

Questions and Answers from Joel (6/17/17)

Q: The most frequently asked question in the world is: How is it, if there is a God, that there can be so much sin, disease, death, lack, and limitation, and wars – evil – on earth? How is it, if there is a God, that these horrors can take place on earth?

A: The answer that has always been given is, “We do not know where evil comes from, or how it starts. We just know it’s here, and perhaps that’s God’s way of chastising us or punishing us or waking us up.” For what? What have we done? Now, you know the answer to that question because you have the answer in the 91st Psalm, in the 15th chapter of John, in the 8th chapter of Romans, in Galatians, and in Philippians. The answer is always the same: If you dwell in the secret place of the Most High, none of these things can come nigh your dwelling place.

If you acknowledge that you are the branch; that the invisible Christ in you is the vine; and that you are all one in God, you bear fruit richly. But when you lose that word, or loose it, or let it out of your consciousness; when you do not hold that word in consciousness, then you are as a branch that is cut off and withers. So in the end, the responsibility comes down to the world’s ignorance of its conscious oneness with God.

Now, none of us are guilty of having inaugurated that or perpetuated it, and so it would seem that we have no right to be punished for it. But the law says that we are punished even for the violation of laws we do not know exist. So we are. Only as an activity of truth takes place in your consciousness do you become separate from the iniquities of human living, from the discords and inharmonies. There is no outside God or mysterious power that can let you go on in ignorance of the law without the penalty of the law.

So it has nothing to do with an outside God. It has to do with an activity of truth that takes place in your consciousness, revealing to you the nature of God and your oneness with It. That is why one person may be a better healer than another person – not because God is any different for one than another; not because God will operate in or through one to a greater extent than another; but because one is maintaining themselves in a higher degree of conscious union with God than another. In other words, the responsibility always rests within ourselves, as to what degree of conscious union we maintain with our source.

It is not a bit different than the pianist or the violinist or the singer. The degree of their expressed harmony is the degree of their willingness to practice, and not only time of practice, but correctness. A person may well practice ten hours a day and never learn to play the piano or the violin, or to sing. That is conceivable, because they are not going about it in the correct way. There are people driving automobiles on the road for ten years that still do not know how to drive and are continuously involved in accidents. It is because they have never learned to drive correctly, although they may be driving six and eight hours a day.

It is not always our zeal, and it is not always the time we put into it. It is the correctness. Many people have been practicing or studying metaphysics for thirty years, who know no more about it now than they knew in the first year, because they have never had the principle given to them correctly. So while they may have been diligent in their study and practice, they were diligent in *incorrect* study or *incorrect* practice. And that will get them

nowhere. So it is with us. There are principles, and if we practice in accord with those principles; if we abide in the *correct* word, we will develop the consciousness.

Now, the question then is: how can there be a God and all of these discords in the world? And the answer is: There is a God, but *there is not a God in this world*. In spite of tens of thousands of churches, there is still no God in this world because there isn't a church on the face of the globe that worships God. There isn't a church on the face of the globe that knows God. There are individuals in every church who have contact with God, but there is no church that has contact with God. The contact with God cannot be through a church. It has to be through an individual. There is no such thing as mass contact with God, nor can there be vicarious contact with God.

Ah yes, I may have a contact with God, and you in some degree benefit by my contact, but that's all. In the end, if you do not make your own contact, you will be benefiting only in a very, very minor degree. It is not possible for a church, for a priest, for a bishop, for a cardinal, or for a pope to make your demonstration for you. They can – just as we can – reveal to you the 91st Psalm or the 15th chapter of John and ask you if you are letting the word abide in you, and tell you that that is the way toward salvation. That is their function, and that is our function.

Now God does not enter the affairs of men, except through the consciousness of the children of God. A letter comes yesterday from a city asking if it is possible to give help in a matter of a strike. And the strange thing is that it's only a few weeks ago, that in that very same city in another industry, a similar situation was handled without a strike and with harmony. And yet the answer had to go out: "No, we cannot specifically help this one." Why? Because no one involved in the situation has asked for the help.

In other words, if you do not ask for help for yourself or reach out for it, no one can inflict it on you. Yes, there are times when a parent can ask help for a child, or when we can ask help for those not mentally or physically capable of asking for help for themselves. But that is another thing because a direct contact has been established through someone close to the situation. But when it comes to our neighbor over here, our knowing the truth here, our conscious realization of God, may bring some degree of harmony to them. It may bring an awakening to them eventually. It may even bring a healing in their family, if one were immediately necessary. But that is about as far as it would go until they themselves open their consciousness to the Spirit of God.

And so let us remember this: in proportion as we open our consciousness to the activity of God, just in that degree do we receive it, until that moment of transition when it takes over completely. And then from then on in, we live in that atmosphere, and it is always living our lives, and we have no further concern. But up to that moment, the responsibility is on our shoulder. We may reach out to that God today and have a healing. We may actually bring the presence and activity of God into our experience to such an extent that we have a wonderful healing. But that doesn't mean that we're going to have all harmony tomorrow, because in the early stages of our student days, disciple days, the very moment we have received the benefit of the activity of God, our thoughts go back to our human way of living, and our human concerns, and our human anxieties, and we shut ourselves off again.

Then in some trying moment, we reach out and establish that contact again. And again we receive a benefit. And then again we go back to our human ways of living and thinking, and

this goes on for a time until we awaken to the fact that we're having too many of these healings and then discords; then more healings and more discords. And we give a little more attention, probably a daily attention, to this union with God. Then we find that we're having quicker healings, better healings, more healings, or we're having less need of healing because now the activity and realization of God is occupying more of our consciousness than it had been up to now.

All right, as we continue in that way, we find that instead of giving thirty minutes a day to the realization of God, eventually we're dwelling in God four hours, five hours, six hours in a day, and in that degree we are experiencing more of harmony, less of discord. And so that goes on until the first thing you know, if we find that if we could measure a twenty-four hour day, that probably the thought of God, or Christ, or spiritual truth, was active in us for seven, eight, nine, or ten hours out of the twenty-four. By that time we are right on the verge where the balance swings over into the other side of the scale, and It takes us over. And then we no longer have to give thought to It.

We never have to think about making conscious contact with It. It has made contact with us, and It maintains Itself as our consciousness, and then everything we do is a spontaneous action, because it is Its action expressed in and through us. Then these evils of the earth, the snare, the fowler, the pit, the fall, none of these things come nigh our dwelling place.

And so always have available the answer to that question: How can there be a God and all of the discords also? There can be, until God is made an activity of our individual consciousness; until the Christ actually fills us and becomes the law unto us, the soul, the spirit, the animating principle of our being. Then we find that heaven and earth are one. The harmonies of heaven have become the harmonies on earth. But that can only be through union, through the activity of the Christ consciously realized within our own being.

[Excerpt from Recording #123, 1955 Kailua Study Group, Tape 14, Side 2, "Practicing the Presence."]