



Unity Church of Christianity
Christ's Formula for Happiness
April 18, 2010

Howard Caesar

I think that most of us sit up and take notice when the possibility is offered to us around getting answers and insight and clarification to those wonderful questions that we ask down through time and have been asked again and again through the ages, questions like, “Why am I here?” and “What is my purpose?” and “How can I be more on purpose?” and “What is really, really important in this life?” and “What can make it more meaningful?” and “What is the way to greatest happiness and fulfillment?”—all these kinds of questions. And they are great questions. And the answers do exist, by the way. We should keep asking those questions, and when we have some semblance of suitable answers that we feel at a deep level of our own being that we resonate with and, “Yes, that is why I am here and that is what it is about,” then I think we should keep those answers in front of us in some way with some level of consistency so that we actually are entering each day and entering our life launching from whatever degree of awareness we are getting in answer to those questions.

So there are answers to all of these questions, and I think that all of us fall in different categories, or all the people on the planet fall in different categories as to where they are in terms of relationship to those questions and to the answers to those questions and to the degree that they are living those answers to those questions.

And so I kind of played around with that a little bit and came up with some of the categories that we might fall into or people may fall into. One of them is that which is the person who has really never been told or never really been exposed to the answers to those questions in any way. They maybe grew up in a family that did not have any spiritual path whatsoever. Maybe there was not any coordination toward it, maybe no speaking of even philosophy or approach or betterment in life. Maybe there was little or no education there. They just were not exposed to it. And yet even knowing that, I believe that on some level we all know the answers to these questions on some level of our being within us that the Spirit speaks.

The second category would be it is available to people. Certain people have heard it and learned of it, but the person was not ready at the time, and so it was not important to them. And so they were preoccupied with other things in their life that had a hold of their attention and their focus. People had other agendas that they were working on. And so they just were not ready to walk the path of spirituality whereby they were really focused on the answers to these questions and living from them.

Another category might be the person who has heard some of the answers and they just kind of maybe ignored them or they rationalized them away or they forgot them rather quickly, and they kind of fall by the wayside, very much like Jesus's parable where he talked about the parable of the sower sowing seeds and that some of the seeds fell on rocky places and some in very shallow soil and some among weeds of distraction and what have you. And so it never got rooted. And so I think that qualifies for certain people as well. They have heard some of these ideas, and then they just kind of fall by the wayside.

Another category is the person who is really willing and wanting to learn, but the answers have not been perfected yet. Many of us fall into that category too. We are a work in progress. We are trying to live more fully and be invested in getting clear and applying what would be the truths that resound from answers to these questions.

And the final category would probably be those who, to whatever extent, have learned the answers and are fully engaged. They are really into the application. They are fully alive with living this and demonstrating what it is they have come to learn. They have it in front of them, and it is in their awareness. That is where they function from.

Maybe you saw which category you are in. You can maybe get some insight. Maybe you float in and out of a couple. It is not to judge yourself in any way other than to just be aware. "Huh, I am kind of here," or "I am kind of there," or "This would categorize myself." But suffice it to say that today with the amount of time that we have, there is no way we can bring exposure to the answers to all of those questions that we began with. But I think we can make a dent in it, to some extent.

The answers, you see, all really do exist in the teachings of Jesus Christ. He covered all of those questions and gave answers. It is not the only place that the answers can be found because some of these answers are universal in nature. But you can be sure that within the context of this great teacher and way-shower, Jesus Christ, that he covered the gamut in terms of being and bringing clarity to the answers to those questions that have gone down through the ages. They were covered, I assure you. And with a thorough study and reading, you will see that and find that.

Unfortunately, not everyone has really come to understand everything that Jesus was saying. They have misinterpreted certain aspects of it. He came to deliver something that was new and deeper than what had been known up to that point in time. Sadducees, Pharisees, various other of the structured religion did not necessarily understand all of what he was saying. We know this. His method and approach was to teach with parables and metaphors and symbology of various kinds. And so sometimes in the interpretation of that it was not always fully and completely understood.

But one of the things that we must understand about Jesus was that he held—this is very, very important—he held every man, every woman, and every child—whatever it was their walk of life—he held them to be sacred, and he held them to be creations of God. The way that you look and see and hold another person is very, very important; that any individual is never beyond hope and that what we should see in another is always that we are all brothers and sisters, that there is a family of humanity that we are all part of. There is not just some select few that is our family; there is this universal family and that we are to really recognize and come to understand and grow into that. So it is not just one household, one tribe, one nation, one political party, one church, one religion. All people are of one family and are one in God. Whether they realize it or not, that is the truth.

And from that premise that we are all one and one family under God, if you will, one of the big teachings that Jesus taught was we are not to judge, for whatever reason, anyone to be inferior or less than us, that people are in various stages of enfoldment, going through various experiences in life, and it is not ever for us to judge another as being less or inferior, no matter what their position, no matter what their walk of life, their level of education, their intelligence, their physical beauty, their age, their degree of success, because they think differently than we. That is not where we are to be. There should be nothing that gets in the way like that. The awareness that we are all one is one of the realizations or revelations to the kind of love that he spoke to, that we were supposed to live, and that is one of the reasons and purposes for us to be in the world is to actually gain a way of looking at the world in which nothing emerges but love. Now, that is not easy because we are not there, but that is one of the goals.

And so therefore, the way that that was emphasized, of course, was through the passage that you have all heard and read and learned of, which is in Matthew 22 in which we find Jesus. He

dazzled the Sadducees with his wisdom and his knowledge and kind of awed them and, as the scripture says in this passage, he silenced the Sadducees. And when the Pharisees heard about that, they said, "Oh, no, he is not so smart. We can outfox him." And so they got together and they went and approached him, and they were putting him to the test, and they asked him the question seeking to outfox him, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?" And Jesus's reply was of course real immediate and quick: "To love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind." And he said that, "This is the first and the greatest commandment. And then the second is like it." We must never forget what he was saying there. "The second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself. And on these two commandments hang all of the law and the prophets." Anything that anyone has ever said through all the ages on that hangs all the law and all the prophets and all the words, all the verbiage, all the doctrine, all the dogma. That is where it all hangs. That is how important it is. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, your mind and soul. So that is something certainly to keep in front of oneself as they launch into any endeavor, any day, any way of showing up in this life. It is one of the goals. So when he said, "To love your neighbor as yourself," as neighbor he was not referring to the guy that is one driveway over. He was referring to humanity, and that is the way he spoke of it. And Jesus wanted there to be no mistake about it, no misunderstanding about the love of God. He said that, "The second commandment is like unto the first." Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul. Love your neighbor as yourself. It is kind of like ice cream. Ice cream can come in different flavors, but ice cream is ice cream. If you change the flavor, it is still ice cream. (thunder rumbles) Thank you, God. (laughter) Yes. Somehow thunder has a way of good timing. (laughter)

Again he was saying that loving your neighbor is loving God really. And so the second is love your neighbor as yourself, but it is a close second. Or they really are blended together. They are one in the same in that it is not possible to truly love God without loving your neighbor or to love your neighbor without loving God. And also, all that you do against your neighbor in a sense you do against God and all that you do for your neighbor you do for and with and of God. And this is kind of what he was trying to get across. And that is why Jesus makes it so important in what one does for their neighbor or for humanity—your expanded family, all brothers and sisters—we are all one. Jesus taught in numerous ways to love one another and do unto others as you would want them to do unto you. These are simple ideas, but we vary in terms of how well we are doing on them.

So he taught in numerous ways about the importance of serving each other and doing good for each other. And he taught what were the dos and the don'ts of how to do these good deeds and to serve one another and to serve humanity. He said things like in Matthew 6, "Be careful that our good deeds are not done simply to be seen." It is not about, "Look at me. Look how wonderful I am. Look at what a great, kind person I am. I am deserving of praise." The motivation should always be simply, "I am doing this because this is the love of God. This is

Unity Church of Christianity
Christ's Formula for Happiness
April 18, 2010
Page 5

what I am, and I am not looking for praise.” And so it is for the love of God and all of God’s creation as brothers and sisters and family.

In Luke 14 is an interesting passage because Jesus says, “When you are giving a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite friends—your brothers or your relatives or your rich neighbors. But when you give a feast,” he said, “invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.” And he says, “And you will be blessed because they cannot repay you.” Interesting. So giving and serving is not about winning approval, it is not about ulterior motives, it is not about getting some kind of future payback, some calculated something as to why you are issuing good. You are doing it simply because you love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and soul, and that is the nature of God in you. And you are moving through and into that sense of consciousness.

We have all heard the word *charity*. Charity is a great word, and usually we think of it in terms of money and giving money, and certainly that is one aspect and actually Jesus speaks to and addresses that. But there is another form of charity that he talks about, and it would be categorized as moral charity. And moral charity is other kinds and forms of giving beyond something material or of money. It has more to do with a kind of behavior, a way of showing up and a way of being in the world that is a contribution. So it is not about how much you have or that you can give, necessarily. If you have a lot to give, then you are meant to give because God has blessed you, certainly. But all of us have been given the capacity to give in this moral kind of charity. Both have to do with helping and serving our fellow man.

There is a parable or a passage that is found in Matthew 25, and it has often been used to scare people. I am not sharing it with you to scare you because it has to do with the final judgment or what has been labeled the final judgment. And understand again that some of the things that Jesus spoke about had to do with elements of metaphor and symbology and what have you. So if you want to take it in its entirety literally, you can. Or you can take the bottom line message, which I hope to make clear to you. But this is the passage where he is talking about, “There are those who are being judged or evaluated. There will be those,” he says, “who are to be blessed of the Father and are to receive their inheritance that was prepared for you since the foundation of the world. And to those is said,”—as the story in the passage or the parable goes—“for I was hungry and you gave me food.” Remember this passage now? “And I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. And I was a stranger and you invited me in. And I was naked and you clothed me. And I was sick and you visited me. And I was in prison and you came to see me. And the righteous will answer him, saying,”—meaning these people who did this—“Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you as a stranger and invite you in or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?” And the king will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’” Do you get that it is all one family? So everywhere you look, the opportunity to reach out, to help, to love, to bless is there. And then he goes to the others. Look out. Hang on. Buckle in. “There he will say to the others,

Unity Church of Christianity
Christ's Formula for Happiness
April 18, 2010
Page 6

'Depart from me, you who are cursed,'" and some other things that were very unappealing. (laughter) But essentially, the passage goes on to say, "Because all these same opportunities were presented to serve and to help, to give me drink, to cloth me, to visit me, to do all of that, and you did not do it." The passage states, "Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these you did not do for me."

Bottom line what we want to get from that is the one question implied in your evaluation at one's life's end. That question is, did charity get practiced? Did you enter into service of one's fellow man? Did you grasp the truth that everywhere you look you see family and not to judge whether you are happy about those people being family or those people not being family or whatever. The obvious indication from Jesus is that charity and humility are two virtues that lead to happiness—eternal happiness—and that one's greatest obstacles are the tendencies toward selfishness and pride. There is no denying it. It is in the scriptures. I am not making this up. I am not trying to be preachy; I am trying to be teachy—T-E-A-C-H. (laughter) So moral charity is something that can be practiced in a thousand ways. You do not have to have a lot. It can be practiced through one's thoughts, one's words, one's actions. It can be practiced through your prayers. It is a kind of kindness: sending a person a thought, sending a person words of encouragement, extending them. It is believing in a person when they are down, believing that they can change their life, that things can be transformed for them. It is entering perhaps a study group or a group of people where you are there to support others as they are there to support you. It is giving of yourself by being present and entering in to the experience. It is volunteering your time sometimes that is beyond self-interest. It is visiting a person in the hospital. It is blessing a beggar as opposed to being repelled by them, again not to judge but just to bless them wherever they currently are in consciousness. It is to ignore bad behavior, meaning not to match it. So bad behavior comes at you and not to move into that but to come from a loving place. It is to never despise your fellow beings. These are the things that are about moral charity and things like it, knowing that we are all brothers and sisters. All those who truly want to be useful as human beings can truly find hundreds of ways in which to help, to serve, to reach out. All one has to do is look because there is really no one who cannot help someone, offer consolation, minimize physical or emotional pain and suffering, do something that is useful.

We have Unity Friends, which is about our prayer ministry. People take a training to learn to be able to pray with individuals, and then they call people who are in their homes and call and check and see if there is any prayer support they can be to them. We have one gentleman who has been doing that a lot of years and now, physically, he is not able to get to church. He is not able to participate, and so he has asked to take on more. This fellow is 80 some years old. Maybe some of you are being called by him. He asked to take on more. So where typically you call 20 people each month and check on them, he has got something like 60. So here is a person that, "No matter what the condition is, there is a way that I can find to reach out and make a difference here in some way and give of that kind of love and that kind of charity." And it is having that kind of willingness to look and to see that that possibility exists for all of us.

In scripture the word *charity* actually was used interchangeably with the word *love*. I have translations of Bibles in which the word *charity* is used where you see it as *love* in other translations. I know I have read several Bibles that have the word *charity* for Paul's treatise on love in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13, the one that we are all familiar with: "If I speak in the tongues of men and angels and have no charity, I am becoming as a noisy gong or a clanging symbol. And if I have the gift of prophecy and understand all the mysteries and all knowledge, and if I am able to have faith so as to move mountains but have no charity, I am nothing. These three: faith, hope, charity. The greatest of these is charity." And it is talking about love but a kind of love, and it uses that term *charity*, which is interesting.

I have found that people who are doers of good deeds are people who are happy. They are engaged. They feel like they are making a contribution, and they somehow are able to rise above sometimes the externals and the difficulties. They are likable. They are healthy-minded. They are fulfilled people. There is a happiness in their heart. There is a connectedness because what they are doing is not about winning praise; it is about doing God's business out of the love in heart, mind and soul; that that is what they are going for, and they have come to that place.

I remember so well when I was 20 years old and I found Unity Church for the first time. I got involved, and I just felt the love of God so much beyond what I had ever known. I became head usher. And so I am 20 years old, and I have a lot of other things that I could be drawn away by. I played baseball on Sundays, so I could have used the excuse, "I have got to go play baseball. I am on this team. Our games are on Sunday afternoon." In fact, I always missed batting practice or was late for it because we rented a Masonic lodge; we did not have our own church. So I had to get there two to three hours ahead and roll in racks of chairs and set up all the chairs and then bring in boxes full of the hymnals and unpack the hymnals and then put everything back again. We also had no bookstore, so we had to set up all the tables, unpack all the books, put them out, price them, everything. Every Sunday, up and down, I and a team did that. Now, I am not looking for praise; I am telling you that felt so good. The friendships that were gained around the team doing it together are friends that I still hold dear in my heart, that I never would have known otherwise. I go back to that time in my life. I had not had the tremors of becoming a minister yet, so it was not like, "I am doing all of this because I am going to be a minister anyway," or something. That was the things that led up to it. But the truth is you do not need the title. Every one of us is a minister, and that is what you need to know also. We are all here to minister unto each other, and that is what Jesus was saying.

I know many of you are volunteers, and you may volunteer in other places and aspects other than the church. Some of you may volunteer in the church, and I thank you if you are here in the church, and I thank you and acknowledge if you are volunteering in Big Brothers or some other organization or something where you are helping and making a difference in the world. But if you are not and you think that there is something inside that says, "I am a little bit selfish with

really being protective of all the free time I can have for pleasuring myself in terms of doing the things I want to do,” then maybe there is a way to be more fulfilled and on purpose to have somewhere where you consciously are choosing to give of yourself. And it is good if you can sacrifice a little bit, if it is not easy. It feels better; it really does. It is a fundamental virtue.

There is something here I found that is so neat. It is called *Soul Owner*. We are all a soul owner. We say a sole owner of this house or something. We are talking about soul—s-o-u-l—owner. And what this says just moved me to grab it and bring it. I just stumbled onto it yesterday. It says, “Philosophy? Let’s review your only true assets. You own your values, your integrity, your thoughts, your words, your actions, and therefore, your destiny. Question: Are you proud of what you own? What is your true net worth to the world and the people around you? Are you really rich, or do you just have money?” Interesting. Interesting.

So many relationships are borne of this. There is a known phenomenon that as people leave this world, in many instances they see people that they knew prior who had moved on already, and they start almost in conversation that that has happened. And so it has been said that those who have done good deeds and have helped the less fortunate and have been in service to others upon leaving this world often encounter a host of grateful spirits who are there to receive and welcome you in the love in which you have already extended to them earlier. Mystics and seers have spoken of this, and they have said, “If you could know the joy that is felt when on reaching the world beyond, you found those who you had given and served to.”

Jesus said, “The greatest among you is he who serves.” And then he said, “I am among you as he that serves.” Let us all be able to say, “I am among you as he/she that serves.” God bless you. Go be a light in the world.