

**The Samaritan Institute
at
The Sunshine Cathedral**

***Keep A True Lent**

A Six Week Course

*Course curriculum designed and prepared by
The Reverend Dr. Durrell Watkins. The course is based on some of the
topics covered in Charles Fillmore's book, *Keep A True Lent*

*"Here at the Sunshine Cathedral, we are
seekers and students of Truth, empowered
by Spirit, sharing the Light with the World"*

Sunshine Cathedral
is
A Metropolitan Community Church
Affiliated with The Center for Progressive Christianity

TSI is the educational arm of the Sunshine Cathedral

Rev. Dr. Durrell Watkins

Recommended Reading:

Keep A True Lent (Charles Fillmore, Unity Classic Library)

We will be discussing the following topics (one topic per week for six weeks): The Trinity, Prayer, Abundance, 12 Spiritual Powers, Blessings, and Reflection on Holy Week

Information about each topic will be provided from a variety of sources, though the theme and the name of the course, *Keep A True Lent*, are based on Charles Fillmore's book by the same name. To learn what Fillmore thought about these topics and others, read his book. You can look up some of his thoughts by reading the pages of his book indicated by the subjects below:

1. Tri-unity: Trinity, p. 14; God as absolute good, p. 9; Christ in You, pp. 24 & 144
2. Effective Prayer: Denials, p. 63; Affirmations, p. 71; Conscious & Subconscious Mind, p. 87
3. Divine Abundance, pp. 101 & 183
4. Twelve Spiritual Powers, p. 148
5. Blessings: Healing, p. 173; Peace, p. 175; Heaven, p. 176; Miracles, p. 178; Communion, p. 192; Atonement, p. 185
6. Reflecting on Holy Week: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, & Easter

Other topics of possible interest for your self-study which are also in Fillmore's book include: Love, Courage, Conscience, Faith, Life beyond death, and the book also includes daily reflections for Lent.

We will be spending Lent looking at these theological and spiritual topics to increase our knowledge, to expand our spiritual understanding and practice, and to keep our Lenten focus on communion with the Divine and on personal, spiritual growth.

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The Season of Lent

The Lenten season extends over a 46 day period beginning Ash Wednesday and ending on the eve of Easter. The six Sundays in Lent are not actually a part of Lent, and therefore the Lenten season itself is 40 days. Sunday, being weekly commemorations of the first Easter, have always been excluded from this fast[ing] season.

Lent developed from two sources. The first was a period of fasting which preceded Easter in the early church. At first, this period of fasting was held only on Saturday, the day before Easter, lasting until 3 AM Easter morning when the Eucharist was celebrated...Later this fast was extended to six days and eventually became separated into the events of Holy Week. Holy Week, then, is an older season than the entire Lenten season.

The second source for this season of Lent was the Baptism of candidates into the faith on the eve of Easter. Since the early church was an 'underground movement,' candidates were carefully screened, and there was a long period of preparation. The strictest part of this probationary period came...just before the time of Baptism. A fasting period of 40 days was required, the length of which was suggested by [Jesus'] fasting in the wilderness, Moses' fasting at Mt. Sinai, and Elijah's fasting on the way to the Mount of God - each 40 days. Eventually, this period of preparation for Baptism evolved into a general period of preparation for Easter to be observed by all Christians.

The word 'Lent' probably comes from the Anglo-Saxon 'lencten,' meaning spring, and the German 'Lenz,' meaning the time when the days lengthen.

[The final week of Lent is called Holy Week]. Thursday in Holy Week [aka 'Maundy Thursday'] is the anniversary of the institution of the Lord's Supper which was held the evening before the crucifixion. Maundy Thursday is derived from the Latin 'mandatum,' meaning command, referring to the foot-washing ceremony at the Last Supper when Jesus spoke of the 'new commandment' to love one another [extravagantly]...Friday in Holy Week...is the anniversary of the crucifixion. The term 'Good Friday' probably came from 'God's Friday' just as 'good-by' comes from 'God be with ye.'

(taken from

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LESSON 1

The Trinity, or Tri-Unity

The traditional Christian language for the Trinity is “Father, Son, & holy Spirit” and in our post-feminist age, we have become sensitive to words privileging maleness, especially words attributed to divinity, so in a more contemporary and inclusive manner we often hear the Trinity proclaimed as “Creator, Christ, and holy Spirit” or “Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer.”

Metaphysically, the Trinity can be interpreted as a Tri-unity, the 3-in-1 Principle: Mind, Idea, Expression (Fillmore, **Keep A True Lent**); Thinker, Thought, Action (Fillmore); Creator, Creativity, Creation; The ONE *Above, Through, and In* all; Mind, bringing forth Idea, into Manifestation; Life, Love, Truth; etc.

There is of course only the One, the Whole, the All-in-all, the Omnipresence; but the One, the Absolute is Pure Being known in our experience as modes of being; so our experience of the One occurs in a variety of ways.

God is all-Intelligence (omniscience), all-Power (omnipotence), and is the one and only true Presence (omnipresence).

Is this another way to understand the Trinity? God as the Intelligence (omniscience/parent), Power (omnipotence/Christ), and the Presence (omnipresence/spirit) of our lives?

As an example of a Tri-unity or modes of being, consider the Sun. There is, for us, one sun. But how do we experience the sun? We know there is a sun. So, intellectually we experience the sun as a knowing. It exists, but of course it is too powerful (hot) for us to experience it in its totality all at once. So, in addition to knowing the sun exists, we also see its light, and we feel its warmth.

There is the sun about which we know,
the sun's light that we see,
and the sun's warmth that we feel.
But it is, after all, just one sun.

We experience the one sun in various ways, but the reality of the sun, the light it produces and the warmth that it radiates is all part of a single thing we call “sun.”

So there is never any reason to argue about the Trinity. Some of us are **Unitarians**. Unitarians believe in the divine unity and say there is no clear scriptural evidence of a Trinitarian belief in bible times. Furthermore, they point out that Jesus, Paul, and all of the prophets were Jewish and there is no Trinity in Judaism.

Other Christians are “**Oneness**” **Pentecostals** (sometimes called “Jesus only” Pentecostals because they baptize in “Jesus’ name” rather than in the name of the Trinity). They believe in God, in Jesus as God’s anointed one, and in the power and presence of the holy Spirit, but rather than thinking of these as different modes of one reality, they think of these as three separate experiences with God being primary among them. God is one and everything else comes from God, they believe.

Others are **Trinitarian**, saying that that the Three are somehow in a mysterious way one. The official teaching is that the Three are all part of the one God-head and each is co-equal and co-eternal with the other two, and in spite of the language of “three” and “co” and “with”, the affirmation remains that somehow the Trinity remains one God. Most of mainline Christianity is in some fashion Trinitarian.

And still others of us are “**modalists**” who believe in the one Power, the one Presence, the one Life Principle, the one Infinite Reality that is expressed in various modes. So there is the “One” and It is known and experienced as the Source of life (Creator), the symbol of the Source in us/expressing as us (Christ), and as the Substance of all that is (Spirit): Creator, Creativity, Creation; God Above, Through, and In all; Mind, Idea, Expression, etc.

In ***A Course in Miracles***, God is ultimate Reality, the Child of God is all people (with Jesus as our elder brother and way-shower), and the Spirit is a gift from God to communicate with our human minds until we wake up from all illusions and realize our unity with the Divine.

In **Christian Science**, God is both Father & Mother of all life, Christ is the perfect spiritual idea embodied by Jesus (but not limited to Jesus), and the Spirit is the Comforter which is Truth or the knowledge of the Divine Reality.

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Most **New Thought** practitioners believe that God is all, or is the substance of all that is, or that all is in God; Christ is a principle (not a person), but Jesus perfectly demonstrated that principle and so is “the” Christ but his purpose is to show us that the Christ Principle or Nature is within us as well and by following him we express that Nature more and more, and the spirit then is the “stuff” of manifestation or expression, the energy that is the substance of all that exists. Mind, Idea, Expression or Thinker, Thought, and Action are good ways to speak of the metaphysical Trinity. God is the Creative Principle or Ultimate Reality, Christ is that of God in each of us (perfectly expressed by Jesus), and Spirit is the stuff or power or substance from which creation is made. If they related it to human life, it could be understood as Spirit, Soul, and Body (Life/God, Consciousness/Christ, and Physical Expression/Spirit).

Latter Day Saints (Mormons) believe in God, Jesus, and the Spirit but do not believe they form a Trinity. To Mormons, the three are one in purpose, but not in being.

For **Jehovah’s Witnesses**, God stands alone. Jesus is a spiritual being, like angels created by God (similar to the ancient view articulated by Arius), and the Spirit is God’s active power or force.

These different views need not be contentious. Each group of believers are being faithful to their understanding and experience and are using limited language to express their understanding and experience. It is probably the case that each view is somehow incomplete, and it may also be the case that each view is in some way completely true. Knowing the diversity of thought helps us to live and work together in community as we each work out what is “true” for us. Each of these views (and more!) can be found among the faithful in Metropolitan Community Churches.

Trinitarian theology isn’t exclusively or even originally Christian. In fact, the doctrine of the Trinity wasn’t clearly articulated in Christianity until the early 4th century (325 CE), and yet, there are older traditions that have had Trinitarian understandings all along.

In **Hinduism**, there is a divine Trinity thought of as Creator (Brahman), Destroyer (Shiva), and the Repairer (Vishnu or Krishna).

Buddhism has Three Jewels: The Buddha (the enlightened teacher who shows the Buddha Nature in us all; sometimes a benevolent cosmic figure), the Dharma (the sacred teachings), and the Sangha (the spiritual

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community). A Christian similarity would be the Christ, the Gospel, and the Church (or, Creator/Christ/Spirit).

The **Greek** philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras called “three” the “number of God” as it represents beginning, middle, and end... “the complete cycle of creational life.”

Ancient **Celtic** religion believed in a three-fold connection between Divinity, Humanity, and the World (compare to Mind/Idea/Expression or God/Christ/Spirit).

In some **neo-pagan** traditions, the one Power is experienced as both a Feminine and a Masculine Principle operating in balance (referred to as goddess and god). Furthermore, the divine power is experienced as a tri-unity in Its Feminine expression: Maiden, the Matron, and the Crone (sometimes called “triple goddess”)...The “goddess” power (and not the “god” power) is a triad because the power of a woman’s life can be divided into three phases: Pre-menstruating (maiden), Menstruating (matron or mother), and Post-menopausal/post-menstruating (grandmother/crone).

There are other pre-Christian Trinitarian images from Babylon, Egypt, Persia, and other cultures.

Is the Trinity an important symbol for you?

Are you intrigued to learn there are so many different views about the subject?

Are you surprised to learn that it isn’t a uniquely Christian concept?

Does the universal aspect of the Trinity help you feel more connected with others? Does it reinforce for you that the Trinity is a valid symbol? Does it cause you to rethink the Trinity?

If you consider yourself Trinitarian, how do you understand the Trinity at this moment?

Are you open to that understanding evolving over time?

God

“In prayer we need to be deeply conscious that God is the almighty One, the supreme Creator, the ruler of the universe...infinite and eternal; we

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need to know that God is the underlying, unchangeable Truth...God as principle is the absolute good expressed in all creation. When we know God...we recognize [God] as this great goodness, which is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, ready and willing to guide, to bless, and to uplift." Charles Fillmore (**Keep A True Lent**)

"God is mind and is everywhere present. God is principle, law, Being, Spirit, All-Good...Creator...cause, and source of all that is. God as Spirit is forever accessible." Fillmore (**KATL**)

"God is vitality. God is life. God is energy. As you breathe God in, as you visualize [divine] energy, you will be reenergized!" Norman Vincent Peale (Plus Magazine, 1986)

"Those who conceive of God as a person will invest [God] with personal traits, some of which are ridiculous." Fillmore (**KATL**)

"God is spirit..." Jesus

"God is not a man, capable of lying, nor is God the child of human parents who might have a change of mind." Numbers 23.19

"As a mother comforts her children, so will I (God), comfort you." Isaiah 66.13

"Make no graven images of the divine." Exodus 20.4

"We have been burdened too long with the rubbish of antiquity. Cast it out of your consciousness and assume the mental dominion that was yours before the worlds were formed and you were one with the consciousness of the [Divine]." Fillmore (**KATL**)

"In universal God-Mind is a substance that includes the seed of all visible substance." Fillmore (**KATL**)

"God as substance does not mean matter, because matter is formed; God is formless. The substance that God is lies back of all matter and all form. It is that which is the basis of all form, yet enters not into any form as finality. It cannot be seen, tasted, or touched, yet it is the one and only 'substantial' substance." Fillmore (**KATL**)

"God is life..." Fillmore (**KATL**)

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“God is potential, unformed will; [we are] manifest God-will. I now link my will with the principle of divine force in order to develop superior executive capacity...I affirm, ‘The will of God is uppermost in my consciousness, and I am glorified in my understanding.’” Fillmore (**KATL**)

*How do some of the thoughts above allow God to be bigger for you?
More accessible?*

Are any of the quotes above challenging, encouraging, uplifting, troubling for you?

How do you understand God?

Can you allow God to be more?

Christ

“Christian metaphysicians have discovered that [human-beings] can greatly accelerate the formation of the Christ Mind in [themselves] by using affirmations that identify [them] with the Christ.” Fillmore (**KATL**)

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” St. Paul to the Philippians

“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1.27

“The Christ is God’s divine idea of [humanity], the embodiment of all divine ideas existing in the mind of Being. The Christ is the ‘Messiah,’ the ‘anointed one.’ The Christ is the living principle working in [us].” Fillmore (**KATL**)

“We come to know that Christ is indeed with us and is resurrecting in us...realizations of light, life, and substance.” Fillmore (**KATL**)

Christ means “anointed.” In what ways do you find Jesus to be anointed?

How was he anointed? By whom was he anointed?

Are others anointed? Is the Christ anointing available to us in our lives?

How did Jesus express the Christ principle?

Is that same principle part of us? If so, how? If not, why not?

Do you ever suppose that the stories of Jesus are meant to call us to be what he was and do to do what he did? (Jesus reportedly said, “And greater works than these you will do...”)

Spirit

Spirit is energy, breath, wind, power, life-force.

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How do you understand the holy Spirit?

How does the Spirit work in your life?

Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgment, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence, and Wonder are the 7 gifts of the holy Spirit (Isaiah 11.2-3). *Which of these gifts do you most value? Which do you possess? Which do you desire?*

LESSON 2

Prayer

Prayer is communion (comm-union) with God.

We say that God is omnipresent, which means “There is not a spot where God is not.” If God is omnipresent, then God is here, right here, with me, in me, around me, flowing through me, expressing as me. For God to be omnipresent means that God must be everywhere *fully* present. This also means that All That God Is and all that God can do and all that God has is everywhere, fully present. Prayer then isn’t begging for God’s attention or for God’s favors, but acknowledging, experiencing, enjoying, and being grateful for God’s omnipresence.

In the presence of God, all things are possible and God’s presence is omnipresent! So, as we relax into the awareness of God’s presence, we also find our faith increasing and with the power of faith we can accomplish great things. So, prayer does bring about many blessings, but the point of prayer is communion with the divine Omnipresence. Recognizing and unifying with the divine Presence is the first step and primary purpose of prayer.

“Words and thoughts in prayer are helpful as long as they lead up to the atmosphere of the true communion, which is without words and thoughts. When words and thoughts *alone* constitute prayer, they become a barrier to the attainment of God-awareness.” Joel Goldsmith

“Seeking the objects of good, such as pleasures, things, and places, for the joy of them is a barrier to spiritual unfoldment. Seeking only the realization of God, pleasures, things, and places of joy naturally come into our experience. Then our pleasure is greater in the realization of their Source.” Joel Goldsmith

“Seek first the [Experience] of God and God’s righteousness, and all good things will be added unto you.” Jesus (Matthew 6.33)

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Nona Brooks experienced a dramatic healing which demonstrates that the divine Power is ever present, waiting only for one's recognition and acceptance of It. After more than a year of praying, "Give me light," Ms. Brooks had an experience in church. While singing a hymn about the divine Presence, she "realized a complete surrender" of herself. Later, during the "fourth class lesson" with a Mrs. Bingham (who had experienced a healing while studying with Emma Curtis Hopkins and who was teaching the class Nona was taking), Ms. Brooks experienced her "whole being...flooded with a great light..." She became completely aware of the bright light. She was amazed to discover that she alone had experienced this intense light. But during that experience, she was "instantly and completely healed" (story found in *Divine Science: Its Principle & Practice*).

The Light that Nona Brooks experienced was surely with her always, but she didn't experience It until she was open to the experience. Even when she did have her experience, it was unique to her. The others in her class didn't have her experience even though they were in the very room where she had it. Nona says, "the months and months of praying that I might receive light had been a preparation for the healing which had actually come to me in the form of light".

"As Divine Mind, which I am, I can preach the Gospel, I can heal the sick, I can cast out [conditions that deny God's goodness], I can raise the dead. I work the works of God, who works through me to will and do that which ought to be done by me, according to the doctrine of Jesus Christ: 'The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but [God in me does] the works.'" Emma Curtis Hopkins

Need is often what drives us to prayer, but prayer isn't about making magic happen but about experiencing oneness with the Divine. *So how is it that we feel compelled to pray in times of need, and why is it that prayer so often seems to yield desirable results?* Even when conditions don't change, prayer often makes us feel better (as recognizing our union with God certainly must!).

God-consciousness is the source of our desire for good, and it is the fulfillment of the desire as well. Since the one Presence is good, the one Power is good, good is the natural, normal state for our lives. We want, of course, to be what we really are, and what we really are is the manifestation of the perfect One. Good is our inheritance, our right, and

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we naturally want what is truly ours, and what must be in Truth. Jung seemed to believe that good desires have a sacred origin.

So what sometimes obscures our way to fulfilling these good desires? Nona Brooks once wrote, “We knew that no wrong thought or anything else undesirable could touch us so long as we centered our attention on God’s presence instead of on...false concepts”. Focusing on God brings about what is of God, All Good. Conversely, when we focus on the problem rather than the Solution, the experience of lack rather than the Source of abundance, the appearance of dis-ease rather than the Truth of perfect Wholeness, disharmony rather than divine Love which is the one Power, Presence, and Knowledge...when we focus on the condition instead of on the Truth, then we continue to out-picture discord and distress. Forgetting our oneness with the All-in-all prevents us from experiencing the Good that the Omnipresence is and that is ours to claim, to have, and to enjoy.

It seems that what we habitually think about, we tend to bring about. So prayer is meant not to make God do something that God otherwise would have not done; prayer is meant to get our focus completely on God and when our focus is on Good/God, then what is of God is what we are more likely to experience.

“As I am feeling, I am attracting...See yourself as [a] magnet, attracting unto you the way you feel at any point in time. When you feel clear and in control, you will attract circumstances of clarity. When you feel happy, you will attract circumstances of happiness...When you feel loved, you will attract circumstances of love. Literally, the way you FEEL is your point of attraction.” Esther & Jerry Hicks/Teachings of “Abraham”

In prayer, we want to notice how we are feeling, and then intentionally raise the vibration of our feelings. We are learning to focus on the good, to be grateful for opportunities, to acknowledge possibilities, to trust the process of life, and to feel good about who we are. We aren’t so much praying to an outside God to change conditions (which He or She presumably would not have changed without our begging), as we are “treating” ourselves to see things differently. This is why we sometimes call our prayers “prayer treatments.”

For example: If I FEEL like I need more money, how should I pray? If I pray for God to remove my poverty, I’m still focused on poverty. Focusing on poverty makes me FEEL poor (or scared or desperate, etc.), and if I FEEL poor, it will take longer for me to experience

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something other than poverty. So, rather than ask God to remove my poverty, I will want to prayerfully treat myself to FEEL prosperous. Rather than affirming lack (which is what I'm doing when I ask God to take it away...how could God take it away unless it were real to me), I want to affirm plenty. And so, I start to do prayer work so that I will FEEL abundantly blessed. If I FEEL prosperous, then I am, regardless of how much money is in my pocket (just as if I FEEL poor, I am, regardless of how much money I have in my pocket). My prayer is meant to help me FEEL blessed, because then my focus, my energy, my intention, my belief, my expectation, my gratitude, my thoughts are all on blessing rather than on lack. And if I'm focused on blessing, I am more likely to experience blessing. "As I am feeling, I am attracting."

So what I want to do is release worry, affirm possibilities, focus on God (the All Good), feel grateful for this moment of communion, and then release the prayer to divine right action going throughout the day then with a sense of peace knowing that God is always with me. If my focus is on God, I am also focused on creativity, on possibilities, on love, on peace, on joy, on vitality, on beauty, on all that God is, and what I focus on will produce feelings in me, and what I am feeling I am attracting. See *how it works?*

Whether I'm praying for myself, my church, my community, my world, my friends...whoever I am praying for, what I am really doing is treating myself to see the GOOD that is already present. I want to focus on the Good, claim it, celebrate it, give thanks for it, and feel good about it. Like attracts like, so when I focus on Good, I'm more likely to attract or manifest it. And, regardless of what happens in the world of affairs, I am already better off for feeling good! If I feel prosperous, then I am! The actual money may show up instantly or take days, weeks, or months to show up...but I am prosperous the INSTANT that I feel prosperous. I don't need money to feel prosperous; I just need to learn how to summon the feeling. And prayer can help me get that feeling. Of course, once I get and sustain that feeling, the money often shows up after all. It works the same way for health, love, happiness, or anything we might desire.

But remember, prayer isn't the genie in the bottle granting our every wish...prayer is focusing on, uniting with, and enjoying the union with God. Because God is Good and wants only Good for us, then blessings do come; but prayer must be more than simply wishing for things and putting the statement "Dear God" before the wish. When our focus is God, then our experience is God, and a God experience is one of power,

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joy, fulfillment, peace, abundance, love, and well-being! *Seek God first...then good things will be added!*

Denials & Affirmations

“Don’t you see that consciousness is an interpretative choice? Try repeating a series of denials followed by affirmations in order to access the new consciousness you’re seeking...[for example], ‘I deny that sickness, poverty or suffering has any power over me. I am a radiant, spiritual being filled with wisdom, peace and light.’” Tom Shepherd

Notice how Dr. Shepherd recognizes his unity with the divine Power (“I am a...spiritual being”) and because his focus is on God and his unity with God, then he denies that there is anything to oppose God’s Good in his life (“I deny that...suffering has any power over me”) and he affirms that God’s Good is ever present because God is ever present (“I am...filled with wisdom, peace and light”). Gratitude is implied and then the prayer is released (“Let go and let God”). Focus on the Good, trust the Good, deny that there is anything to oppose the Good, claim the Good with gratitude and then release all concern. This is the power that “avails much”.

“...the prayer of a righteous person is very powerful.” James 5.16

Now, the spiritual component of prayer is simply being in the presence of God, “practicing the presence” as Brother Lawrence wrote. But so much of what happens in our world is a result of our habitual thinking, our feeling, our attitudes, and our actions. So denials and affirmations aren’t meant to move God, they are meant to clear the obstacles from our mental storehouse. As we remove the obstacles, we are more likely to allow God to express as God in our lives, and remember, God is all Intelligence, all Power, and all Presence. When THAT expresses fully, miracles are bound to happen!

“Denials may be made in many ways. It is not always necessary to say specifically, ‘I deny so and so.’ The conscious acknowledgment that you have been incorrect in your conclusion [of assuming that there was no hope or that suffering was inevitable or irreversible] is denial. Refusing to entertain longer any thoughts [that you are a victim of circumstances or conditions] is denial. Withdrawing mental sustenance from low ideals is denial. There is but one Mind, and we can deny away error conditions...You acknowledge to the mind of perfect serenity that there has been a departure therefrom, and that peace is now restored. The acknowledgement by you that there is but one universal Mind, and that

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your clear consciousness of this frees [you or others] from sin and sickness, will release you...from any belief [in negativity] you may have reflected." Fillmore (**Keep A True Lent**)

Following a denial, always make an affirmation. Charles Fillmore believed that because we are God's children, filled with God's presence, and are part of God's very Life, our speech should reflect this powerful truth. Affirmations aren't begging God to do something; they are recognizing that Good is already available to us, and is actually ours to claim, put to use, and enjoy. Affirmations aren't magic words that make something happen, they are statements of truth that acknowledge what already exists in God, and as God is omnipresent, all that exists in God is available to us because "there's not a spot where God is not"!

"The universal life current is subject to the word of man [and woman]. This current flows into and through [our bodies] from above as Spirit...and from below...as life energy...[Jesus] said, 'The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life.' He gripped the current from above and united it with the current from below, producing a supermind voltage...This process was illustrated [in the story of turning] water into wine...in Galilee...Galilee means 'rolling energy'...indicating what takes place...when words are spoken. When the words are spoken with spirit, not only conditions without are changed but the watery cells of the body are transformed from sluggish action to 'wine' or a state of high positive activity." Fillmore (**KATL**)

"We...may become a disciple and reap the benefits promised by Jesus if [we] will assume the mental attitude of a [person of faith] and practice the power of words." Fillmore (**KATL**)

We deny that what can't be true in/of God could ever be true of us, and then replace that denial with a declaration of what is true: *God is love and so I am love, loving and loved; God is perfect Peace and so I claim peace as my natural state and divine inheritance; There is no lack in God and so I lay claim to the divine Abundance which God so extravagantly shares with all who will receive it...etc.*

As we develop the habit of training our conscious mind (surface mind) to think optimistically, then eventually, those positive thoughts and attitudes sink down into our subconscious mind (deeper mind) and that is where they become a powerful part of us. Once we "allow" God to be All That God is in and for us, then blessings abound.

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So remember...focus on God...that is the point of prayer.

Use denials followed by affirmations to clear out whatever may have been keeping you from staying focused on God and God's good. Feel grateful knowing that prayer is powerful and is inviting a more powerful experience of God, and then release the prayer refusing to let worry sabotage your success.

Finally, as much as possible, try to detach from outcomes. God can prosper us in more ways than we can imagine. God can heal us in a variety ways, with or without medicine, and the healing can happen even if a cure does not. Love can be made manifest in many forms. Don't miss out on a blessing because you will only accept it if it comes in a particular form. Once you release your prayer to God, let God handle it in the way that is best. You just stay focused on God, on God's goodness, and on God's loving presence in and all around you.

Recognize the Omnipresence. Deny anything that is unlike It. Affirm the Good that It is and that It offers. Be thankful and release the prayer with trust in divine Goodness.

LESSON 3

Divine Abundance

"There is a kingdom of abundance of all things, and it may be found by those who seek it and are willing to comply with its laws." Fillmore (**Keep A True Lent**)

"Spiritual substance is the source of all material wealth...It is always with us, ready to be used and to make the consciousness potent and fertile...Just as the earth is the universal matrix in which all vegetation develops, so this invisible Spirit substance is the universal matrix in which ideas of prosperity germinate and grow and bring according to our faith and trust." (**KATL**)

Abundance Message by The Reverend Durrell Watkins

"If I dwell on limitation and insufficiency in any area of my life, I am building a consciousness of lack, and lack always attracts more lack."
John Randolph Price

Why do you suppose the gospel writers remembered Jesus as one who could multiply a limited amount of bread or transform water into wine? Whether or not those events historically, factually took place, the writers were convinced that in some way Jesus had a consciousness of accomplishment and abundance and followers of Jesus should develop similar ways of approaching life.

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*Have you ever known people who would argue vehemently for lack? Fear based, scarcity thinking always wants to hide, cut back, protect, claim the worst and brace against it. Such thinking does not multiply the loaves nor does it keep the wine flowing. To argue for limitation gives power to limitation, and the result, more often than not, is the further appearance of limitation. "Where attention goes, energy flows." If we focus on lack, we contribute to lack. If we believe in "can't", we rarely experience "can." Or, as I'm fond of saying, **what we think habitually we create eventually.***

In a world in need of healing and abundance and peace and justice, let's be the ones to see what can be. Let's give as if we have abundance to share. Let's love as if our hearts can embrace countless souls. Let's face each day as if it has a wonderful blessing to offer, regardless of apparent circumstances. Let's avoid limitation thinking and begin to practice abundance thinking. Ours is a God of abundance, and it is the light of this God that illumines our path and fills our hearts. Abundance of opportunity and accomplishment is ours to imagine, to create, to experience, and to share.

An ancient law declares "as within, so without." Once we become habitual abundance thinkers, we are bound to live in the Christ-power of perpetual abundance.¹

What Does the Bible Tell Us About Abundance Thinking?

"Don't worry over anything whatever; whenever you pray tell God every detail of your needs in thankful prayer, and the peace of God, which surpasses human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus." St. Paul, Philippians 4.6-7²

A Story

Katherine found her calling at the age of 60! She answered the call, went to ministerial school, and became an ordained minister. As a minister, she started her own church. Of course, new churches don't have a lot of resources at first, but by this time she was eligible for social security, so she had an income. Between her social security and the money she

¹ Posted Aug. 6, 2006 on www.kweerspirit.com

² J.B. Phillips, The New Testament in Modern English, Revised Edition (NYC: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1972)

made by teaching classes on a love offering basis, she was able to make a living and build a church.

However, one day her social security checks stopped coming! The church wasn't yet able to pay her a fulltime salary and she depended on her pension. It took months to sort out why the checks stopped and then to collect the back pay. But Katherine refused to sink into despair. She trusted that her Divine Source was infinite and just as that Source had supplied her needs through a pension check, It would also supply her needs in alternate ways. She didn't know how it would work out, but she refused to panic and give in to defeat.

During this time, she found more people attending her classes and their love offerings increased. People who knew of her situation would take her to lunch and bring her gifts. It wasn't always easy, but somehow she managed and when the social security snafu got straightened out, she had a big windfall come her way! Eventually, the church would pay her adequately so that such a problem would never happen again.

Katherine didn't worry (or, when she would start she would redirect her thinking). Instead, she trusted the God of her understanding to provide a way. In this way, she "went to peace instead of to pieces" (her phrase), and therefore was able to see possibilities as they arose. She didn't sabotage her success or give up too soon. And in the end, she was financially more secure than before the mishap took place. Divine peace guarded her heart and mind and sustained her through the difficult time and brought her to the improved situation.

Philippians 4.8 (a continuation of the earlier passage) tells us, "...fix your minds on whatever is true and honourable and just and pure and lovely and admirable."³ That's what Katherine did, and that's what we can do, too. We can focus on the good, the possibilities, the hoped for improvement, rather than staying focused on the problem. By going to peace instead of to pieces we can stay balanced through the difficult times and find our way back to the good that God desires for us.

A Prayer For Abundance

Knowing that God is All-Good and that God's desire for me is to express and experience Good in my life, I choose now to turn away from fear, anxiety and worry. Negative thoughts and attitudes only get in the way of my Good, and I am ready to participate in the Abundance of Life right

³ J.B. Phillips

*here and right now. And so it is that I now fix my mind on what is lovely and good and admirable. I trust God with my needs with a thankful and expectant heart, knowing that somehow, in some way, for my good and the good of others, my needs will be met and my good desires will be fulfilled. By faith I declare this to be my truth and I allow it to be. Amen.*⁴

How to Participate in the Circulation of Divine Supply

Now, of course we need to work if we can, and save some of our money for a “rainy day”. We will also need to not over-extend our credit or waste our money on excessive gambling or other counter-productive habits. Common sense tells us we need to do what we can to be able to meet our daily needs.

And, in addition to working and saving and spending wisely, we also need to realize that our money is energy in material form. It is the barter of our day. We need it to secure housing and food and clothing and other necessities. It’s good and necessary that we have enough money to live safely and comfortably in our world. So, in addition to earning and saving money, we must see money as something that is good, necessary, and a gift from God, our eternal Source.

If money is good, we will want to use it for good purposes. And if it is a gift from God, we can trust God to show us how to obtain all that we need to provide for our real needs and good desires. Jesus is remembered as having said that his purpose was to offer life in its fullness.⁵ We can have full, abundant lives, and share our abundance for the good of others.

When we give to causes of social justice, environmental protection, the care of the needy, or the building of positive, encouraging faith communities, we are returning to our Source a portion of the Good with which we have been blessed. The more we share, the more we are saying “thank you” for what we have, and the more we are telling ourselves that more will come our way. By seeing money as a spiritual gift and sharing that gift for the furtherance of spiritual causes, we are bit by bit removing the obstacles from our lives that hinder the flow of Good. We are, in fact, participating in the circulation of Divine Supply.

Especially powerful is the practice of tithing, that is, consistently giving a percentage of our income to the place that nourishes us spiritually.

⁴ Prayer composed by The Reverend Durrell Watkins

⁵ John 10.10

Here are the words of wisdom of some great teachers on the matter of participating in the circulation of Divine Supply ('Creative Sharing' we might call it):

- i. **"The plain and simple truth is that you must start giving before you can start receiving. This is the kind of Universe in which we live." John Hoshor**
- ii. **"'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse...Test me in this,' says the LORD Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.'" Malachi 3.10⁶**
- iii. **"When I chased after money, I never had enough. When I got my life on purpose and focused on giving of myself and everything that arrived into my life, then I was prosperous." Wayne Dyer**
- iv. **"One of the ways to attract money into your life is to tithe. Tithing 10% of your income has long been an established principle. I like to think of it as giving back to Life. When we do that we seem to prosper more." Louise Hay**
- v. **"If your consciousness is filled with fear and anxiety, that is where your faith is. You are putting your faith in the possibility and probability of misfortune, lack and limitation. Your consciousness, which is your faith, your substance, must by law act upon itself." John Randolph Price**
- vi. **"Everything is energy...You create your reality by your energy patterns, and through focus and intent can manifest either what you want or what you don't want in your life. The energy is neutral. It goes where you direct it, thus you 'get what you focus on.'" Paul Waters**
- vii. **"Empty pockets never held anyone back. Only empty heads and empty hearts can do that." Norman Vincent Peale**
- viii. **"It is...normal and natural for us to have more money at certain times than others. If we can trust the Power within to always take care of us no matter what, we can easily flow**

⁶ New International Version (NIV)

through the lean times, knowing that we will have more in the future.” Louise Hay

The wise ones seem to concur, a positive attitude free from excessive worry or fear, along with doing what you love or really believe in, and being grateful for what you have while sharing the abundance you have right now where you currently find yourself in life are the ingredients for building a prosperity consciousness that will result in the experience of abundance.

Our progressive faith is much needed in our world of prejudice and hostility. And so, we wish to build up our progressive church and offer it as a safe haven to all who are seeking the positive experience that we have found here at this wonderful cathedral.

As we support this church with our time, talent, and treasure, we are assuring that our positive and progressive message, which we believe is the very message (Good News) of Jesus Christ, gets into the lives and hearts of people who need it and long for its life-giving benefits.

As we invest into the life of Sunshine Cathedral, we are investing in our own spiritual growth, our own prosperity potential, and we are offering life-giving Good News to our community and to our world.

Another Prayer for Abundance

Dear God, you are the Source of my supply, and my Source is infinite. Filled with your Spirit, I have the power to overcome worry, distraction, anxiety, and the expectation of limitation. With you, all things are possible, and from you all good things come. And so it is that I now relax and allow myself to contact my Good, the great Good that you have always had in store for me. I am open to receive my abundance, and I am willing to share my Good freely and gladly. I lovingly support my church with my tithes and offerings. I give to other good causes as well. I trade with worthy businesses. I tip generously. I pay my bills and my taxes happily. In every way, I share as if I have plenty to share and as if more will come to me as I need it. I choose now to believe this is true and I ask you, God, to bless all that I have, all that I give, and all that I receive. Let me now live as a prosperous child of an Infinite and Good God. Alleluia! Amen.⁷

⁷ Prayer composed by The Reverend Durrell Watkins

**An Attitude of Abundance:
Developing a Prosperity Consciousness Worksheet**

*The churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.
Acts 16.5*

1. Do you believe in God?
(This is not a trick question. Just answer honestly “yes” or “no.”)
2. If you answered “yes” to question #1, then what is the God in which you have affirmed belief? Define God, as you currently understand God, below:

God is

God is

God is

God is not

God is not

God might be

3. If you were able to define God, either by what God is or by what God isn't or by what God might be, how did you reach this conclusion? What makes you think God is what you have affirmed God is? How do you know?
4. If God is, then whatever else God is, God must be _____.

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5. If God is indeed _____, then ours is a God of _____.

6. We live in an abundant Universe. Ernest Holmes once said, "Never has there been a Cosmic famine." Does that statement ring true for you? Why or why not?

7. Abundance includes not only money, but also _____

 _____.

8. If we live in an _____ Universe, and if ours is a _____ of _____, and if whatever else God is God is also _____, and if the ancient writer was correct in believing that we are each made in the divine image and likeness (Genesis 1.27), then what does that say about our potential to live lives of _____ and plenty?

Answers:

4. more
5. more, abundance
8. abundant, God, abundance, more, prosperity

Tuesday, January 9, 2007 (*Spirit & Truth*)

The Demonstration Will Come

After a long time, in the third year, the word of the LORD came to Elijah [saying], 'Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land.' 1 Kings 18:1

After a long time, Elijah had a demonstration of Good. When we are waiting for a breakthrough, for healing, for good news, for a great idea, for a project to begin (or to come to a successful end), we may feel as if a long time passes by. We may even be tempted to give up too soon. But as Robert Schuller has said, "God's delays are not God's denials." If the miracle doesn't come quickly, we continue to wait and work and pray and give of ourselves, always expecting and always believing in the possibilities. The prophet Habakkuk wrote, "For the revelation awaits an appointed time... Though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come..."

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Dear God, even when our miracle comes slower than we would like, help us to not give up too soon. May we be present for our Good. Amen.

Today's devotional prepared by Durrell Watkins

Thursday, January 11, 2007 (*Spirit & Truth*)

Sharing Our Time

Each week, we choose what will be done with the 168 hours we have available to us. Good stewardship of time means we will share some of that time... The Diocese of Lubbock's parish stewardship campaign manual

People of faith naturally want to be generous. Of course the more we give, the more we seem to have to give. An attitude of abundance just seems to make things possible, and we find that what we have is enough to do great things. When we speak of generosity, we may immediately think of money; and we do want to be generous with our money, but we have more than money to share. We have skills. We have love. We have time. As we share all that we have, we accomplish more and more for God and for ourselves.

I have enough time to care for myself and others. I have enough time to rest, play, work, and plan. I have enough time to worship and as I spend time in worship, I grow ever more aware of God's presence in my life.

Today's devotional prepared by Durrell Watkins.

Monday, January 15, 2007 (*Spirit & Truth*)

Letting Our Light Shine

[The light of candles over an altar] is a symbol of the life that is never extinguished... There is a light at the center of everyone...

Ernest Holmes

My paternal grandmother could make a rock grow. She had the original green thumb and she used it to bring beauty to her corner of the world. She planted trees, flowers, berries, vegetables – anything that one could stick in dirt and have grow. She was the best gardener I ever knew. Everyone has some gift worth sharing. The gift may be patience, which can be expressed as envelope licking. The gift might be the appreciation for solitude, which could be expressed dusting pews alone in a quiet sanctuary. Everyone has a talent, and when that talent is used in divine service, everyone benefits. What is your light? Are you letting it shine?

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Inward Light, shine through me as I use my talents to help others.

Today's devotional prepared by Durrell Watkins.

Tuesday, January 23, 2007 (*Spirit & Truth*)

To Give is to Receive

Give alms in proportion to what you own. If you have great wealth, give alms out of your abundance; if you have but little, distribute even some of that. But do not hesitate to give alms... Tobit 4.8

National Public Radio, People for the American Way, Human Rights Campaign, Amnesty International, International Campaign for Tibet, St. Jude's Children Research Hospital, alumni associations, Church...there is no shortage of worthy causes asking for money. I can't always give to every cause, but there are some to which I give consistently and others to which I give occasionally. My first commitment, of course, is to my church. Giving is my way of saying "thanks" for my blessings; it's also my way of participating in the circulation of divine supply. I find *A Course in Miracles* to be right when it says "to give and to receive is one in truth."

When I freely give to something that blesses my life, I am opening channels of greater Good to flow to me and through me. My generosity helps build a prosperity consciousness, and my consciousness contributes to my experience of life. And so it is that I happily give and thankfully receive. Amen.

Today's devotional prepared by Durrell Watkins

Thoughts & Questions:

1. Honestly explore your attitudes. Where do you have fears about abundance?
2. Do you believe that giving and receiving are part of the same natural and divine cycle? Do you see a connection between your generosity and your prosperity?
3. Where is abundance manifesting in your life right now that you may have overlooked?
4. When was a time when your need was almost magically met? If it happened then, what would prevent it from happening again (or over and over again)?
5. Do you believe you deserve a life of plenty?
6. Do you believe sharing actually "seeds" the soil of your experience, increasing abundance for yourself and others?

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7. If you answered “Yes” to the question about believing in God, answer these questions as well. Does the God you believe in want you to have your needs met? Is this God capable of meeting your needs (or at least of guiding you in ways that help you meet your own needs)? If God is a God of abundance, and wants to abundantly bless each of us, and is able to do so, then how might we spend time in prayer, meditation, and creative sharing to release all mental barriers to our abundance?
8. If prosperity, like health, success, happiness and harmonious relationships, etc., is a matter of thought and attitude, what thoughts and feelings might we change in ourselves to increase our experience of abundance?
9. As you pray the abundance prayers in your booklet this week, let yourself “feel” prosperous. See in your imagination only success and opulence. Feel contentment and gratitude as you pray and meditate. Cultivate a feeling of prosperity and notice how prosperity seems to increase in your experience. Bless what you have with gratitude, share with gladness, and allow “More” to manifest in your life.
10. Don’t compare your prosperity with another person’s. Simply notice what you have, give thanks for it, share from it, and visualize more. Feel that your good desires are already fulfilled. Be glad that the blessings are already on their way. And notice when you are prospering more than you did. Give thanks for that. Judge your progress against yourself only. Your path is your own. Don’t let someone’s path distract you from doing your work and reaping your Good.

Assignment:

Say one of the following prayers (from the lesson above) twice a day everyday for the next week. Notice a difference in your attitudes about money. Notice, also, if Life seems to offer you little gifts of joy, self-esteem, opportunity, healing, friendship, success, prospering ideas, or other blessings along the way.

(1)Knowing that God is All-Good and that God’s desire for me is to express and experience Good in my life, I choose now to turn away from fear, anxiety and worry. Negative thoughts and attitudes only get in the way of my Good, and I am ready to participate in the Abundance of Life right here and right now. And so it is that I now fix my mind what is lovely and good and admirable. I trust God with my needs with a thankful and

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expectant heart, knowing that somehow, in some way, for my good and the good of others, my needs will be met and my good desires will be fulfilled. By faith I declare this to be my truth and I allow it to be. Amen.

(2)Dear God, you are the Source of my supply, and my Source is infinite. Filled with your Spirit, I have the power to overcome worry, distraction, anxiety, and the expectation of limitation. With you, all things are possible, and from you all good things come. And so it is that I now relax and allow myself to contact my Good, the great Good that you have always had in store for me. I am open to receive my abundance, and I am willing to share my Good freely and gladly. I lovingly support my church with my tithes and offerings. I give to other good causes as well. I trade with worthy businesses. I tip generously. I pay my bills and my taxes happily. In every way, I share as if I have plenty to share and as if more will come to me as I need it. I choose now to believe this is true and I ask you, God, to bless all that I have, all that I give, and all that I receive. Let me now live as a prosperous child of an Infinite and Good God. Alleluia! Amen.

LESSON 4

12 Spiritual Powers

Working With the Twelve

Twelve seems to have some mystical or at least spiritual significance in our religious tradition. Our sacred stories tell of Twelve foundational tribes & Twelve Apostles. Our calendar has Twelve months and our zodiac has Twelve signs. In ancient Greece, there were 12 primary Olympian deities. In numerology we would add the digits of double numbers to come up with a single digit which would have meaning; when

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we take the 1 and the 2 in Twelve and add them together, we get Three. Three represents the past, present, and future; wholeness, creativity, success.

Some astrologists have compared each of the biblical apostles to each of the Zodiac signs and Charles Fillmore used the apostles as symbols for Twelve spiritual powers innate to all people. We'll be taking an Apostle/Power/Sign/Olympian each month and reflecting on it to find possible meaning for our lives today.

It doesn't matter if there were really more than Twelve Apostles or fewer than Twelve tribes; even if some of our stories prove to be legendary or the literary work of creative minds, the point that life is infused with spiritual significance and we have symbols pointing to that significance can be very meaningful to us. And so, let's spend 2011 Working With the Twelve!

January – Hera - Capricorn the Goat – Matthew – **Will**

February – Poseidon - Aquarius the Water bearer – Jude (Thaddeus) –

Renunciation

March – Dionysus - Pisces the Fish – Judas – **Life**

April – Apollo - Aries the Ram – Peter (first known as Simon) – **Faith**

May – Ares - Taurus the Bull – Simon the Zealot – **Enthusiasm**

June – Athena - Gemini the Twins – James the Elder (in the Hebrew Bible, Wisdom Lady Sophia) – **Wisdom**

July – Zeus - Cancer the Crab – Andrew – **Strength**

August – Aphrodite - Leo the Lion – John – **Love**

September – Hestia - Virgo the Virgin – Philip – **Power**

October – Hephaestus - Libra the Scales – Bartholomew (or Nathaniel) –

Imagination

November – Hermes - Scorpio the Scorpion – Thomas – **Understanding**

December – Artemis - Sagittarius the Archer – James the Younger – **Order**

The Power of Will (Matthew)

Within us there is the power of will. With our will we make choices. With our will we make decisions. With our will we change our minds, our direction, we even overcome negative habits. The power of will is a great blessing to us, and so let us use our will wisely, aligning it always with the divine will for our highest and best good. Amen.

The Power of Renunciation (Jude)

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St. Jude, you represent the power within me that allows me to turn from discord and toward harmony, from fear and toward courage, from despair and toward hope. I now renounce any negative thought or feeling that is keeping me from living a life of harmony, love, goodwill, and joy. Miracles are now possible for me; and so it is!

The Power of Life (Judas)

I will not sell my integrity for silver, for praise, for comfort, or even for security. God is my Source and I have no need to strike any bargains with God. I am good enough and my life is blessed because I am a child of God. Amen!

The Power of Faith (Peter)

Faith is Trust, and I choose to trust my own sacred value! I trust that God, in me, is always Good! I trust that Wisdom is guiding me and Compassion is motivating me every day! I trust that there are wonderful blessings for me and I now claim them, accept them, and give thanks for them. By faith, I call it done! Amen.

The Power of Enthusiasm (Simon)

I am enthusiastic about life! I am enthusiastic about learning! I am enthusiastic about growing! I am enthusiastic about sharing! I am enthusiastic about expressing my Higher Self! I am enthusiastic about the good that I can do! As I live with enthusiasm, my life is filled with joy. And so it is.

The Power of Wisdom (James)

Divine Wisdom dwells within me. She guides me, inspires me, empowers me, blesses me, and shines through me. I declare this to be true and I allow it to be. Amen.

The Power of Strength (Andrew)

God in me is the power that strengthens and renews me. In God's name and by God's power I AM healthy, energetic, confident, and strong. And so it is.

The Power of Love (John)

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*The love in me is the power and presence of God.
The love in me is the power and presence of God.
The love in me is the power and presence of God.
I AM loving, lovable, and loved.
I AM Love.
Amen.*

The Power of Power (Philip)

There is one Power, one Presence, one Principle and It is eternal and It is All Good. From this Power all good gifts come. This Power is always available to me as It is flowing through and expressing as me! I trust the divine Power to bless and harmonize my life right now. With calm serenity and deep gratitude I affirm that all is well in my world; and so it will be and so it must be and so it is.

The Power of Imagination (Nathaniel)

Imagination is very powerful. What I can see, I can seize. What I can envision, I can become. What I can believe, I can also achieve. It all starts in my mind, which is a unit of the Pure, Everlasting, Omnipresent Mind. Thoughts held habitually will manifest eventually, and so with the power of my imagination, I choose to think good thoughts, to entertain good possibilities, and to expect the best from life. Amen.

The Power of Understanding (Thomas)

Honest doubt, sincere questions, earnest exploration will lead to discovery, to growth, and to understanding. The Thomas power within me, the power that seeks and searches will discover many blessings including the spiritual gift of understanding. I am thankful to and for this power. Amen.

The Power of Order (James the Younger)

As I "let go and let God" I can be certain that all is in divine order. I now trust God in me to order my days for my good and for my joy. All is well because all is in divine order. Alleluia! Amen.

Charles Fillmore's Affirmations using the 12 Powers:

Faith:

"I have faith in the glorious infusion of the more abundant life of Christ vitalizing me. I am lifted up and healed." (Keep A True Lent)

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Strength:

“The joy of the Lord is a wellspring within me, and I am established in divine strength.” (KATL)

Love:

“God [lovingly] fills me with new life. In [God’s] name I am cleansed, strengthened, and healed.” (KATL)

Power:

“All the issues of my life are stirred to action by the quickening Christ power, and I have dominion over my thoughts and my feelings.” (KATL)

Understanding:

“Diving understanding in me unites with the holy Spirit, and I always know what to do.” (KATL)

Will:

“The will of God is uppermost in my consciousness, and I am glorified in my understanding.” (KATL)

Enthusiasm:

“My zeal is tempered with wisdom, and I maintain a perfect balance within and without.” (KATL)

Life:

“I have the Mind of Christ. My words are spiritually quickened and they are alive forevermore. I am filled with the vitality and vigor and health of Jesus Christ.” (KATL)

Wisdom:

“The wisdom of the Christ Mind here active is through my recognition of Christ identified and unified with God. Wisdom...[is] here now expressing...in the beauty of holiness. The justice...and peace of the Christ Mind now harmonize, wisely direct, and surely establish the

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kingdom of God in...my body. There are no more warring, contentious thoughts in me, for the peace of God is here established..." (**The Twelve Powers of Man**)

Imagination:

"With my imagination fixed on Spirit, I affirm: in the quietness and confidence of Spirit, I see myself as God sees me, [the divine] image and likeness." (**KATL**)

Renunciation:

"In [Jesus'] name I affirm: the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes me free from the law of sin and death." (**KATL**)

Order:

"My house is set in order, and I press forward toward the goal of perfection." (**KATL**)

Other Thoughts by Fillmore:

"Anyone whom the Lord calls to a work will succeed in the end, if he [or she] lays his [or her] foundation deep and strong in the spiritual understanding." (**TTPOM**)

"The Lord is the universal law, whose impulse is always upward and onward." (**TTPOM**)

"Do not imagine anything but good, because under the law of thought combined with substance it will sooner or later come into expression..." (**TTPOM**)

Assignment: Choose a spiritual power to work with throughout the week. Meditate on the power and say one of the affirmations coupled with it. Do this throughout the day everyday and take note of how that power becomes active in your experience throughout the week.

LESSON 5

Blessings

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In this lesson we will look at specific blessings that a life of spiritual seeking and discipline can help us experience. Those the blessings available to us are unlimited, for this lesson we will focus on the blessings of Healing, Peace, Heaven, Miracles, Communion, and Atonement.

Healing

"...We do not disbelieve in any form of healing, whether it be medicine, surgery, psychiatry, diet, or exercise." Ernest Holmes⁸

"God, the universal life-force and energy running through everything, is an intelligent presence pervading all space; a self-existent cause; a perfect unit, a complete wholeness." Ernest Holmes

"Healing does not mean going back to the way things were before, but rather allowing what is now to move us closer to God." Ram Dass⁹

"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by each experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'" Eleanor Roosevelt

"...My God, I called to you for help and you healed me." Psalm 30.2¹⁰

"...Paul had collected a large bundle of sticks and was about to put it on the fire [when] a viper driven out by the heat fastened itself on his hand...But Paul shook off the viper into the fire without suffering any ill effect." Acts 28.3 & 5¹¹

"O Hope! Dazzling, radiant Hope! What a change thou bringest to the hopeless; brightening the darkened paths, and cheering the lonely way." Aimee Semple McPherson¹²

⁸ Religious Science Founder

⁹ Spiritual teacher

¹⁰ New International Version (NIV)

¹¹ J.B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English*, Revised Edition (NYC: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1972)

¹² Aimee Semple McPherson was a Pentecostal evangelist and pastor and the founder of the Foursquare Gospel Church.

“The secret of health for both mind and body is not to mourn for the past, worry about the future, or anticipate troubles... but to live in the present moment wisely and earnestly.” Buddha¹³

"By following the teaching of Jesus Christ and seeking guidance of the Most High, [one] does not leave room for a negative thought to enter. Health, or harmony, is the one presence and the one power in the universe." - Myrtle Fillmore¹⁴

“...Health is wholeness, and it is our normal state.” Nona L. Brooks¹⁵

"God is both within us and without us. [God] is the source of all life; the creator of universe behind universe; and of unimaginable depths of inter-stellar space and of light-years without end. But [God] is also the indwelling life of our own little selves. And just as a whole world full of electricity will not light a house unless the house itself is prepared to receive that electricity, so the infinite and eternal life of God cannot help us unless we are prepared to receive that life within ourselves. Only the amount of God that we can get in us will work for us...As soon as we learn that God does things through us (not for us), the matter becomes as simple as breathing, as inevitable as sunrise." Agnes Sanford¹⁶

"We are all 'natural-born healers' for the simple reason that the healing presence of God is within all [people], and all of us can contact It with our thoughts." Joseph Murphy¹⁷

"Do not tell me you are sick or broken in spirit; the spirit cannot be sick or broken, because it is of God." Ella Wheeler Wilcox¹⁸

¹³ An ancient Eastern mystic who was called “the Buddha,” meaning awakened or enlightened one. Followers of his teachings are known as Buddhists. His teachings focused on freeing human beings from suffering and helping others awaken to their innate potential.

¹⁴ Myrtle Fillmore co-founded with her husband Charles the Unity School of Christianity

¹⁵ Nona Brooks was a co-founder of Divine Science.

¹⁶ Agnes Sanford was a Christian writer and charismatic healer.

¹⁷ Joseph Murphy was a Divine Science minister, teacher, and writer.

¹⁸ Ella Wheeler Wilcox was a syndicated columnist and poet.

"You are not merely the physical body that you identify with out of habit. Your essential state is a field of infinite possibilities." Deepak Chopra¹⁹

What Difference Does it Make?

Why consider the thoughts of New Thought ministers, Pentecostal faith healers, physicians, poets, statespersons, mystics, psychologists, and contributors to the Judeo-Christian bible? How can reflecting on the thoughts and observations of men and women spanning more than 3000 years help us live better lives?

Notice what the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 12.7-9)

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit...(New International Version)

But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit...(King James Version)

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit...(English Standard Version)

And to each hath been given the manifestation of the Spirit for profit; for to one through the Spirit hath been given a word of wisdom, and to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; and to another faith in the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healings in the same Spirit...(Young's Literal Translation)

In each of the translations above, what do you notice? There isn't a single gift of healing; there are *gifts* of healing! Multiple gifts to help make sure the church lives as well as possible.

¹⁹ Deepak Chopra is a well known author on spiritual matters and is by training a medical doctor.

We reflect on the thoughts of the bible and of great contemporary thinkers because whether from the mind of a scientist or an artist or a philosopher or a preacher...over and over the word of encouragement comes to us offering us the hope of health and wholeness. Health seems to be the divine will for us, and don't we pray "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"?!²⁰

Healing vs. Cure

T.W. was diagnosed with cancer at age 63. It was aggressive, and had to be treated aggressively. Over the next two years he had repeated rounds of chemotherapy, several surgeries, and a great deal of pain medication. Every time he would undergo a treatment, his family and friends would hope and pray that this time the cancer would go into remission and not return.

During the two years of aggressive treatments, T.W. began to pray. He didn't pray for a miracle, but simply to know God better. He prayed for his loved ones who were sad because he was suffering. He prayed for his wife who would be left alone if he should die.

Also during those two years, T.W. became more demonstrative and communicative with his children and grandchildren. He became more affectionate with his wife. They grew closer than they had ever been.

His wife, who had always been very ill herself, found the strength during this difficult time to care for her ailing husband. She even managed to give him shots. In fact, he preferred that she be the one to administer them! Towards the end of T.W.'s illness, his wife had a mild heart-attack, but she didn't know it. It wasn't discovered until later. She survived it and didn't even notice it while she was needed by her husband; and she lived another two decades!

At age 65, T.W. died. But medicine gave him two years of life that he wouldn't have had otherwise, and during those two years his relationship with God and with his family grew stronger. His wife discovered that she was much stronger and more capable than she had ever imagined herself to be. As it turned out, T.W. was not cured of his cancer, but he did experience a great deal of healing in his life!

- Ella Wilcox tells us that the spirit cannot be broken.

²⁰ Matthew 6.10

- Myrtle Fillmore uses the words “health” and “harmony” as synonyms.
- St. Paul tells us there are multiple gifts of healing – different ways to be healed.
- Eleanor Roosevelt talks about the strength and courage to face what is at hand.
- Ram Dass says healing means feeling closer to God.
- Ernest Holmes says healing comes from various modalities and we can try them all.

We all hope to be cured when we are ill, and there are many ways that we can seek to be cured. But, healing is not limited to “cure.” Healing is about being “whole,” recognizing that we are more than our bodies. We are Mind. We are Spirit. We are divine Ideas in God’s Imagination. When we live in communion with God, in right relationship with others, with inner peace and sharing love with others, we are experiencing the wholeness of life. This may reduce physical pain and even extend our earthly lives, but spiritual healing is being aware that we are spiritual beings of light and love and living as if we really believed that, in this moment, right here and right now.

Jesus offered wholeness (salvation), and still does. When we embrace our wholeness, we may even be cured, or at least feel better. But regardless of outer circumstances and conditions, our wholeness and spiritual perfection can be experienced in an holy instant!

Prayer by Charles Fillmore

“I faithfully affirm: Through Jesus Christ, God’s vitalizing energy floods my whole being, and I am healed.” (**Keep A True Lent**)

Peace

“**Peace** I leave with you; my own **peace** I give to you.” Jesus, John 14.27

“Still in thy right hand carry gentle **peace**, to silence envious tongues. Be just and fear not: Let all the ends thou aim’st at be thy country’s, thy God’s, and truth’s.” Shakespeare

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace**, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” St. Paul, Galatians 5.22-23

“Be **still**, and know that I am God.” Psalm 46.10

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“You keep in perfect **peace** all who trust in you...” Isaiah 26.3

“**Peace** is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but the means by which we arrive at the goal.” Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“**Peace** comes from within. Do not seek it without.” Buddha

“**Peace** is its own reward.” Gandhi

“When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know **peace**.” Jimi Hendrix

“**Peace** is not something you wish for; it’s something you make, something you do, something you are, and something you give away.” Robert Fulghum

Prayer by Charles Fillmore

“I praise God for the peace of my own higher self. I rejoice and am glad in the possession of the Holy City within. With my inner vision I see the gates open wide, and holy peace pervades my consciousness.” (KATL)

Heaven

“The kingdom of heaven is near.” Matthew 3.2

“The kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17.21

“Heaven is not a locality, but a divine state of Mind in which all the manifestations of Mind are harmonious and immortal...It is Harmony; the reign of Spirit; government by the divine Principle; spirituality; bliss; the atmosphere of Soul.” Mary Baker Eddy (**Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures**)

“Heaven is everywhere present. It is the orderly, lawful adjustment of God’s kingdom in [the human] mind, body and affairs; it is the Christ consciousness, the realm of divine ideas, a state of consciousness in harmony with the thoughts of God. Heaven is within every one of us; a place, a conscious sphere of mind, having all the attractions described or imagined as belonging to heaven. I realize that faith in Spirit and the ultimate dominance of the good in me will restore me to the heavenly consciousness from which I descended.” (KATL)

Life is eternal, without beginning and without end. Heaven isn’t a destination, but a reality to be experienced. This experience can last

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forever more, but it need not wait until after the death of the human body. The heavenly consciousness can be accessed here and now, and we can continue grow into it more fully throughout all time and beyond time.

Prayer by Charles Fillmore

“Heaven within is one perfect harmonious life, substance, and intelligence, and I rejoice.” (KATL)

Miracles

In *A Course in Miracles*, a miracle isn't a dramatic intervention into the natural world, changing something, making the impossible suddenly and magically possible. Rather, a miracle is simply a change in perception. To see something differently is to experience a miracle. To see what you didn't see before, to consider what you hadn't considered before is to change your entire experience and expectation, and such dramatic changes within oneself is miraculous. To see our unity with God and our innate and unblemished sacred value is the miracle we seek most diligently and from that miracle many other blessings will come; but the primary miracle is to change our thinking and that miracle will result in positive changes in our lives. Hagar looking up and suddenly seeing a well in the wilderness that she had previously overlooked is an example of such a change in perception/miracle (Genesis).

“God never performs miracles, if by miracle is meant a departure from universal law. Whatever the prophets did was done by the operation of laws inherent in Being and open to the discovery of every [person].” (KATL)

Prayer by Charles Fillmore

“The clear unclouded mind of Jesus Christ dominates all my thinking, and I discern the omnipresent laws of Spirit.” (KATL)

Communion

Our Sacrament of Holy Communion is an act of sharing elements of grape and grain. A Sacrament is an outward sign of an inward event, a symbol of grace that is already present with us, for us, in us. But while we celebrate our unity with God and with all life by sharing bread and a common cup, it is the unity itself and our awareness of it which is communion.

We call the bread, or the sharing of the bread, Christ's body. It is the body politic, the community of faith, the seekers and students of Truth who gather together to learn together and grow together in Christ's

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name. We are the body of Christ and sharing bread together reminds us of our unity, our comm-unity.

We call the cup of wine (non-alcoholic wine or juice in our church) the cup of blessing, or the “life” of Christ. In the early church, the words “this is my blood” were used for the sharing of the cup. Blood in antiquity was a symbol of life; in fact, in ancient biology it was believed that blood contained the life-force. It was sacred, even magical in primitive cultures. The cup of life for us symbolizes divine life which flows through us, circulating as spiritual ideas in our consciousness which empower, heal, uplift, comfort, strengthen, and enlighten. The life of God is unlimited and it is our life; we celebrate this truth by sharing the cup of life together at the communion feast of unconditional, all-inclusive love.

Holy Communion, the Agape Meal, the Great Thanksgiving, the Eucharist, the Lord’s Supper...this “communion” can be acted out in ritual (as we do in Metropolitan Community Churches) but is primarily a spiritual event that isn’t dependent on anything external to us such as bread or wine. Mary Baker Eddy described the spiritual understanding of Holy Communion this way: “Our Eucharist is spiritual communion with the one God. Our bread, ‘which cometh down from heaven,’ is Truth...Our wine the inspiration of Love...” (**Science & Health**)

Regarding the spiritual nature of Communion, Fillmore said “As our mind and heart are cleansed of untrue thoughts and beliefs, and as we feed on living ideas, our body takes on the life and light of our divinity, and eventually will become living light.” (**KATL**)

Prayer by Charles Fillmore

“I affirm [that divinity’s] pure life and substance are constantly renewing and rebuilding [God’s] holy temple, my body.” (**KATL**)

Atonement

Rather than imagining ourselves as separate from our divine Source and needing some action (on our part or on our behalf by a chosen one) to bridge the gap between us and God, our progressive brand of Christianity believes that God is omnipresent and therefore we could never be separate from the Presence that is everywhere fully present. So, rather than speaking of atonement as trying to get back to God, we speak of it as at-one-ment, recognizing our unity with God. *At-One-ment* is the reminder that we are not separated from our Source, never have been, never can be. We are one with the One; remembering this changes our perceptions and our experiences in life.

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“[Jesus’ spirituality] had a living God in it, a God that lived in him and spoke through him. It [was and] is a religion of life...[Christ followers] are to be lights that glow with a perpetual current from the one omnipresent energy.” Fillmore (**KATL**)

Prayer by Charles Fillmore

“Declaring my unity with [divine] power, I affirm [that] the redeeming word of Jesus Christ...makes me whole and perfect.” (**KATL**)

Assignment

Reflect on the blessings discussed in this lesson: Healing, Peace, Heaven, Miracles, Communion, and Atonement.

Which blessing are you most needing right now?

- Do you need to embrace and celebrate your wholeness (healing)?
- Do you need to discover the deep well of peace within you and begin to express that peace more abundantly?
- Do you need to believe that Heaven is a divine reality accessible to you right now (Heaven)?
- Do you need to change your perspective to be able to see possibilities you may have so far overlooked (miracles)?
- Do you need to feel a deeper closeness to your divine Source (communion)?
- Do you need to remember that God is omnipresent and is right where you are at all times (atonement/at-one-ment)?

Whichever blessing you need in your life, reflect on it and reread the part of the lesson that dealt with that particular blessing. And say the affirmative prayer by Fillmore claiming that blessing. Do this every day, several times a day. Notice how you feel as you practice this throughout the week.

LESSON 6

Reflecting on Holy Week: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, & Easter

Read the reflections each day of Holy Week and say the affirmative prayers.

Spirit & Truth Reflections: 2011

Palm Sunday

Remembering who we are

"The entrance into Jerusalem has all the elements of the theatre of the absurd: the poor king...riding on a donkey...even parading without a permit!" David Kirk

On Palm Sunday we traditionally recall the story of Jesus riding into Jerusalem. According to the tale, crowds of people had heard about this rural, peasant teacher/healer and they were excited about this celebrity coming to town. They welcomed him enthusiastically, but soon thereafter, things got tough for Jesus and he was arrested, tried, convicted and executed. The crowds can sing our praises; they can turn on us as well. But who we are (divine beings in a spiritual universe) is true no matter what is happening around or even to us. Palm Sunday reminds us that we are much more than the circumstances of our lives.

Prayer Treatment

Regardless of appearances, today I remember the truth: I AM a child of God.

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Monday of Holy Week

The *scentuality* of Lent

"Martha warned him. 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead four days.' Jesus called loudly, 'Lazarus, come out!' John 11.39-40

Experience the story with all of your senses. When Jesus brings Lazarus out of death's grip, can you smell the aroma of life and reunion? Imagine the smell of celebration as Mary pours costly perfume over Jesus' feet, gently wiping them with her long hair. Smell the sweet and musky scent of pure nard, the perfume brides brought to the bedchamber. Mary had prepared him with the fragrant smell of vulnerable love and devotion in anticipation of death covering him with its own breathtaking scent.

Prayer Treatment

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Breathe in the scent of this holy moment, God with us; God in us. God's love is all around. The faint smell of lilies and resurrection is in the air. And so it is.

Rev. Robyn Provis, M.T.S., D.Min.

Tuesday of Holy Week

Demonstration

"I am a Knight of Heaven and this is the shrine, yours and mine, to prove it." H.H. the Dalai Seng Shih

We don't need religion to make us feel guilty; we could do that without religion. We don't need religion to make us feel afraid; we could be fearful without religion. We don't need religion to make us feel alone; we could entertain that illusion without religion's help. Religion at its best calls us to be our best, reminding us of how good, in Truth, we really are. Religion, at its best, calls us to demonstrate the Good that is within us, to manifest blessings of peace, joy, and fulfillment. Today let's answer religion's truest and highest call.

Prayer Treatment

God in me is all-powerful! I AM ready to demonstrate divine power in every area of my life. I call forth blessings now. Amen.

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Wednesday of Holy Week

Time to reflect

"You can look at a slum or a peasant village, but it is only by entering into the world – by living in it – that you begin to understand what it is like to be powerless, to be like Christ." Penny Lernoux

Holy Week has always been, for me, a time to reflect on my life and how the presence of Christ is filling me. As I strive to live into the gospel message of inclusive love for all people, I remember how Christ was the example of this message – always working, always teaching us to share the blessing of unconditional love and grace to all of God's people. Take some time during this week to consider what you have to give to this world, to your neighbor, and to your faith community and reflect on how you can live out this empowering gospel message. Reach out of your comfort zone and be an example of Christ in this world.

Prayer Treatment

Today and through this holy week, I will reflect on the meaning of Christ's ministry and I will take the time to recognize the sacred value of all people. Amen.

Ms. Anne Atwell, seminarian

Rev. Dr. Durrell Watkins

Maundy Thursday

Jesus' mandate

"God indeed is All of everything; God is absolute and dwells in all things. Nothing exists beyond God. God embraces the whole of Reality."

Nectarean Shower of Holy Doctrines (Seicho-No-Ie Sutra)

On Maundy Thursday we recall Jesus' mandate for us to love one another. Of course, God is Love and Religion at its best always calls us to honor God by loving ourselves and loving our neighbors (and everyone is our neighbor!). When we celebrate Holy Communion, we are sharing a Love Feast, performing a ritual reminding us that we are one with God and with all God's creation (grain, grape, fellow human-beings, etc.). God is omnipresent Love, and when we love we express the God in us.

Prayer Treatment

Divine Love, through and as me, is revealed today and blesses everyone with whom I share this day. Amen.

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Good Friday

A day of remembrance

"I think of those who were truly great...The names of those who in their lives fought for life, who wore at their hearts the fire's center. Born of the sun they traveled a short while towards the sun and left the vivid air signed with their honor." Stephen Spender

Behind the sacred stories filled with myth and metaphor, there is a man who lived out his humanity so fully that people encountered Something divine within him. Behind the rituals, traditions, and sacraments there is a prophet who spoke so powerfully, lived so courageously, loved so extravagantly, and gave so completely that we feel compelled to honor and memorialize him. On this day, our hearts are heavy as we think of the injustice Jesus suffered on a Roman cross. But we also remember the man, the hero, the one who dared to show us that we are all children of God. Today we remember and we honor the one we call God's Anointed: Jesus the Christ.

Prayer Treatment

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Dear Jesus, I don't celebrate your death, but I do honor your life and I remember the gift you were and remain to humanity. Amen.

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Holy Saturday

God is good

"We are forced by intuition, logic, and manifest evidence to the conclusion that the Creator of the universe... is wise and good. This being true, we cannot accept descriptions of [God or God's] acts that contradict that primal conclusion." Charles Fillmore

There wasn't much good about "Good" Friday. Jesus was tortured – I find nothing of God in torture. Jesus was brutally killed – I find nothing beneficial to humankind in such an act of violence. I don't credit God with the events of Golgotha; but I do see God at work in not letting Golgotha have the last word. God, the Good, doesn't cause or delight in evil; but God, the Good, can raise us up, heal us, renew our hope, and restore our dignity when the appearance of evil strikes. As we remember Good Friday and look to Easter, let's remember, Easter is the part that involved our Good God.

Prayer Treatment

God is Good! When circumstances seem not good, I trust God to lift me to a new experience of hope and healing. And so it is.

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Easter Sunday – Eastertide begins

Alleluia! Christ is risen; Christ is risen indeed!

Easter for us

"For I remember it is Easter morn, and life and love and peace are all new born." Alice Freeman Palmer

Stories of the Phoenix rising from the ashes of its own destruction, of Hercules and Julius Casear rising to the heavens to watch over us, of Elijah escaping death and rising to the heavens in a whirlwind, of Osiris and Lazarus returning to life, even of the Dalai Lama returning to earthly life again and again are all well known. Even the Pharisees believed in resurrection; it isn't unique to Christian doctrine. But the Christian version of the concept is very powerful; it tells us that dignity can't stay dead! When we fall, we can get back up. For

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Christians, Easter isn't just something that did happen; it's something that does happen!

Prayer Treatment

May the Christ in us lift us up this morning and forever more!

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