



Unity Church of Christianity
Our Place in This World
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So there was this fellow who was having a conversation with God. And he was kind of having a prayer with God, and he says to God, “So far today, God, I have done all right. I have not gossiped, and I have not lost my temper. I have not been grumpy or nasty or selfish, and I am really glad of that. But in a few minutes, God, I am getting out of bed.” (laughter) “And from then on, I probably am really going to need a lot of your help.” (laughter) That may characterize some of us on various days, depending on which side of the bed we are getting out of. I do not know.

It has been said that one of the most often asked questions about life is the one about what is our purpose? What is my purpose in life? Why am I here? What is it that would give my life meaning and purpose? And it seems that if we find the answer to that question or some semblance of the answer that basically we should be inclined to keep that in front of us on an

ongoing basis, to be mindful of it so that we keep looking to what that is that I am wanting to live from that makes my life meaningful and purposeful.

Jesus, our great teacher and way-shower had some things to say about this that we should take note of. He said things like, “Be a light in the world. Let your light shine. Do not hide it.” So that certainly fits in terms of our purpose and meaningfulness, being a light and all that that may mean. He also said to live the commandments. He told us to live those commandments. He also emphasized extensively that in this life we are to seek ye first the kingdom. Seek ye first the kingdom. And then he went on to share all kinds of explanations and teachings and metaphors and parables and really spent a lot of time wanting to help us understand what this kingdom was about. And so we should not miss that. We should, it would seem to me, realize how important it was to him and therefore how important it should be to us as to what he was trying to convey. He said that we are to put it first among all things and that these other things would be secondary. Other things would flow into your life, but first and foremost you need to be thinking about and pursuing and creating this kingdom, being a part of it. And he pretty much said that it was not a place, this kingdom. He said it does not come with observation. You have heard that. He said it is not something where you say, “Oh, oh, it is over here,” or “Oh, oh, it is over there,” or you could point to it. But the kingdom of God is within you—within you—and that distinction he made. And Jesus then went on to teach that this kingdom consciousness is one that flows into you and flows into your consciousness, your awareness, your being, through the Spirit of God and that that Spirit of God shows up in you in various ways, energies, vibrations that are of the nature of love and forgiveness and understanding and faith and peace and joy and oneness and truth and goodness. These are all energies and attributes, and God is in all of these things, God’s vibration is in all of these things, and God’s kingdom is in these or in us. In fact, the God seed of this kingdom lives in us. There is the seed of God, the blueprint of God, the divine self, the God self—however you wish to speak of it—the Christ self that lives in us much as a mighty oak lives within an acorn. It already exists, but there has to be a process of development that takes place in order to get from an acorn to a mighty oak. But yet at the moment that it is an acorn it is also a mighty oak. And at this very moment there is so much more to you that you may not know that is wanting to be birthed, unfolded, expressed, and experienced. But there is a process of development that we have to go through, each one of us, to experience and bring forth the God seed, the divine blueprint that is in us. Paul referred to it as the Christ in you, your hope of glory. There is this image and likeness. We can call it the divinity of man that is within every person.

And so we can accelerate that process through the purity of our intentions. We have intentions all the time in terms of how we are going to steer our way through this life each day. And Jesus said that it is most important that our first intention in living this life is to be about hungering and thirsting after a conscious connection to our source, to our creator, and that everything else is secondary. And that is why he was saying seek ye first this kingdom, seek ye first this connection, seek ye first this relationship.

Now we live in a finite world, and it is important for you to distinguish the world you live in from other realms. And this realm that we live in is a finite world. It is a world of matter. It is a world of objects, a subjective world, things that can be measured, have a beginning and an end, subject to change. But we are invited into a relationship, a conscious connection, with the infinite. And God is infinite, and that is what we are invited into—from the finite into the infinite. And the world of the infinite exists beyond the world of the finite which we live in. And so we have to make choices and we have to make decisions as we move through this life as to how attached we are going to be or how attached we are going to become to this finite world, this temporal world, and if it is going to dominate our attention and our focus and to what extent or if we will be able to integrate the two because yes, we live in a finite world, we live in a three-dimensional world, yet there is the realm of the infinite, and we have to have an ability to integrate and to have each have its place as we move through this experience called life. The finite world will lie to us. It will feed us all kinds of illusions about where happiness lies. The finite world will say, “Oh, over here is happiness,” or, “Over there is happiness,” and we will go off after it. And yet we find out that it is not lasting; it is temporal because the finite world is temporal, and we are here to understand and learn that, that first and foremost is the infinite. That is what we have to have on the top of our list in everything that we are to be about. And so in this finite world we will go after the finite, and we will maybe even get it. And then we lose it, and then we have pain and suffering and so forth around that because things come and go. They are temporal. But in the world of the infinite whatever we gain, whatever we achieve, whatever we awaken to, they carry eternal qualities. They are with us. No one can take them away. They have a sense of permanency. They are within us. They are something that is being built internally, not externally. They are eternal truths that transcend the finite, and they are otherworldly, if you will. And so Jesus referred to this as the kingdom of God. The infinite offers then a state of being that carries with it a sense of peace and strength that no matter what it is that you can encounter in this finite world that is shifting and changing, it cannot be taken away from you—that peace and that strength—because it is founded on a truth that also is attached to the infinite.

In the gospel of John, Chapter 18, we have the experience where Pilate is trying to decide what to do with Jesus, to determine what it is that he has done wrong and what it is that should be his punishment. And so Pilate is in the palace, and he summons for Jesus to be brought, and when he is there he asks Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?" And Jesus's response was, "My kingdom is not of this world." That is really significant to begin with. "My kingdom is not of this world," this finite world. He said, "If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews." In other words, "If it was about an outer kingdom, there would be people in battle right now, and I would have them be about that. But that is not what I am up to. Now my kingdom is from another place," he said. And then Pilate said to him, "Okay, so are you a king?" And Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. The reason I was born and the reason I came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." So here is Jesus telling us, "Here is my purpose. Here is my reason. Here is what makes my life full and complete is that the reason I am born and the reason I came here is to testify to the truth, and basically, everyone on the side of truth listens to me." And so we can right there ask ourselves, are we on the side of truth? Do we listen to that? Do we listen to the truth on a regular basis as we go through our day, as we go through our life? Because that puts us on purpose with what Christ Jesus was trying to tell us to be on purpose with.

So earlier we pointed out that Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom." Now he is saying, "My kingdom is not of this world." He seems to be saying, sort of, "Be in this world but not of it." He seems to be saying that there is a way of being in the world but not attached, that attachment is not good. Attachment in various ways and shapes and forms leads to our pain and suffering and what have you. And so we are asked to adopt the kingdom that Jesus taught and spoke of and yet it is not of this world. And so does that mean that we have to leave this world in order to experience the kingdom, or that that kingdom is achievable in this life and it is achievable by rising in consciousness, rising beyond our attachments, rising beyond all our outer desires to a certain extent, our slavery to the objective and finite world and moving our pursuits to a realm that is beyond that which, as Jesus said, moth and rust doth consume? And so we know that there is that something more that is beyond the finite that we are calling the infinite, the realm of the formless, that we are to move in the direction of. And it seems like that is a dimension of the kingdom that he was talking about. He taught us to pray that the kingdom could be brought to earth, and he taught us to pray the Lord's Prayer. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." So it can be on earth just as it is in heaven, but it requires decisions, it requires a willingness to follow thy will, not my will, not my way, that there is a listening, there is a voice, there is an intuition, there is a connecting in this kingdom that is beyond the external, this kingdom of another kind of world that he is trying to explain to us. So it is not limited to

one locality, and it is omnipresent everywhere. And maybe not everyone gets to experience it. We move in and out of it, or at least some people are really intent and get there and experience dimensions of it. To others it is just not important, so how do you expect them to experience this kingdom which is created inside? So there is a confusion really that arises in whether the kingdom is within you or whether this kingdom is of another world beyond this one. And we are hearing messages about both. And so perhaps it is not either-or; perhaps it is both. We know that there is a world, if not worlds, that exist beyond this one where we live for a time in the physical form. Over a billion people believe that we lived before we came into this life. So where were we then? Of course that is a matter for another day. (laughter)

But today we want to realize that of course there is a world beyond this one. We could ask, “Well, what are angels?” They are beings that are from other realms, and no one disputes through centuries of time that there are beings that manifest and disappear, manifest and disappear, stories on end. And so we know there is another world, other realms, beyond this one that we see. And spiritual seers have spoken of the idea that there are many worlds, that one graduates spiritually into higher dimensions as one grows spiritually and that eventually one moves from world to world as they graduate in consciousness until they reach the ultimate, referred to as the kingdom of heaven—absolute oneness with God. But to think that we live this one life and people have so many varied consciousnesses and that suddenly there is just a line cut off somewhere where one goes to that awful place and one goes to heaven does not make sense and to think that there are possibly other dimensions that we graduate to because we take ourselves with us. Whatever level of growth we have established, whatever kingdom we have created or how close or far away it is, that is the grade level we are at. Jesus said, “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” What he was saying is there are many dimensions. “In my Father’s house there are many rooms,” is another interpretation of that. There are many rooms, not just one. And we have oftentimes been misled. We must not ignore the many things that he said that hinted toward giving us some clarity around some of this.

So at the same time we have to deal with one life at a time and where we find ourselves. And so Jesus dealt with the present. He dealt with life in the here and now and what it is that one does with it. Where is your focus? Because what you do with that life in terms of the internal is what you take with you. He attempted to establish this high degree of importance around one’s relationship with God and that we are to build a relationship with God. And the metaphor for building that relationship was the building and creation of a kingdom. He called that a kingdom. And you are to experience this kingdom, and it is within you. And whether a person’s concept of God, which is very important—your concept of God—and whether your concept of God is one

of a man standing off in the sky somewhere issuing punishment versus good and what have you or whether you have a concept of God as absolute love, omnipresent, everywhere present Spirit, it matters not what your concept is; you must learn to know him. That is everything. And as you come to learn to know him and actually enter into relationship, you will graduate out of the idea that God is separate and apart and a man somewhere in the sky, and you will feel his Spirit, and you will know that God is Spirit and that you worship him in Spirit and therefore in truth.

We are to come to the place where there is an influence, this relationship has influence on everything in our life and that somehow there is no way we can do without him and this presence, this divine intelligence, that we take this presence with us in dealing with our jobs, our careers, our desires, our relationships, the tests and challenges we face in life, large or small, that we make this connection that Jesus was offering, suggesting, and teaching. And so the whole idea is to know God, experience God. We can attend lectures and we can read about God and we can call him the infinite, we can call him omnipresent, we can call him all-knowing and all-merciful, but these things only satisfy the intellect. There is nothing intimate about that. So we can conceive of the divine and as we do, it should not be something that we just call forth daily but hourly and even momentarily, that that is what we are to grow towards, where it is something that is compelling in our life, so compelling that it is a driving force in every area of our life.

Your religion should be first about assisting people and encouraging people in having their own firsthand experience of God, the Spirit of God, helping them have that. Secondly, maybe they can be about a body of beliefs and tenets and dogmas. But if everyone had the experience of their connection to God and if everyone tasted of the kingdom of their daily bread, then we would really have fewer denominations and sects and breaking off into other groups because what that tells me is no one is really having the real experience. They just keep searching for it, and they keep dissecting by basis of what the mind is telling them, that it is this or it is that. And we just separate more and more, whereas if we say that God is a universal God, then there is a universal experience that all of us can have. And as we begin to have that experience, we know there is no distance between us; there is only oneness, and there is much, much less going on that would separate us from one another.

There is a passage in Luke 16 where Jesus said, “No servant can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other or become attached to one and despise the other. But you cannot serve both God and mammon,” meaning you cannot serve both God and materiality. And so also in Matthew 19 he had a man come to him, to Jesus, and ask, “Good master, what good things must I do to have eternal life?” And first off Jesus took issue with him being called good.

He said, “No, no, no. Do not call me good. There is only one who is good. That is God. Okay? Let us get that straight. So do not fluff me up.” And then he went on to say, “The way to have eternal life is to keep the commandments.” And this young man said, “Well, which ones?” And then Jesus rattled off a list of the Ten Commandments. And the man said, “I have done all of these. What do I still lack?” And that is when Jesus said, “Well, to be perfect, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.” And interestingly enough, “Then you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me.” That is the order. But when the young man heard this, he went away sad because he had great possessions, as the story goes. And then Jesus turned to the disciples, and he says to them, “I tell you truly, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle.” He was just giving them a metaphor of how difficult it is. He was not coming down hard on the guy. He was just saying, “This is really hard and difficult.” So he begins by saying, “You must learn that you cannot serve two masters.” That is part of your spiritual path. Serve God alone. Seek ye first. Not God and mammon—God. Then he says, “Truly, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.” Why? Because we are attached to things. Why? Because we are so focused on the finite, the objective world. It pulls at us. It is not that it is bad to be prosperous. It is not bad to be wealthy by any means. It is just that it should not be at the expense of taking away your thirst for God, and it should not be at the expense of making it and things external to you a god. It is not about becoming a slave to the external world and the external life. The only evil that there is is our tendency to attach to whatever it is that we want to attach to.

There is a passage in Luke 12. Someone in the crowd came up to Jesus and said, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” And Jesus says, “Man, who appointed me as judge and arbiter between you?” They still had these problems back then—wills and estates and everything else. And so Jesus then said, “Who appointed me?” But then he said, “Take care. Be aware of greed, for a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of things he possesses.” He is being really clear. And then he went on to tell a parable. He said, “The ground of a certain rich man produced plentifully.” In other words, he was a farmer. “And he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do because I have no place to store my crops?’ And then he thought, ‘I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones.’ And then he thought, ‘I will store all my grain and all my goods in these new ones, and I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have plenty of goods laid up for many years. Take life easy. Eat, drink, and be merry.’ But God said to the man,”—we are still in this parable—“‘You fool. This very night your soul will be called. Then to whom will those things that you have provided and worked for belong?’ So it will be with anyone that stores up treasures for himself but is not rich toward God.” And I want you to really put italics

around *rich with God*. That is what we are being asked. The whole thing, everything we are talking about, all that Jesus was talking about to make that distinction is putting God first is to be rich with God, not at the expense of slaving to become rich in a finite world. I wonder how many of us here and how many in the world are working much toward filling our barns and tearing down barns and building up bigger barns and accumulating enough goods for enough years so that one can take life easy, eat, drink, and be merry. To all of us who think that way, God says, “You fool. The point your life was supposed to be about was storing up treasures in heaven, this kingdom.”

And Jesus spoke to that in the Sermon on the Mount. He said, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust consume, but lay up treasures in heaven. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” So the only true property that a person can own is that which can be taken with him in leaving this world. And that true property is nothing that the body really can use. It has everything that the soul can use: love and forgiveness and kindness and faith and truth and goodness, spiritual qualities. What we own in consciousness is what we take with us. We forget that because we get lost in this world and measuring ourselves, and the voice of ego calls us instead of the voice of Spirit, and we have to determine which ones we are listening to. So basically, you want to be rich toward God and have that which no one can ever take away from you because it is within you. It is a kingdom you built within yourself and you move forward. And so I believe that it is true, that when we step into this next world, no one will be asked what position they held, what company they worked for, what they had accumulated on earth or whether they were a prince or a pauper. Prince or pauper, there are things to be learned in both domains.

So our purpose here on earth is to learn and demonstrate spiritual virtues, cultivate treasures. So I invite y’all to keep looking at what it is that you may be attached to and the way that you may be positioning yourselves in the world, what it is that you make so important that you even make and go through agony, that you are a slave to at times, and how it is that you could become rich in and rich toward God, the treasures of heaven that are to be built up. There is a book by Arthur Abell titled *Talks with Great Composers*, and he shares how at least one composer was quoted as saying, “I always contemplate my oneness with the creator before commencing to compose. I immediately feel vibrations that fill my whole being.” Emerson said, “When we have broken with the God of tradition and ceased from the God of the intellect, then God fires us with his presence.” We are all composers. We are composing our lives. May we pause often to contemplate our oneness with the creator, the Spirit of the infinite, and feel the fires of his

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presence putting us on purpose and giving our lives new meaning. Go be a light in the world.
God bless you.