



Unity Church of Christianity
New Beginnings
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So, there really is no getting around it—January is a time of new beginnings, and you can't ignore that fact. I believe that some have even said that new year's is synonymous with new beginnings—they go hand in hand. They are one in the same, and so we also teach at Unity that it's not just in January, or not at the beginning of a new year, but it's any time, really, that we can begin to move into a time where we're renewing ourselves and revitalizing and beginning again. But yet, at the same time, what could be better than to really reflect on how it is that we can have a new beginning.

We are co-creators with God in creating this life. And any time we can stop and remember to partner more deeply with the source of this life that we've been given, and to gain its assistance in moving us through change—changing our life, the conditions, the events, the circumstances—strengthening us to move forward and to shift our consciousness, as well. Everything is from the inside out. And so, we are to be about the process of letting go of old ideas, certainly those ideas that in no way have ever empowered us, but have diminished us, and to be making new choices—new choices that help to create a new beginning and a more positive experience. That's what we're about.

When Jesus began his ministry, he began with a summation of the teachings, the wonderful message and accumulation of teachings that were referred to as the Sermon on the Mount. They're found in Matthew 5, 6, and 7—something you should read again and again because it really has so much in there. The reason I bring it up is that at the end of that body and package of powerful teachings, is something very significant that he says—and he makes a distinction between the people who have then only heard what he said, and those who are doers of what he said. And, if you recall, he said, “Whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, a wise man who built his house on rock. And the rains came, and the winds blew, and the floods came, and all this beat upon his house, and it didn't fall because it was founded upon rock.” You've heard that story. And then, of course, the other side is those who hear these sayings, these teachings that I've just shared and poured out to you, and do nothing with them. They are foolish, and they basically have built their house on the equivalent of sand. And when the rains come and the floods come and the winds blow, that house is going to fall—and great will be the fall.

The interesting thing here is he's really talking about consciousness, of course. He's not talking about an outer house, he's talking about the household of your own internal being as to how strong and sturdy you are. He's also saying that, let it be known, you are going to be faced with challenges. You're going to be faced with storms. There are storms that come in life and no one escapes them. And so, here are these teachings that I've just given you that you need to do—not just hear.

I'm arming you with some spiritual truth. I'm arming you with the artillery of truth, if you will. And you have a choice to be made here. And the choice is whether I'm just going to hear them and just intellectualize them and say, “It's just some more stuff to know,” or am I going to really do them, am I going to integrate them, am I going to live them, am I going to make them a part of me? And that's a big decision in terms of any beginning—what is it that you're going to apply that's different from yesterday. Those are choices to be made. So, a person has to choose to move more toward the light—the light of God, the light of truth, a higher energy, a higher frequency of thought and being.

And at the point of a new beginning, I think one is always needing to look at what are the choices that I'm making that are in alignment or in integrity with the direction that I'm wanting to go with my life. So here's where I want to go, here's what I want to have happen, and am I doing the inner work that is in integrity with that direction. Those are really important things.

Now Jesus was no different really. At the very beginning of his ministry, he had to make some choices. He had to determine where he was going and what he was going to do, and what he was up to and how he was going to live his life, his calling. And what he encountered was an

experience that was called the temptations. And it was interesting to me—I read that passage where in Matthew 4 it says, “Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, and the tempter came and said to him,” and then gave him all of these different temptations to turn stone into bread and to throw himself down from the top of the temple, and to worship this being or tempter. And actually, that really is representative of the dynamic of the ego that is talking and always saying, “You do all these outer things to the glory of yourself.” And his response was continually, “No, I’m in alignment with what I’ve been called to do, and letting God’s light shine, and being one with the Divine.” So, constantly, he was back to affirming that dynamic.

It’s just interesting that, he too, even at the very infancy and the beginning of starting out—a new beginning in his life relative to delivering a ministry, changing people’s lives, something that would impact so many for so long—that he had to make choices and decisions, as well, from the highest to the lowest. And he did that. And he was building his consciousness on a rock, just as he later taught shortly after having gone through that process. And it was the idea that rather than allow the externals to be the basis of your choice—and that’s what all the temptations were, if you’ll read them and that passage—he wanted to allow only the voice of God within him to be the basis of his choices.

It was always going to be about remembering that he was a child of God, a son of God, and that whatever he did, and the choices that he made, were going to reflect that. That’s, again, a good indicator for us as we go through anything in life is to say, “My gosh, my golly, does this reflect the nature of the Divine in me? I, too, am a child of God, and what I’m being and how I’m choosing to be, and move in the direction I’m going in—does this reflect the fact that I, too, am a child of God?”

Jesus’ analogy where he was talking about, at the end of his Sermon on the Mount, the idea of building your house or your consciousness on a rock versus on sand. And that if you build it on sand and you’re a hearer only, that your house will fall—your consciousness will fall. And in some ways, I think that Jesus was really doing a parallel or a re-do of the story of Adam and Eve and the fall of man. Because it’s really, again, an allegory that has to do with the fallen consciousness—the fallen consciousness if from a state of one-ness into a state of separation. And that, basically, all of our spiritual growth has to do with saying no to all of the tendencies that are of mind, separate from God and apart from God, and moving back to a oneness with the Divine and a oneness with truth. That’s why if you shall know the truth, meaning live the truth, then it will set you free. That’s the path we’re all on.

If you look at the story of Adam and Eve, they were instructed—because they were given choice—to eat only of the tree of life because there was absolute only oneness with all that is of the nature of God and good. But there’s another tree over here that you want to stay away from

because it creates duality in your consciousness. And that's the tree of the knowledge of not only good, but less than good. And now less than good has found its way into occupying space in your own consciousness. Now you actually are potentially envisioning the worst, thinking about the worst, thinking about less than the good. All of those things are born of separation. So that's allegorically what takes place.

Now then, the journey after having made that choice, which was free will we're all given—and that's the story, the allegory—now the journey becomes one of finding our way back to aligning only with that which is of the nature of the Divine, where there is no lack. So, the fall is symbolically the separation. Until then, really, nothing was lacking, if you look at it. The tree of life, nothing was lacking. And a sense of separation from God is the only lack that you or I really need to correct—that belief and that livingness. And so, Jesus was saying there's always a choice, and we are to move in the direction of God or the light of truth.

Now, Jesus taught the atonement—which is, if you spread that word out, the atonement is at-onement. So, the answer for separation is oneness or atonement. And he introduced us to the Holy Spirit. Remember, when he left and departed, he said, “There will be the Holy Spirit that will come, that will remind you of the truth—everything that I have taught you, everything that I have said.” All of this truth, you will access. Only now it will be the voice of the Holy Spirit, which means it's the voice of intuition, if you want to call it, or the still, small voice of God. But, it's now a part of you, it's in you, it's not a voice outside of you, as me—the person walking the planet. Now, that voice is in you and will always be with you. That is the highest form of communication that exists to you.

We have lots of forms of communication in the world in which we live. There is the word of mouth, there is Twitter, Facebook, Skype, cell phones, snail mail—all those good things. But nothing, nothing can measure up to the frequency and vibration of the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that takes you into wholeness. You see, it is that which always argues for oneness, the Holy Spirit, if you'll listen to it. It undoes all errors, uproots all of the sources of fear in our life, and it keeps us in a constant state of grace. Wherever the Holy Spirit is alive and well and vibrant, you are actually in grace—the grace of God. And so, it's all about escaping the darkness through the voice of the Holy Spirit. It's the restoration of all that God gave us. It's the restoration back to the tree of life. And the Holy Spirit wants to take you back and have you only partaking, only eating of, only allowing to thrive on, that which is of the nature of the Divine and of oneness.

You know, January, the month, was named after a Roman god, Janus. And it's an appropriate personification of the start of a new year because this Roman god, Janus, actually had two faces—one face that looked to the past, and one that looked to the future at the same time. And so, January, perhaps, can be a time where we say, “Okay, I'm going to look to the past enough to

be able to learn what needed to be learned, to make the choices that need to be made new, and now I'm going to align with the one that is looking forward and onward and upward." That's where we need to establish our intentions to do better, be better.

Transformation, as I say, is always an inside job—everything moves from center to circumference. Sometimes we look at and around the world or at people to try and analyze and perceive how it is that their transformation happened for them in their life. And, we often tend to look at things externally to get clues, and yet we forget that there's an organic, internal process that is always part of any transformation and development.

If you consider, for instance, an egg. We're all eggs—good eggs—but anyway, eggs. No one pays an egg much attention until one day the egg cracks. It cracks open and all of sudden, out comes a chicken. "My gosh, where did that come from?" Children love to see a chicken coming forth from an egg because it's a miracle. There's just this stagnant something, and all of a sudden something is pushing its way out, cracking, that's alive. It's a miracle. It's a stunning turnaround from this shell to a creature. It's almost as if the egg has gone into some kind of an overnight, miraculous metamorphosis that suddenly alters itself into a chicken. And yet, from the chicken's point of view, it's a different story. While looking at this dormant looking egg, all the while there was something happening inside of that shell. All the while, it was evolving, it was growing, it was developing, it was incubating. Something was happening, you see. Then the crack occurred in the egg, and we think, "Wow, that was it."

But that was just one step among many steps in its evolution and evolvment. And so, most of us tend to want an easy route. We want to look for the big deal, the big key. What's the key here in this, what's the single step that I would take? What is the shortcut here, what's the fast track that is the miraculous route? And in an egg, there is something that is happening that we can't see—and it isn't really able to even be measurable until all of a sudden there's the crack and there it is. And it has its right and perfect time.

For us, the measurement is actually to get a reading based on the evolution and the changing and the growth that is happening in us. The measurement is peace. The more you begin to feel a sense of peace and inner harmony—that nothing that happens out there can shake you. The wind can blow, the rain, the this, the that, and just as Jesus was saying—you're a rock. And that's the measurement, you see. There's something deliciously peaceful about really applying the spiritual practices, being a doer and not just a hearer.

There's a fellow named Dalton Roberts who discovered our teachings, new thought. He discovered them when he was in his forties, and he credits it to his personal and political success. He actually was a county executive in Tennessee for sixteen years. He talks about his story about

how peaceful inside he has become by applying these teachings that we teach. But, he says it wasn't always like that. He said that if there was one word that described himself when he was in his twenties and thirties, and before he obtained these teachings and their application, the word would be unpeaceful. And he said things began to change in his forties when he became unemployed, freshly divorced, and found himself living in a one-room apartment. And he says, although it may sound complicated to go from constant inner turmoil to peace—for him, it was that simple. He states, "In one of the most aware and conscious moments of my life, I just turned my life over to God." He said, "I was an intellectual agnostic about much of religion's paraphernalia, but I had experienced some things that convinced me God could be real, and I based my commitment on that knowledge." He said, "Then I made a deal with God—the kind of deal that made me pay attention to God's activity in my life." It went like this, "If you will become real in my life, I will walk through any doors you open. And when one does not open, I will not try to force it. I won't knock the door down." And he said he started looking for these open doors everywhere in this sense that God was real, and God was in his life. He said, "When I hit a wall, I didn't try to install an entrance, and the daily communion brought a firm, firm realization of God's presence—that continually sense of looking for the doors to open, the opportunities, the continuum. And he states, "When we spend our days seeing and feeling the presence in our life, it brings guidance and peace. It brings the peace of knowing our commitment is being honored by God. How long can we not be peaceful when we find the communion of inner knowing."

One last thing that he said that I thought was powerful—he said, "Structure your spiritual practices to make your communion with your creator real, make it real." You know, it's not something that's stale and it's iffy, and it's just on Sundays, and it's just when I'm in trouble, but it's real and it's authentic on a regular basis—that's what works.

Renunciation is a spiritual word that gets tossed around a bit and it's a part of having a turnaround in your life, the word renunciation. But, it means to give up. It doesn't mean to quit and give up, it means to give up something—renunciation. It's the idea the same as letting go. The Christ is the word that we use to refer to the Divinity of God, of Jesus. Jesus was the man, and Christ was the Divinity that was in and expressing through Jesus. The Christ, therefore, is this Divinity that is in you and me. We all have Christ in us. As Paul the Apostle said, "Christ in you, your hope of glory." The mystery which has been hidden for ages and generations is Christ in you, you're hope of glory. So, Jesus was the man, he put on the Christ, and he asked us to do the same. He modeled it, he was an example of it—not the great exception, the model and example.

And so, it is like this chicken inside the egg—you can't see it, this Christ, but it's there. It's evolving and it's growing. Maybe bit by bit, a little step at a time here and there. And part of the

process is renunciation—it's the letting go of some things. You know, we all have our demons, we all have our devils, if you will. And you can interpret that from the Bible as being either a personification of something evil out there like a being, or you can think of the demons as being parts of our personality that need to be done away with—the demons of ego—e, g, o, edging God out.

In Luke 8, it refers to these as evil spirits. In the Old Testament, it talks about he had an evil spirit in him, referring to it as anger or hatred or bitterness or resentment. So, it can be some of these things that have to do with emotions and energy. However it is you want to think about it, there are those ideas and thoughts and beliefs that we have that are our demons that we have to renounce, renunciate. Whether they're fear or hate or prejudice or jealousy or anger or whatever they may be, we may know what our demons are. And, we are called to invite the Christ, the Divinity in us, to help and assist in this renunciation process—this giving up and letting go of any of these personality traits, these emotions, these ways.

Jesus, as you know, helped Mary Magdalene. In Luke 8, it states, "A certain woman which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils" or demons, whichever you choose. So we know that Jesus cast out seven demons out of this person known as Mary Magdalene. And the act of renunciation, then, or this happening, represents a letting go—that there was something that was being completely cleansed of Mary, as she once was. However you want to think of it or speak of it. But, the Christ had something to do with it. The Christ light, the Divinity, this something that was stirring in her. And so, this Christ light is helping to eliminate conditions of human stumbling blocks to your and my soul growth. Here we have this woman, Mary Magdalene, who was probably living a living death. And she was taught by the Christ a way to give up and let go and move into victorious living by releasing her demons, if you will. And, as a result, if you look at her life, it's really interesting. As a result, Mary Magdalene becomes one of Jesus' most faithful and devoted followers, going with him all the way to the foot of the cross—many who were not so inclined. She was the first to know that he was risen, and to report this to the disciples—Mary Magdalene. She was the one that was able to release the past idea of physical death and declare that he lives—he's still alive, he's still active, able to reach out to him and to speak to us. She sounds the word of truth that the relationship continues, and that separation is a lie. Tremendous, tremendous shift from where Mary Magdalene was to where she came as a result of renunciation—discarding her demons, thoughts, ideas, and beliefs that are not compatible with the Christ in us.

All of that I share with you now, and some questions that it's important to ask as we reflect in going forward. If you're going to be on the quest, you ask questions. And so, one of them would be, "What did I learn?" If you look at this past year and even journal some of this stuff, "What did I learn? What awarenesses, insights, upside, downside, what did I accomplish?" And by that,

we're not beating ourselves up if we don't accomplish a lot, but "What strides did I make—know what they were? What would I have done differently?" Look at various aspects of your life. What would you have done differently, why? Be able to communicate that to yourself. "What did I complete?" In other words, "What did I complete, what did I release, what did I have closure on in my life that I needed to make closure on that was maybe a sore spot in me—or what still feels incomplete and is still calling for closure?" Some good things to be conscious, aware of. "What were the most significant events of the year? What do I feel especially good about? What were the fun things I did?" Important. "What were the biggest challenges and roadblocks and difficulties? How am I different this year from last year?" And then, "What am I especially grateful for?" Very important.

I want to close our sharing this morning by sharing with you a recipe for a happy new year. So, those of you that cook in the kitchen of life, you might want to take down this recipe. It goes like this—take twelve, fine, full-grown months. See that these are thoroughly free from old memories, of bitterness, rancor, and hate. Cleanse them completely from every clinging spite. Pick off all specks of pettiness and littleness. In short, see that these months are freed from all the past. Have them fresh and clean from when they first came from the great storehouse of time. Cut these months into thirty or thirty-one equal parts. Do not attempt to make up the whole batch at one time, but prepare one day at a time. Into each day, put equal parts faith, patience, courage, love, hope, liberality, kindness, prayer, meditation, rest, and one well-selected resolution. Put in about one teaspoon full of good spirits, a dash of fun, a pinch of folly, a sprinkling of play, and a heaping cup of good humor, and you will have a great new year in the making.

So, in conclusion, be a doer of the teachings, build your house of consciousness on the rock of truth, turn it over to God, move toward the light, practice the presence open to the Holy Spirit, allow peace to come in, ask yourself the right questions so you're on the quest, and live this recipe for a new life in the new year. God bless you all.