the place where you want to be loved?

And do you see an area in your life that you're in resistance to surrendering into? A situation; maybe a relationship; maybe a thing at work; maybe your finances; maybe your health ... that you have not yet fully resisted -- I mean surrendered! [Laughs] You have fully resisted! -- fully surrendered into that place. moment.

And I think trust becomes so, so important. So if you get on a roller coaster, or if you go to a scary movie, what's the requirement for you to do that? Any roller coaster people here? Like what's the -- if you get on a roller coaster or you go to a scary movie -- what's the guarantee or what's the expectations that you expect if you get on a roller coaster or go to a scary movie? That you're going live through it! [Congregants laugh] Right? That's the guarantee! You might be scared to death through the whole experience, but the guarantee is: if I get in the car and you pull down the lever, or if I buy a \$15 ticket and go to this movie, that I'm going to get scared the bejeebers out of me, but that I'm going to live through the experience!

If you had a roller coaster where 50 % of the people fell out of it, [congregants laugh] how many people would get in that roller coaster? Not many! Because it's a low level of trust.

And I want you to see that the degree that you trust God is the degree that you're willing to surrender. When we have low trust in God, we have a high need to control. And we refuse to surrender. When we have high trust, we get in the car, we pull the lever down, we say, "*Go, scare the criminy out of me!*" Because we know we're going to survive!

What if you remembered the moment where Spirit said to your soul, "*You're going to take a ride. It's going to be 70, 80, 90, 100 years. And there's going to be great moments: wonderful, fabulous moments. There's going to be moments of that scare you and disappoint you and frustrate you. But trust me! You are going to make it through and it's going to be a great ride!*" And your soul was so excited about taking this ride that you committed to life on this planet.

And then you got here and it's like, "Time out!" [Congregants laugh] "What mistake did I make? Can I still trust my God now that I'm here to surrender into the moment and take the ride and have the full experience that life is offering me? And become the man or woman that life is calling me to be!"

"I trust life!"

Will you say that with me? [With congregants:] "I trust life!"

One more time: [with congregants] "I trust life!"

To the degree that we trust is to the degree that we can surrender.

You know, there was this line that John the Baptist said when Jesus showed up to John the Baptist to be baptized. And John the Baptist didn't want to do it. He didn't think he was worthy. of it. He instantly saw who Jesus was and he didn't want to do it. And Jesus said, "Let it be done."

And John the Baptist in John 3:30 is reported as saying this: "That he must become greater and I must become less."

And I want you to see this in your dance with your ego. And in the dance that your ego does with your spirit, that the more that you love your ego just the way it is – with its needs, its concerns, its fears, it's wanting to control things – the more that you love your ego, it makes it easier to surrender to God. And it makes it easier for your ego to actually get out of the way and allow the Christ in you -- the God within you, the spirit within you -- to move through you to do amazing things.

But when we're in resistance to our own ego; when we're at war with our own ego; when our ego hasn't ever received all the love that it wants and needs, our ego is constantly in conflict with our divine self.

So how much more love does your ego need to trust that God is in charge of your life? And to allow the glory of God to move through you? To be more and greater than you've ever been before?

The last point that I want to make tonight is the idea that, when we pray for something fervently; when we pray for something passionately; when we pray for something with all that we are, I want you to hear me say tonight that we also need to surrender at that level.

When you pray and you put in your prayers everything you've got – "God, I'm going to be healed; God, I'm going to be prospered; God, I'm going to get this job; God, my relationship is going to be transformed" -- when you pray with all your might, with all of your spirit, with all of your energy ... When you pray at that level, I would like to suggest tonight that you also have to surrender at that level. That when you pray and you put all of yourself into a prayer, there is this need to surrender to that greater goodness of God so that your ego does not get attached to even the prayers that you're praying.

Because for many of us, when we pray in a strong, fervent way, our ego often gets attached to our prayers, and it becomes necessary for us to believe that we can control prayer. That we can control things with our prayers.

And what I'd like to suggest tonight is: the more that you believe – the more that you pray with all that you are -- I believe there's a need to also surrender at that level. Because as you pray at that level and then surrender at that level, it automatically takes you to what I've been talking about the last several weeks. It takes you to the higher will of God. Because God's will for each and every one of us is greater and greater and greater good.

So, I do want you to pray with all that you are. I want you to put your heart and your soul into your prayers. But I am going to invite you -- challenge you, even -- to then let go. Surrender them, knowing that whatever you're praying for, no matter what you're praying about, that we also have to surrender to make sure that the highest good -- the greater level of good, God's good, God's will -- is being made

manifest in those prayers. So that those prayers are not just praying for my will, but we are praying for *"Thy will be done."*

And that idea of holding our prayers fervently, powerfully, dedicated, speaking the word, claiming the glory of God ... and also surrendering – to not just that situation or that moment or that experience, but surrendering to something greater -- changes everything.

So here's the request. Here's your homework. You ready? I want you to look at the place in your life tonight where you may be able to see room to surrender more. Where your ego has gotten involved and is wanting and clearly telling the Universe how it's supposed to go. And would you be willing tonight to surrender that so that even greater good could happen? So even greater blessings could come to you? Greater love and joy and peace and power?

**Because the more we get comfortable with surrender, the more we actually manage our ego and open to the greater goodness of God.**

*"I am more than my ego."*

Will you say that with me? [With congregation:] *"I am more than my ego."*

One more time: [with congregation] *"I am more than my ego."*

*"And my ego is adorable."* [Congregants laugh]

Together: [with congregation] *"And my ego is adorable."*

Come on; one more time! [with congregation] *"And my ego is adorable."*

*"But I am more than my ego."*

One more time: [with congregation] *"I am more than my ego."*

Will you pray with me?

I invite you to open your mind, your heart, your soul to the activity of God. That today we take a deep breath, and we feel how much love that we are surrounded in. We feel the love for all the ways that our ego wants to be loved. Our ego needs more love. So we embrace it with an open heart. We embrace our ego just the way it is, flaws and all, and all of its goofiness and dorkiness. We just embrace our ego with complete love.

And in every moment we surrender to God. We surrender to God! And in every moment we let go and surrender to God. Thy will be done. Thy will be done!

In the name and through the power of the living Christ, we give thanks. And so it is. Amen.