

The Anatomy of Peace 3



Pick Up the Coins



Sunday lesson given at Unity Center of Christianity in Baltimore, Maryland, January 26, 2020.



Hi Friends —

Audio clips of music, meditation and lesson from today's service at Unity Center of Christianity in Baltimore are at the end of this post. I hope you enjoy them and that you will visit us the next time you are in Baltimore. Here are the notes from the Sunday lesson.

Several times today, and everyday, we are presented with a choice—a choice that changes our life. It may be a choice to apologize. It may be a choice to help a neighbor or friend with some need that we can easily satisfy. It may be a choice to share some piece of information with a co-worker.

The situation that presents the choice does not need to be all that significant. It may be a simple opportunity to lend a helping hand or it may be something that will require an change of our plans or may inconvenience us in some way. What is significant is not the size of the commitment to help, but rather the commitment to be helpful. It is a choice to do the right thing.

A wise Harvard business professor who recently died once wrote that it is easier to do the right thing 100% of the time instead of doing the right thing 98% of the time. The professor is Clayton Christiansen and his essay is [How Will You Measure Your Life?](#) He shares a story about a time when he might have chosen to abandon his principles “just this once” and concludes that life is one “unending stream of extenuating circumstances” and that giving in “just this once” leads to a lifetime of regret and missed opportunity to define what one stands for.

The same conclusion is made in chapters 8 through 11 in *The Anatomy of Peace*, the topic of our third look at how we can live life with a peaceful heart. Let me review what we’ve covered in the earlier two parts.

We began, as we always do in Metaphysical Christianity, with an understanding that changing our thinking changes our life, that it is our beliefs which guide our thoughts, our feelings and our actions and which ultimately lead to a successful life. What is new and striking for New Thought Christians is that, while our self-beliefs are important, it just may be that our beliefs about others are more important still. In other words the way we see others may be more impactful than the way we see ourselves.

We may see others as people or to see them as objects. To see the other as a person is what we would recognize in Fillmore understanding as “beholding the Christ in you.” If our hearts are at war we do not see the other as a person, rather we see the other as an object. An object, according to *The Anatomy of Peace*, is either an obstacle, a vehicle or an irrelevancy. We blame and punish obstacles to get them out of our way so we can do what we want. We manipulate and control vehicles so that we can get to where we want to be. And we marginalize and exclude irrelevancies so they don’t clutter up our goals in life.

Our second lesson from *The Anatomy of Peace* introduced the concept of collusion. Collusion is when two people engage one another in such a way that they make life miserable for each other and inhibit either one from achieving what they wish. Here is a video I played in that talk, given two weeks ago at Unity Center of Baltimore:

Collusion occurs when our hearts are at war. It is what happens when our emotions become engaged with the thought of others as objects. Our conscious mind perceives the other as object and our emotions engage with others to carry out the war.

Today's lesson moves from our conscious mind (seeing others as objects) and our subconscious mind (engaging others on an emotional level in war) to the choices we make each day in life—our behavior. As said above, these choices are typically small matters and they seem insignificant. But, as Clayton Christiansen says, life is an “unending stream” of small, insignificant matters that, combined, shape our life.

Here's how it works. First we believe that the thoughts of our mind are private. That the processing of an idea in our thinking process is not known to either God nor to other people. Rene Descartes put this idea in a well-known axiom—“I think, therefore I am.” That is to say that my experience in life is my own, separate, individualized matter, affecting only me and my world. Our lives are separate.

The problem with that idea, as Martin Buber and others have pointed out, is that we are one—one with God and one with our fellow human beings. We are not separate. We are bonded to one another in deep and intimate ways, not only physically, but also in mind. Our minds are not private, not private to God and not private to others. We know when we are being treated as an object by others and others sense the same from objectifying thoughts coming from our own mind. And the “God of our being” knows all.

That we know that the God of being knows all leads to what we know as “justification.” Justifying the choices we make is a high-maintenance activity. If we treat others as people, not as objects, there is no need for justification. As expressions of the God's divine idea of perfect humanity, it is our natural mode of being. We help when help is appropriate. We clean up our own messes in life, even when no one is watching. And we are humble enough to ask others for help when our needs are not being met—we do so because others are people, just like us, and people are naturally inclined to care.

However we take on a high-priced burden that we did not previously have when we make choices that our deepest sense tells us is wrong: *the burden of justification*. How we justify ourselves is the topic of next week's talk, but know for now that there is no need for justification if we make choices that are aligned with our highest sense of the humanity of others.

A quick look at what Jesus teaches in the last part of [chapter 5 of the Sermon on the Mount](#) reveals why this is so. Jesus speaks about the high price of anger, of lust, of abandoning life-long partners, of lying, of retaliation, of playing favorites and of appearing to be holier than everyone else. All these are behaviors, not acts of consciousness. And all these leave us with broken hearts are war with others.

One may ask, as the western Christian church asks, “who is the judge of what is appropriate?” Emilie Cady was asked a similar question when she wrote about desire. The desire of our deepest sense of Truth comes from God tugging at our sensibilities. We know what is right and what is wrong, independent of the Bible and it's many interpreters and independent of the church traditions and their many preachers. We

have the gifts of Love and Wisdom, working in tandem, as a pipeline from God to us as God's beloved children, to know what is just and good. That is how metaphysical Christianity differs from evangelical Christianity.

However the question can be answered another way. You see, there is no need for justification unless we are objectifying others. So do we find ourselves justifying our actions? After we have made our choice, how is the state of our soul? How do we view others? How do we view ourselves? How do we view life in general? It's safe to ask these questions, because, if I'm wrong and our minds are truly private then there can be no one to shame us when we ask such questions.

But, if I'm right and our minds are not private, then we may find our lives in a turmoil of self-justifying beliefs about ourselves and others. If so, then know that justifications are the red flags of a heart at war. We will learn more about them next week.

Mark

Sunday, January 26, 2020

Colleen Leggett, Soloist:



0:00 / 2:46

Elizabeth Frederick-Carter, Meditation



0:00 / 6:10

Mark Hicks, Speaker



0:00 / 29:09

Karter Jaymes and Mary Goldsborough, Put a Little Love in Your Heart:



0:00 / 4:33



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