



Unity Church of Christianity
Our Life Stories
May 30, 2010

Howard Caesar

I'd like to start you off with a question today, and the question is, How well do you know yourself? How well do you know yourself? And we're back to what is over the temple—know thyself—and the importance of it. One of the things that we stress here is that there is the self of you that God created and Paul talked about it as Christ in you, which is your hope of glory—the Christ self—the divine self. The God seed. The God DNA. That which is the Son-of-God self. The sacred self. That which is of the nature of God. It's inherent in you. It's the divine blueprint. Whether you're being that or not, it lives in you, and that's part of what spiritual awakening—spiritual growth—is about. You know, you are joining your will with the will of God and bringing that forth, so the question is, do you know that self, and how well do you know that self of you? That's very important. It's part of our growth—is to be about that. And conversely, how well do you know the self that you have created? Because there is a self that God created, and there is a self that you've created over the top of it, and over the top of it is the one that is full of different aspects of personality that carry with it certain limitations—fear, anger, a sense of separation, limitations, scarcity, envy, greed, victimhood—these various things that we slip into which are states of consciousness that are nowhere near indicative of your true nature as a Son-of-God self. Okay? So part of life, then, is understanding and knowing that self, when it's there, and recognizing there's another self that's wanting to emerge. And recognizing enough in moments of time, "Wow—that's not me! I want to move and rise up and be the self I know that inherently I am, and that I'm called to be," and that's a big part of the path of life itself. That's

what we're on. It's a matter of basically knowing both of those selves, and when you're in which one, and what to do about it. The thing that's most important is to feed the one that is the Son-of-God self, and to starve the other, and that's a process really of purification really then. And so we want to feed this larger Christ self, this sacred self, and allow it to become dominant in our life, and also, to consistently—more often—step into remembering, that's who I am. What does it feel like? What are the energies of that? What's the frequency? How great it feels to be a loving being. How great it feels to let the light of God shine through, no matter what the circumstance, no matter what it is, to bring forth the best in me, and to make that a pattern and to make that a consistent happening in my life. That is powerful.

Another realization that we must come to and understand is that our lives tell a story. You see, every day we are creating a story and it's our story, and it's our own unique story of this life that we are currently living. And you know, I do a lot of memorials and funerals, and basically at a memorial or a funeral, you meet with the family even if you knew the person well—or didn't—and you get a feel for the eulogy, the eulogy being really about the person, about their life. It's their story. It's basically from when they were born and where they were born and what their interests were and what their personality was like, and all this, and contained within that, you get these stories of how this individual impacted people. There are anecdotes and stories of when this happened and when that happened, that stays with people, and it's like a legacy that is left because of the way that person showed up in various instances and aspects of other people's lives.

So you are creating a story and that story lives on, and the question is which does it reflect the most? Does it reflect this Son-of-God self, or does it reflect this ego self that edges God out? And so obviously, the goal is to be moving with growth and movement and shifts because there are people whose story in life is they went through a lot when they were young or they really got off into some sad, dark, off-base, separated stuff—got some bad habits or some bad this or that. Made some bad choices. But boy, did they make a comeback. Did they learn! There was movement in their life. So we're not here to condemn, we're not here to judge, we're here to really move from that self that is the separate self on into the self that is the Son-of-God self, the sacred self, the Christ self, your true self, however you wish to speak of it. All of those are synonymous and one together. But that's what really Jesus came to model. He's saying, "Heck, look at me, this is you, this is the real you, and if you will follow me, and be about that, that's a powerful thing." It's a matter of emerging from darkness on into the light. The light of becoming a light in the world. The more you step into the light, the more you realize your true identity is, "Ah, I am here to share light. I am here to be my true nature in any instance and any circumstance to somehow arrive at how can I be a light in this? How can I bring my best forward?" Jesus said and taught, "I am the light of the world." He said, "He who follows my example will not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life." Who would not want the light of life in their life?

We're talking about the light of God and the Son-of-God self, and they're really intertwined, because you can't be a light in the world unless you begin to identify with this part of you that is the Son-of-God self. The true you that carries the true nature of the divine. The self that God made that you may have covered over based on the experiences you went through and the decisions you made which are not accurate, and you weren't tuned in to wisdom and so decisions and choices were made that were not accurate. You got afraid. You got angry. You got upset. You felt less than. You started measuring. You started comparing. You started looking externally instead of resonating with this part of you that is like the child of us. At a very young age, we

just accept ourselves. We are in a whole other vibration as a child, a happy child, and so there is this Son-of-God self and actually, western Christian religion has tended to emphasize that there is one and only Son of God and that that was Jesus Christ. But that really contradicts what a number of people have said and taught, including the Apostle Paul, who said something else and taught something else. Because Paul said, "All who follow the spirit of God are sons of God." So whoever really opens up to being a vessel through which the activity of spirit is moving through them is expressing this part of them that is the Son-of-God self. It's beginning to emerge. And when you shut that down, stop listening, block it off, then yes, you become separate from your true nature.

But that's what Paul was saying. And he also said—this is Paul—he said, "The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we"—meaning all of us—"are children of God, and if children, then heirs. Heirs of God," he said, "and joint heirs with Christ." So every one of us, he is saying, is a joint heir with Christ, and if we are heirs with Christ, then we are also heirs of the Son-of-God self that lives in us. It doesn't mean we've achieved it. It doesn't mean we're expressing it, but that's what we must begin to believe is there, that lives in us, to look for it, uncover it, awaken it, and that's what really all the masters and mystics have said, by golly!

Now there's another source that supports this Son-of-God self, and it was basically in some of the writings that were left behind. We have the Bible that was a compilation of writings. Somebody didn't start and write the Bible from beginning to end as one writer. Hopefully, you all realize that there were many writers, and over many years and time periods, and that that was brought together at a council meeting in the fourth century—The Council of Nicaea in the fourth century—and so at this council, they decided what was going to be included and what wasn't, and there were some things that were not included that scholars have said are pretty powerful things and have some insights and could be very helpful. One of those—and I mean, there were things like the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, there is the Gospel of Thomas—and there are a whole host of these writings, and I referred just this morning only to the Gospel of Thomas, which is being read more often lately, in particular, and recognized for its content.

But in the Gospel of Thomas, Jesus is quoted, and he is quoted as saying this—it's very interesting as he's talking about the Kingdom—he said, quote, and this is Jesus talking: "If those who lead you say to you, see the Kingdom is in the sky, then the birds of the sky will precede you. And if they say--those who lead you--see it is in the sea, the Kingdom is in the sea, then the fish will precede you. Rather, the Kingdom of God is inside of you, and it is outside of you"—meaning it's everywhere present. There is no place where God is not. And he goes on to say, Jesus being quoted, "When you come to know yourselves, then you will become known." In other words, when you come to know the self of you that is truly you, you stand in a state of knowingness. And he goes on to say, "—and you will realize that it is you who are the sons of the living Father." And he concludes in this passage, "But if you will not know yourselves, you dwell in poverty, and it is you who are the poverty." So he's saying the poverty, people, that you will dwell in—is not the circumstances out there, but a physical kind of poverty. He's talking about a poverty of the spirit. You will be lacking the peace, the love, the joy, the harmony, the resonance of God. You will be poor in that. And those who have come to understand their self—their Son-of-God self—will be rich in the spirit. That's what he's saying, and that's what we're called to. So it's the importance of knowing yourselves—that you are all sons of the living Father as he says, and that will be reflected in your story.

The story you're living every day, that people will share down the road, and maybe are sharing now, they're telling about you—whether it's, "Yeah, my dad's this and that, and my mom's this and that, and we've been doing—"they're stories, they're all wonderful stories, you know? But you're helping to create and design those stories, and it's important to realize.

Mark Twain, you know, was the pen name for the wonderful author Samuel Clemens, and he is known for such wonderful classics as "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," "Adventures of Tom Sawyer," and so forth—an interesting thing about Mark Twain is that he wrote an uncensored autobiography, which is of course a life story, and he wrote it himself, and he tried dictating it—tried, rather—writing it by hand himself, gave up, and eventually dictated it—but what he did was he left strict instructions that his uncensored autobiography—uncensored—remain unpublished for 100 years after his death, and he insisted on that. And he died in April of 1910. We have passed that date now, and it is going to be coming out in November. Volume one. Volume one is 743 pages. There are 3 volumes. He wrote a big story, and the other volumes will be coming out over the next 5 years. In the autobiography, Mark Twain discusses his friends, his acquaintances, including criticisms and things. He talks about numerous topics including politics, God, all kinds of things. And now the thing that I'm getting to is that he died in 1910. In 1904, we know he was already working on his autobiography, because in 1910, he dictated a note—or shared a note to a friend—and here's what he said to him: "You will never know how much enjoyment you have lost until you get to dictating your autobiography." Isn't that an interesting insight? You will never know how much enjoyment you lost until you actually start to look at your story of your life and how much more enjoyment you could have had by the choices you made and didn't make. How much more of the Son-of-God self could have emerged that you somehow didn't get done in this moment—in that moment. Not to beat yourself over the head, not to have all kinds of regrets, but have the awareness, you know? You're creating a story, and so, realize our response to circumstances defines us. It's part of our story. You know, it defines and dictates the story that you and I are writing in terms of how we respond to the challenges, the hardships, the difficulties, the things that come along to face in life, and we all have them. And one of the reasons we all have them is to determine who's going to show up? The small self or the Son-of-God self? Is the best going to be brought forward in this situation, to be shown onto the world, to your friends, to your relatives, to be an example? To let the light shine? You're given that opportunity. It's always a choice.

You see, we each have our own set of circumstances and experiences in life, and they define our path in life. And so we have different economic circumstances. Some are rich, some are poor, some are somewhere in between. All have their own respective responsibilities, whatever that might be. Poor or rich, you have responsibilities. And there are different relational circumstances. Some have been married. Some have not. Some have been married more than once. Some have had a spouse die on them. I did a memorial this past week for a lady who—the love of her life died when she was pregnant with her first child, and she was in her late teens—and she never married again, lived to be 102. Was a widow for 80 plus years. That was a choice. That's her story. So, there isn't a right or wrong here. I'm saying, but we're creating our stories, whether it be economic, relational, some have children, some don't have children. Some have many, some have one. It's coworkers, friends, relatives—how close or far or distant you are from them—we have different health circumstances and some have experienced relatively good health most of their life, others have been in and out of sickness to some extent. Some have had threatening illnesses. Some have had disabilities they were born with. All kinds of different experiences relative to their physical health.

Others have had different challenges, much like going off to war. Some have come back without a limb or in various other disabilities along the way. Some have had car accidents or other kinds of accidents in which there's been some loss. So our circumstances are all different, each person's story—the highs and the lows—is the stuff that molds and shapes, really, who we are, our character, our spiritual character. Who's going to show up? In all of those instances, I've met courageous people who have been—who had—so much of life seemingly taken away and yet they are radiant because nothing will keep them from being that Son-of-God self, no matter what the condition is, you see. And then some others who have something that doesn't seem all that big, but yet it's right on their face every day, and it gets in the way of who they really are and their true nature. We're all different. We're all writing a different story, really, and our story is formed out of which self? Which self is it that shows up?

The man at the pool of Bethesda—he had a story. Remember that? And so here he is—he's in the shadows for 38 years—and he's waiting for an angel to stir the waters, and every time it stirs the waters, he is too late because he has an infirmity. He can't get there. He doesn't have the mobility, and so he has that difficulty, and he's telling Jesus his story of woe. He needs healing, but he's been in the shadows 38 years. That was his story and his life and his condition. So Jesus said to him—his response—he said, "Rise. Take up your bed and walk." Remember that line? And he was made whole. He was healed. And now that man's story became different, and everywhere he went, he talked about the story in which he had been in this condition and now he was able to rise and be made whole. He was telling people everywhere, and it got Jesus in trouble, because, you see, the authorities of that day heard that that healing had taken place on the Sabbath, so they called Jesus in and said, "What are you doing? What are you doing healing on the Sabbath?" And Jesus' response was, "My father is working still, and I am working." Beautiful. Beautiful! He's saying, "Hey, man, do you think God's work is over with?" You know, God is still working even now and he's working through me, even now, and I'm never gonna shut that down. There is no day that you shut that down. Very, very powerful, and it raises for all of us—can we come to the place where we say—oh, and also—here's the other thing—the next thing that happened is they all the more—according to scripture, wanted to kill him, it says—because not only had he broken the Sabbath, but now he had said that God was his Father. Making himself equal to God. But the thing that we have to come to be able to say is, that, "My Father God is still working, and so am I." We say that every day. "My father God is still working and so am I." In partnership. So everything that comes along that we are faced with—does it rise out of the shadows when the water stirs or the spirit stirs in you—do you respond? Do you rise up and give your absolute best that is called for in that moment in time? And so, we are invited to listen to that spirit, to rise up. And the conditions of our life story can either be something that takes us down or it can be really a springboard that helps us to align and bring forth the best that is in us. Every day we are creating our stories. Every day we are living from our stories. Sometimes we lock into a story of who we are or what happened in our life, but every day we also are leaving a legacy out of which stories will be told about us.

You know, in the Houston Chronicle, there was an article about—the title—it's all about graduation and high schoolers graduating, and it says "Every grad has a story," and so I read in there about Tyler Hanna, who's been living in an RV since Hurricane Ike destroyed his home; it takes him an hour to get to school in Galveston every day through a ferry and a bus that he's taking, he's one of the high in his class graduating. He's going to U of T. Imelda Medina from El Salvador—her younger brother had an eye cancer and is a survivor of it, caused her to now go toward becoming a pediatrician; she just happened to be in the family where she had a brother, younger brother, that survived that, and that's her story. That's how she went that direction.

Ermias—a person that goes to school right over here at Lee High School—was born in Ethiopia and both parents died in a car crash when he was 5. Then he was shipped out to Kenya, the slums of Kenya, where he lived for the next 10 years. And so now he is 15 years old and by a stroke of some luck an uncle got him to the U.S. at the earliest at 15, maybe 16, and so now he is graduating from high school, age 17 or 18, from the slums, and all of that he went through, he's graduating number 3, going to UT to study engineering. That's his story. He didn't let it get him down, do you see what I'm saying? There's something that would not lose hope. All was hope. Which is the story of Cindy Cline Flores's latest book—all about stories that don't lose hope—and there's always a possibility. There is always something that can emerge and that is wanting to emerge. It's simply knowing that. Another pupil is 90 percent deaf from age 2 because of a—what do you call it, when you heat up?—a fever—just had a block—simple word, but you know, it just happens. Anyway, that young man is going off to be a lawyer—and just stories on end like that, it's wonderful to see, and you and I have our stories.

One of the stories I want to tell you is Mary Manin Morrissey, my prayer partner—her mother recently died, and at the funeral, her son, Matt, which would be her mother's grandson—got up and told a story about Mary's mom, and it was about the fact that Mary's mom—when she was in her 80's—and she lived to 92 I believe it is—she took up china painting, and that's painting a cup and a plate and all that—it's pretty involved. She didn't know much about it. She went and took classes, studied it, and some projects could take almost a year. They're very tedious. And so she had done an eagle for somebody for a birthday, had worked long on it. She had another that was two birds on a branch, and this was something that really spoke to her—it was for herself, actually—and it had one bird on the branch sitting upright and strong, and the other one was upside-down, clinging to the branch, and it represented that when your life is sometimes—you know, it throws you upside-down—to remember there is another part of you that is standing erect and strong on that branch and is connected to that branch, to the vine. And it was very powerful and meaningful for her. Anyway, she also had this raccoon. She had been working on this raccoon, and she had been telling the family about it a bit, and so, anyway, months had been spent—Matt, the grandson, came over, and he was about, maybe—I don't know, 12—15—around that time—to visit her—and came up and saw this plate with this raccoon and went, "Oh, that's pretty!" and put his hands across it, and it just smudged the whole thing. It hadn't yet been fired, you know, and solidified, and the grandmother saw that—you know, months of work going up—and he said, he looked at her and he could tell there was some upset there—you know, the agony at first, and he said, "You know, but it didn't last." In a matter of moments, she smiled, and he said, "Oh, I'm so sorry, Grandma! I'm so sorry!" He felt terrible. And she eventually smiled and she said, "It's okay, Matt. Those things happen. I could have, and should have put a note on it, saying, 'Do Not Touch'." And he said she never told anyone that story. At family gatherings when they were around and they'd all tell funny stories about one another and things that happened or good stories, and that story—she never shared that—she always really protected his—she always had his back on that. Always respectful of not hurting and harming him in regard to that whole experience. And he said, "That fact, what happened there, and she never brought it up, she never really made me feel bad about it ever again—I never forgot that. I never forgot that, and I'm telling you now," because they had never, ever heard that story. It was very powerful.

My father, actually, was out fishing with my nephew, and my nephew was about 8 or 10 years old, and he was learning to fish, and so there was just the two of them in the boat and so he was learning to cast and he took it back and went—this way—and had caught my dad, and had caught him in the nose. So the hook penetrated right through his nose, almost took him out of the

boat, and, of course, you can imagine how he felt, the little boy, my nephew. And my dad never shouted, never said anything in pain, he just went, "Mnnnh!" and just comforted him. They went back to shore. They went into the house there—the little cottage we had—and they got a snippers and cut the hook to be able to get it out. But I just remember that in no way did he pounce all over him and say, "You dummy! Don't you know how to cast?! And you know I was there!" Nobody would—he just—would never do that. And there was that sense of really wanting to keep his calm, not scream out in pain, not worsen it in any way for my little nephew. Stories. Stories.

Someday people will be telling your story. What will be the legacy of the stories that characterize you? At some point, we all die. What remains is our stories. But we don't even want to talk about that. The fact of the matter is that life is made meaningful by virtue of the fact that you are creating every day, page by page, the stories that impact and serve as an example and a teaching to the people around you, to the youth. They remember. They step back and go, "That guy/that gal was amazing. You know, what I always remember about them is—" and they go on to tell something about the Son-of-God self in you. Let that be your story about the light of God that is in you. God bless you all.