



Unity Church of Christianity
The Bread of Life
January 16, 2011

Howard Caesar

There's a young lady that came home from a date with her special guy—significant other. She was feeling kind of sad, and she told her mother, “Mother, he proposed to me an hour ago.” And she asked, “Why, then, are you so sad?” The daughter said, “Well, because he also told me that he's an atheist. And Mom, he doesn't believe in heaven or hell.” The mother thought a moment, and she said, “Marry him anyway. Between the two of us, we'll show him how wrong he is.”

I'm glad you laughed, but actually it has some judgments in there, if you haven't noticed. Actually, it implies that a wife and/or mother-in-law can create the experience of heaven or hell. Some of you obviously believe that, and I'm here to tell you it's not the truth. At least it's not what we teach. We teach that a person creates their own heaven or hell in this life. We teach that nothing outside of you should be ever given the power to determine who you are or how you're going to show up or how you're going to respond to the various aspects of life. If we think that there is someone or something outside of us that could be the source of our hell or our happiness or heaven, then all we do is continue to focus externally. We think that that's where all the work has to be done—whether is it to move things away that don't seem to be working, or that we've got to do something externally in order to bring the qualities of happiness and heaven.

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Jesus told us, very clearly, that there is this state of being which we are all called to, which is oneness with God, and that is about a kingdom. He referred to the kingdom—and He talked so much about the kingdom—and so it's a "kingdom consciousness", and its location is not somewhere outside of us. The Kingdom of Heaven is within you, as He said. He said in various other ways that it's not to be focused on externally, and often times that's where we're searching and digging and looking. It has its place, but it has to be balanced. He said that it wouldn't be found in things where moth and rust doth consume or where thieves can break in and steal. He said that these true treasures that are lasting are only found in heavenly things, and they're not necessarily found in the earth—meaning in form, in the external, in the physical realm.

In Unity we teach that heaven and hell are states of mind; that's nothing new to you. Essentially, they are states of consciousness. The energies of hate or anger or fear or resentment create an inner hell for an individual. That's how it could best be described: total separation from its opposite, which is love and peace and joy and oneness, which creates the energies and experience of what might be described as heavenly vibrations and heavenly energies. Scripture states, "Heaven and earth shall pass away," and that's an interesting statement. Actually, the course in miracles says that that means they will not continue to exist as separate states. So there won't be the internal and the external. Essentially, heaven will come to earth, where you're living. The whole idea of the journey—spiritually—is to bring heaven on earth. Maybe not everyone is going to do that, but you can be doing that. That's what it's about. It's not two states; it's one state with you—one state of being.

We teach that the word "Jesus" represents the man—the physical man, the form, the physical being—and that "Christ" represents the Divine. It's not about form; it's about spirit—the spirit of God that was within Jesus. We like to teach that, as you're reading the Bible and exploring scripture in various stories, the word "Christ" is synonymous with truth—the truth of God—so that Christ was the voice of truth and He *was* the truth. Whenever Jesus shows up in the story, you should think in terms of "truth has just shown up"—or whatever He has said and is espousing. That is the voice of truth being conveyed and He said Himself, "I am the truth. Remember I am the way; I am the truth; I am the life."

He also referred to this truth as bread. You can read through the sixth chapter of the Gospel John, and it talks about this. He said, "I am the bread of life. I am the living bread which came down from heaven." This is something that is to be partaken of, and He's not talking about a physical bread; He's talking about the spiritual bread. It's something that you partake of, you invite, you digest, you integrate, you make a part of you. Many people didn't understand what He was saying, but this is what He was trying to convey.

In one instance in that chapter, Jesus says, "Labor not for the meat which perishes, but for that meat which endures unto everlasting life, which the son of man shall give unto you, for he has the God—the Father—sealed." It's almost as if He's talking about He has God—the Father—

sealed within Him, and that's really what the Christ dimension of Him is. The Christ being the truth—being the bread that we are all to partake of. And that lives within Him.

They asked Jesus to show us the proof—show us a sign—that he was really doing the work of God. They then brought up the idea of how their fathers ate manna in the desert. So they ate bread in the Old Testament. In the Law of Moses you can read about that. He says that He gave them bread from heaven. Jesus jumps in here to make a distinction and says, “That was something different. That was something that was physically experienced.” There are different stories on that—that the man actually appeared as a result of a tree and some different things. Essentially, Jesus went into clarifying right after they said that. What He said is, “Verily, verily I say unto you,” which really means, “Now listen up because I’m telling you something important here, to make a distinction.” He said, “Moses gave you not that bread from heaven, but my father gives you the true bread from heaven.” That’s exactly what He said. He goes on to say, “For the bread of God is He which comes down from heaven and gives life unto the world.” He’s talking about the idea that Jesus—the truth, the Christ—gives us bread. When they heard this they said, “Well give us that bread; who wouldn’t want that bread?” And Jesus answered, “Well I am that bread.” Still they hadn’t gotten it, and He said, “I am the bread of life, and he that comes to me [meaning the truth] shall never hunger or thirst.”

He talked about a well of living water welling up where one will never thirst again. And He wasn’t talking about physical water; He was talking about spiritual. We’re talking about a truth, and He was the voice of truth. That truth was the bread—that it feeds you the ever-lasting, the non-perishable. You can look at the idea of the last supper and taking the bread and wine and that it represents—as it has been taught—that the bread is body, and the wine is the blood. Those represent the physical forms, at the physical level. But on another level, the bread symbolizes the truth that is the body of teachings He taught, and the wine is the life that flows through those who live the truth and incorporate the truth within them—the same way that you incorporate blood and it gives you life.

We’re talking about life and truth. Truth is something that resides within you. You’ll only truly find it in moments when you’re quiet, alone, listening, or in other moments when you’re living life, but seeking to open up and engage with something that’s higher within you that wants to reveal itself and its truth to you.

One of my favorite writings, which I refer to again and again and love to read, is the writings of Robert Browning, in his poem called Paracelsus. Whether you’ve heard it before, it’s great to hear again. It’s so powerful because it’s rich with truth. He was obviously very inspired to have created this poem. Out of his experience, he came to know this and stand on the ground of what he was saying in this poem, Paracelsus. It goes like this:

Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost center in us all,
Where truth abides in fullness; and around,
Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
This perfect, clear perception—which is truth.
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Binds it, and makes all error: and [then] to know
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without.

There are some very important lines there—at least three: (1) “Truth is within ourselves,” (2) “There is an inmost center in us all, Where truth abides...,” and (3) “...to know rather consists in opening out a way in which the imprisoned splendor may escape.” We all have this splendor—the splendor of truth. When you know the truth, there’s a splendor of life and feeling within you that you engage with.

Aldous Huxley stated something similar. He said, “There is a central chamber of the soul blazing with the light of Divine love and wisdom that has come, in the course of history, to multitudes of human beings.” He’s saying that there is the chamber, this something, this imprisoned splendor. There are people who have gotten glimpses of it, felt it, experienced it, know of it, and speak about it in poems and writings. There is this central chamber of one’s being where this imprisoned splendor resides, and it’s important for us to know that. It’s all there within you. You don’t have to go somewhere to find it. It’s wherever you find yourself. There it is, if you engage with it.

The Apostle Paul said, “Christ in you—your hope of glory.” “Christ in you” is your point of power and your point of truth. Christ in you *is* you. It’s you at the place where God and you meet, and all separation and fear has melted away. Some people aren’t able to accept that—the idea that Christ is within them, that the truth is within them, that it lives within them. They just can’t accept that truth. That’s okay, but it reminds me of the movie with Jack Nicholson, *A Few Good Men*. He was on the stand and was being harassed by the attorney. He was in the jury room and finally said, “You want the truth? You can’t handle the truth!” I love that. I don’t believe the truth I did that.

The way people show that they can’t handle that truth—the truth within them—is that they project outside, into the outer world, that it’s all there. That’s where all of their problems lie, and so they blame the world; they blame others; they blame things. It reflects separation. A good question to ask ourselves is, “Who made the fear that is in me?” The answer always comes back

to ourselves. It may be that we learned fear along the way, because life and the world create that in us. But whatever we have learned, we can unlearn, and that's part of the spiritual journey. It's to question those things that we have learned, that we've given loyalty to, that may be a lie. They aren't the truth at all; they're false. Therefore, we're living from them, and they're creating a sense of separation and pain, which is fear and a form of hell, if you will.

It is said that the journey of transformation begins with recognizing the false as being false. We came into this life without a story, and then we began to create one. We all have our own unique stories around things that have happened. We all have had our own unique experiences, and out of those experiences we made decisions. We created a story around us: "This is what happened to me. This is why I'm like I am. That's why I'm going to stay this way, as opposed to breaking out in some form." Many of the decisions that we made about the story and the happenings were false, but because we established loyalty to them, they defined us, and they've defined a portion of our life. We have to decide: "How long is this going to define me, these things that I may be clinging to or attached to that are false? They're not true, and I have to challenge them."

As for myself, I grew up very small. That's not to say others aren't small, but I was three or four grades behind the grade that I was in—in size, in appearance, in everything. When I was in grade school, I was playing with kids a lot younger than me, and when I got to high school I looked like I still belonged in fifth grade. I was 5'3" when I went into my senior year and graduated at 5'6". It was tough relative to sports; it was tough relative to girls—important things like that. But it was feeling like you were minimized, and you didn't measure up, and you weren't enough. Those were things that I dealt with, so I would always be trying to prove myself by working hard, whether it was sports, or this or that, to prove myself—to get up to that level of acceptance. My mantra became something like, "You weren't good enough." Even after I came to know about that, as you go through your life, there's residue that can appear. Sometimes when something happens in my life that brings that up, if I'm not really attentive and aware, I find that I'm working harder and harder to prove that there is enough. Or I may become irritable and angry inside, not knowing that that's what it's about, because I'm living from "I'm not okay." Or I'm awake and aware and notice what I'm feeling and what the emotion is, and I challenge it, and I question it. I get back to knowing this is not the truth and affirming what is. That is the process that we go through, recognizing the false as false.

When I went to India, one of the things that they taught us was this idea of how we wrestle with *what is*, and we fight against *what is*, instead of accepting what is in front of us. The fighting of it is what causes the suffering. I just got it at another level when I was there and continue to understand it at new levels. If we could accept *what is*—that is in front of us at every level, as opposed to just doing battle with it—we would do a lot for ourselves.

There are things that we learn as we go through life: what to do and what not to do; from childhood we learn that we are not supposed to hit our playmates when we're in the sandbox; we

learn not to jump from a high place because of this thing called gravity; we learn not to put our hands on a stove after we've been burned. We make decisions to avoid ongoing suffering based on what we've learned. We may say, "Why would I do this if there's a better way? There's a better way, so I'll do this differently. If I'm going to New York I could take a bus, but why would I take a bus? It would be better to take a train. Or rather than a train, I could take a plane." Those decisions come along. We learn to look for a better way, and we learn to question some of our decisions. That makes sense that we have to learn to question some of our thoughts, as well, because we live from our thoughts and our thought patterns. That's just natural. You may be riding a bus through life in your mind, when you could be flying at higher elevations, at higher frequencies, at higher vibrations. That's a decision. The core of ancient spiritual traditions is the discipline of intense questioning—questioning about life and one's self. And that's what allows wisdom to emerge. There is a Greek philosopher who said, "We are disturbed not by what happens to us, but by our thoughts about what happens to us." Do you get the difference? It's a big difference.

I love Byron Katie and her book, which is called *Loving What Is*. She's been here and is coming to speak again. She's one who says—along with what they taught in India and other places—"Suffering is optional." Katie recommends a process called inquiry, in which one can discover all of the concepts and judgments and things that we believe, which are distortions of the truth. She says, "We tend to believe our thoughts instead of what is really true." Back to that same thing. And she says that your suffering and your emotions that are unpleasant are the alarms that are sounded within us, warning us that we have become attached to a thought that is not accurate, that is false. So that's something for us to think about.

It's also interesting to look at her life, and she talks about it in her book. For ten years, she was in a downward spiral in her life, with rage and paranoia and despair. For two of those years, she said she was so depressed that she could hardly manage to get herself out the door of the house. She would spend weeks on end in bed. Finally, she checked herself into a halfway house for women with eating disorders because it was the only place that her insurance would pay for. But she went to this place, and she said that the people were all so frightened of her that they actually placed her all alone, up in an attic room. So she must have been a piece of work. It's interesting how God works. Sometimes we're taken to such a low that we finally bottom out, and we open up to something that moves through us, like the bottom that AA speaks of. There's an awareness that explodes inside of us at these low places—at the dark night of the soul. That imprisoned splendor somehow finds its way out—maybe not all of it, but a good bite of it.

One week into her time in this halfway house, she woke up one morning without any concepts of who or what she was. There were no stories anymore, and she said there was no "me." She said, "All my rage and all the thoughts that had been troubling me—my whole world—it was gone." And then laughter welled up from the depths and just poured out.

It's interesting how there are those who move into a kind of bliss when everything is let go, because there's just such a joy and exuberance. There was a lady from Germany that was very timid and everything else that went into this laughter. I talked to her about it, and she said it was just like everything left you, and you saw how the way you were seeing everything was so silly. Everything got so clear for her.

Katie was saying that she was intoxicated with this joy. There was nothing separate. There was nothing unacceptable. Everything was just okay as it is. She accepted it—embraced it—and didn't put a heavy thought around it. She would just be there and be herself and be the truth in it. Her daughter Roxanne was sixteen at the time. She remembers her mother always yelling at her and criticizing her. She was even afraid to be in the same room with her mother at times. And now she was peaceful and filled with love and innocence. They were afraid the old Katie would return, but it didn't. So once it didn't, they began to explore what it was that had happened for her. She had a hard time explaining it, but she said that through her inner questioning she had realized that all her old thoughts were untrue and that freedom had woken up inside of her. She developed a process that people came seeking out. People started asking her to speak, and that's what she does today—she shares that process of calling out of the mind those things that are not true. And that is the journey of transformation. She has some wonderful questions that she takes you through, in a beautiful way. The first one is, "Is it true?" In other words, if you write down a thought that is upsetting to you, ask the question, "Is it true?" Secondly, "Can you absolutely know that it is true?" Third, "How do you react when you think about that thought?" Obviously the unhappiness comes up. The fourth question is, "Who would you be without that thought?" which is a great one. Lastly is the turnaround, the idea that we project out so much of this, and could it be that whatever we're projecting out has something to do with needing to see in ourselves what needs change? It's a wonderful process. It's noticing the thoughts that we argue with, and that we often argue with *what is*. She asks which is more empowering, "I wish I hadn't lost my job," or "I lost my job; what can I do now?" You see, being in the moment, as opposed to fighting with what is, is an amazing thing.

Thomas Troward talks in his writings about livingness, and he states, "To whatever degree we exercise our self-conscious intelligence to transcend the effects of conditions in our lives is the degree to which we experience livingness." He points out that there is always more of us, that we are to look beyond appearances, that we can always know that there is a greater truth beyond the problems in our lives and a better way for us. We have to begin to affirm it. It doesn't mean to deny the existence of limiting conditions; it's not to give them power. As you do this, you become less and less impressed with intimidating circumstances and situations, and you begin to always know there is a truth that you can embrace, that is a better way through the situations.

So may you all eat of the bread of life—the Christ within—and be set free. God bless you all.