



Unity Church of Christianity  
Beyond Personality  
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All of us are on a journey in truth, in which we're trying to lay aside everything that has lied to us or that we have lied to ourselves about and then embrace the truth more fully. It's a process where we have to hear again and again what the truth is and just continue to wash away and dissolve that which we were loyal to at one time or another, but we held it fast as a part of our structure. We need to allow it to kind of break up. Sometimes you have heard something fifty times—a hundred times—and then all of a sudden it hits you, and you see it from a new angle, and it penetrates to a new level.

So always understand that you're going to just keep hearing truth—oftentimes the same truths. We begin to see them and hear them from different angles, and that's the idea: to chip away a little bit more. What we've been talking about is the divinity in man. We know that God is Divine. Hopefully you all agree that God is Divine. They're one in the same. So if God created us, then *we* must be divine. There has to be an element of the divine in us, and we have to all learn to call that forth. It's also to understand and grasp that this divinity is in us, and therefore, it's in everyone. That's a powerful thing, and that leads us to a sense of connectedness.

We are taught in the Scriptures that Jesus Christ was Divine. We teach that he was the model, the example, the way-shower, the elder brother. He came and modeled the divinity in man. We, in Unity, try and make a distinction between the word “Jesus,” which represents and refers to the man (the human), and Christ, which represents the divinity—the divinity in man. Traditional Christianity has tended to say that Jesus was the only son of God, and we say Jesus was the son of God that put on the son-ship. But we’re all sons of God, becoming the full expression of that, because there are many references in Scripture that contradict the idea that Jesus was the only son of God. We’re all to be joint heirs with Christ, and all who follow the spirit of God are sons of God. Various others are sprinkled through the Scriptures to understand that the divinity lives in you. It just hasn’t come into full bloom. And that’s what Jesus called us into and what he was trying to show you, so that you’d see yourself in Him and hear it in the teachings.

In the Scriptures, the order of the term is “Jesus Christ.” And then there are other times where it says “Christ Jesus.” Have you ever thought about that? Why have they switched that around? Just think in terms of man—divinity. When it says “Jesus Christ,” it’s talking about man in the divine, and when it says “Christ Jesus”—like “have faith in Christ Jesus”—it’s talking about having faith in the divinity that is in man. Have faith in a being, in your friend, in your neighbor, your parent, or whomever you’re dealing with. Have faith that the Christ Jesus is in you.

The Scripture that is used is, “We’re all sons of God through faith—faith in Christ Jesus.” If you read in Galatians, there are some wonderful writings in Chapter 3 and 4, and I’m going to share some excerpts. It states, to begin with, “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” So it’s something you put on—your divinity—this essence that you are. It goes on: “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you all are Christ Jesus.” Read it in Galatians. It’s been skipped over for too long. It’s there. It goes on: “If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs—heirs according to the promise.” In the next chapter (Chapter 4) you can dig in and see where it says, “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the spirit of His son into your hearts—crying Abba, Father.” It concludes, “Therefore, you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God.”

How powerful. How much we have cut ourselves short, and how much we forget that and paint a whole different picture. We’re not there, but that’s what we need to hold up to. That’s what we need to identify with more. What we want to pull out of all of that is that we are all sons of God. We all, therefore, are to put our faith in Christ the Divine. Yes, a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is powerful, meaningful, and a to-do; but at the same time it’s to remember that what he came to do was to give the glory to us—that he had received Himself—which was his prayer that we said earlier in the service. He prayed to God, “I have given them the glory that you have given me.” And so He has seated in you the realization of that truth. We’re not all demonstrating

it because we live in separation from that knowing. We've had all kinds of things come in and cover over that truth, or cover over the truth of who we are with another kind of self—the self that we've constructed, the one that we have made that has covered over the one that was created from the beginning—the essence.

In Unity we have a text dating back to probably the 1930s, early in its movement—Unity itself is a movement that goes back to the 1880s. This book was written by Emilie Cady, and it's called *Lessons in Truth*, and it's a basic text that is often introduced. One of the things that it makes a distinction between is this idea of a person at their current level of expression and the idea of truth of who they are—the truth in them. The words that were used were “personality” and “individuality.” In a nutshell, personality is the personal, changing self of you. There are many selves in personality; you can be one way here and one way over there, and it depends on what's provoking what part of the self that you have covered over the real self. Not all people's personalities are bad, because the other word is “individuality.” What you want is more of the individuality, which refers to the eternal essence at the core of your being, which is the God-self. You want the personality to be dusted off so that you begin to see the essence of who you are. And then your personality becomes radiant with the light and all the attributes of the divine. That's the goal.

A lot of life is about unlearning what you've learned. The word “personality” is from the Greek word *persona*, which was a mask worn by actors in the theater. The actor would change masks according to the part that he or she was called upon to play. But “individuality,” the word that Katie used, would be the equivalent of the real person that is behind the mask, and it's the part of you that is the authentic, real, true nature of God. We touch that part of us at various times, but we also move in and out of it a great deal. At the personality level we wear many masks—many of us can. We may be one person at work, we may be another person at home, we may be another person out with the guys and the gals, we may be another person when we're with our minister. It's interesting to note that several people could be asked to describe the same person—one of them could be a friend, one of them could be a coworker, one of them could be neighbor, one of them could be a spouse—and the descriptions of that same person could vary very significantly.

The goal is for us to become real and authentic all the time, because we accept who we are; we're comfortable with who we are. We're being real and we love ourselves where we are. We may not be perfected yet, but we love who we are. We're not trying to work consciously to put a mask on. We're just *being*, and we just have that comfort. That's a beautiful thing because we have that comfort when we're remembering that there's a core essence to who we are and where we want to live from. There are moments when I slip out of it—and that's okay. I just remember to return back to remembering and emphasizing this other dimension of you.

I had a person come to see me, and it helped me see that some people really can struggle with an idea. Sometimes people who are up at the podium look like they have it held together, and they look like they're ready to ascend. I'm not claiming that for myself, but some people project onto people. This person who came to see me put that on some of the speakers and put it on me—I don't know how. My heart went to him because he had the courage to say, "It feels like it's out of reach." In other words, the way that the person held themselves—maybe they were in a little moment—and many a person can be there. It seems like it's deflating; "I can never be that, I can never live all that. Why try? It seems too far off." You can't do that to yourself, and you have to realize that all of those people are in a zone of affirming what is the truth, and they are as much trying to live it as anyone else. They, too, have gone through their dark night of the soul. They may even get off the stage and be back in it. They, too, are suffering in various ways, through life, because we do have pain and suffering; we have emotional, and we have existential. Everyone—if you're on the planet—is dealing with something. On some level you're pushing against it.

Richard Bach, in his book *Illusions*, says that wonderful line and quote that is often used. "Here is a test to find out whether your mission on Earth is finished: if you're alive, it isn't." So anyone you see up here on stage is working through their stuff. I assure that I do not have it all together. Many of you know that; you could ask my wife. This dear soul came in and shared from the heart, and I thought that would be good for anyone else that's out there. Don't put it so far off like that. Love yourself where you are. Start where you are. Go from there. Life is a journey, not a destination, and no one should judge themselves inferior or even superior to others, because that's also the ego speaking, and you can know that. So the goal is to have your personality take on your individuality or take on this Christ or this core essence to dissolve all that is not the essence of you; we are in the journey of dissolving that. Usually when we don't like a person or we react negatively or we have a charge on about a person, we don't like their personality, and it may be reminding us of some part that's hidden in our personality. Sometimes it takes a while for a person to learn that—to look within themselves when they're looking outward—but we have to remember that behind that mask is a person—a soul—and the divine lives within them, and they're marvelous people. Everyone is, and they have that essence within them.

There was a student in my class when I was in ministerial school, and he was actually a former Catholic priest. He had gone through all of this education, and he found Unity somewhere and decided to leave the priesthood and become a Unity minister. He shared a story about his humanness with me, and I actually wrote it down and kept it so that I wouldn't forget it. The essence of the story was that he was serving in a Catholic parish with other priests, and he had become very despondent. He was suffering. For the public he had to look really great to be a priest and be priestly, but inside he was dying, he was depressed. He said he was thinking about

suicide, even. And so he prayed very strongly. He said, “If there is a God, let me see your face so I will know for sure.” It was like he just came to a place; he was wanting to end it all, and he was in so much pain, he came to doubt whether there was a God, and he asked to see the face of God. At the same time, he said, “I was dealing with a particular priest that would just send me into rage. I actually said to myself, ‘I hate that guy; I hate that priest.’ It wasn’t right. I’m a priest; I shouldn’t be hating anybody, but I hated him.” He said he just couldn’t—anytime he walked in the room. That night, he prayed that prayer, and he had a dream. In the dream, he had a sense that all of a sudden God was in the room, and he heard this voice calling “Here I am,” and he turned and looked. It was the face of the priest that he hated. Perhaps there are other stories like that, but this is a true story that he told me, and he said that was so powerful for him. It just brought him back to understanding: “Wow, God is in everyone,” to look beyond personality, as Emilie Katie says.

My friend the priest had to realize that the strong dislike had to do with some element of his own personality—that he had to do some digging there. You know Jesus was very clear on all of this, and He said, “Remove the beam from your own eyes so that you can see the spec that’s in the other,” and that’s a dynamic that goes on.

One of the first things that I learned in Unity that’s very powerful—and sometimes we don’t emphasize it enough—is that we are to behold the Christ in everyone. It’s actually even a saying. You don’t say it out loud and run up to somebody and say, “Hey, I behold the Christ in you!” That probably wouldn’t get you far. In the right place it might. Inside you, you say, “The Christ in me beholds the Christ in you.” And even when there’s a person that you are confronted with, that maybe you have a charge with—anyone, whether it’s a coworker, a spouse, whatever—just go back to that and say, “I’m going to get beyond personality here. Mine, theirs, whatever, and the Christ in me beholds the Christ in them.” People that do that have shared how a relationship can totally shift and how much is gained from that and how much healing takes place, and the other person starts showing up so differently, because it’s a totally different energy that you are holding and projecting and affirming and looking for. You’re peeling away whatever may be that person’s mark or whatever they’re going through. You make it okay, but you know at the core beyond that, there’s something gorgeous and wonderful that God created, and when you are willing to see that—you see it, you feel it, you live from it within yourself—every time you affirm that in another person, you are, at the same time, keeping it for yourself. You know it for yourself. You’re living from that part of yourself. It’s a powerful thing.

Always remember masks lie. Personalities are masks, and we are to peel away the mask—choose to see the truth of God in ourselves and in others. Emmett Fox was a great metaphysician and writer from years past. In one of his books he tells about an old legend, which he says is a legend that comes from a colony of artists, years ago, in Paris. He said this one person was a struggling,

very poor artist. He didn't have enough money to buy a piece of canvas to paint his masterpiece that he felt was inside of him. He was walking along a paved bank where there were various things displayed, and he saw this old, crude picture selling third-hand from somebody for a very small amount—it was just for pennies. It was already painted, but it was ugly. It was in a frame. He bought it for pennies and took it home. It was actually a picture of Napoleon III in full dress uniform, as the story goes. The artist decided to clean it off and use the canvas underneath to do his painting. When he went home, he began to remove Napoleon III—this horrible painting—and as he did so, to his astonishment, he found another picture underneath it. Somebody hadn't cleaned off the canvas and had just painted a Napoleon over the top. He continued to remove it, and he found that it was a very fine, precious painting. He took it to an expert, and it was confirmed, and suddenly he was poor no more.

But the perfect allegory in all of that is that on the outside there might be this marred image of a Napoleon. There may be limitations and there may be scarring and there could be—in our own lives, even—limitation in harmony. But underneath was this masterpiece of tremendous value. Consider every person you look at as just that: an absolute masterpiece that lies underneath. No matter what may be showing up, the truth in God is in there. One of Jesus' great abilities was to see anybody and to call that out of them, no matter what it was. And that's why He was, so often, with what was referred to as the sinners—the people who were missing the mark—and He helped them see this other dimension of themselves. We also tend to sell ourselves short, and we tend to know so much more about what we're not capable of or where our limitations are. And yet, there's always much more in every individual to begin to see and begin to emphasize. You can take small women, who could never lift 250 pounds, and yet, in a crisis situation, they don't think—they don't slip into the thought, "I can't do." They lift it off the baby or whatever. Suddenly, they draw upon something. Where did that come from? It came from a place beyond the thought of limitation that lives in us. We've covered ourselves with various kinds of thoughts like that, that keep us corralled. It's important to think in those terms. Again, we tend to know so well what we *cannot* do.

I had a good friend who was telling me a story, and this goes back some years—probably 30 years ago. He told me this story where when he was single he and the guys would go out for dinner, and they had this group. They were all buddies, and one of them was very shy—painfully shy. His buddies would sometimes do the wrong thing, but they conspired to take him to this dinner place where they had a show; there was a hypnotist. They were going to put him up on stage when it came time for volunteers. And so that's what they did. They went to dinner, and when the hypnotist asked for volunteers, they pushed him up on stage, and this guy was really terrified. The hypnotist recognized it and asked him a question—I still remember it—"What is your favorite subject?" and the guy was frozen. He couldn't even think of a favorite subject to talk about. So then the hypnotist went to yes-and-no questions like, "Who are you?" and "What's

your name?” and “Where do you live?” He was a good hypnotist, and he put him into a calmness and into a confidential state, and then he said, “Okay, I’m giving you the microphone, and you are a great orator, and you have something in your heart that you want to tell the world.” He took the microphone and delivered the most powerful, most articulate, well thought-out message, and all of his buddies’ mouths dropped open. When the hypnotist took the microphone back, he said, “You all think I hypnotized him, don’t you? I did not hypnotize him; I de-hypnotized him. He’s been hypnotized by all of the fears that have kept him from being that, but that’s always been there; it’s always been in him, and it’s his road to discover that.” Very powerful.

Now what are the ways in which we’re hypnotizing ourselves and holding ourselves back? What are the ways in which we have been such strong critics of ourselves, and don’t give ourselves time to behold this Christ in us, to see and behold and identify with the fact that, “My gosh, I have God that’s created me. I’m a divine masterpiece. It lives in me. It’s time for me to embrace that and have compassion upon myself. Stop self-loathing or beating up on myself. This is life. I’m going to love it. I’m going to start where I am. I’m going to move forward on that.”

The Greek philosopher Zeno said, “The most necessary part of learning is to unlearn our errors.” Let go of everything that we’ve been hypnotized by. It’s a powerful road to begin to let go. In the book, *The Four Agreements*, Don Miguel-Ruiz writes, “Humans punish themselves endlessly for not being what they believe they should be.” Can you relate? Yeah. But we are more than our to-do lists, and we are more than our personalities, and we are more than our bodies. We are more than the roles we play, more than the masks we wear. We are spiritual beings. We are masterpieces. We are all the sons of God. Eric Butterworth, a Unity minister and wonderful writer, told us to “sing our song of wholeness”—to take time to be still and listen to the beat of your heart and the pulse inside you, to see that this is the universe celebrating itself inside of you every moment. Get in tune with that.

There was a woman who was sent an e-mail from a good friend. The woman saved this e-mail in her inbox, and her friend wrote, “Just remember, in case you forget, you are perfect in every way. Say it. Know it. Feel it.” That was the message. She didn’t know what prompted it, whether her friend saw some doubt in herself or if it was something she was going through, but the e-mail wasn’t that she was perfect and never made a mistake—that wasn’t what it was about—it was just reminding her that she could see in her the “real me.” The friend was saying, “I see in you, the real person—the real me. I behold the Christ in you.” Loosen the grip on that inner critic. Begin to see and feel and live from this wholeness that wants to be celebrated in you, that lives in you. It’s there—it’s always there. You haven’t given it the time of day enough, most certainly.

And so, the Christ in me beholds the Christ in you. Now you need to behold it in you and in all others. God bless you all.