

Finding sacred ground

A talk by Greg Deabler who leads the Course in Miracles discussion group at the church on Tuesday evenings 9 months of the year.

Good evening, and welcome.

First off, since this talk is entitled 'Finding Sacred Ground', I feel obligated to mention sacred ground at least twice in the next 20 minutes. And next, I'll apologize in advance for anything I say that I thought was funny and you don't. That's your judgment, not mine, and I am trying to learn not to be responsible for your judgments. I have enough of my own to deal with.

So I'd like to say that I believe that virtually all of the estimated **6,624,037,038** people in this world (as of Oct 12, 2007 at 2 am GMT) are looking for sacred ground in some way. Most probably don't call it that.

If nothing else, there are a lot of dreams and desires being generated at every second. Some are sacred by my standards, and some aren't. We all have dreams – and they all are kindled by a common wish to be happy, to experience some kind of fulfillment. Stop and consider your own desires, and the effort spent in trying to make them happen. Whatever your desire, it is founded on feeling some scarcity, some lack. If we don't look at the lack, but choose to focus on the effort, we call that positive thinking. If instead we look at the other side of the coin and always see what we lack, we call that negative thinking. But whether you see it as a blessing or a curse, it is true.

In my life, a loving marriage was one those sacred dreams that was built into my belief system as a cornerstone of the brick house that would be my safety from the wolves of despair and anxiety. I'll come back to that one. Another one was material prosperity; another was being physically beautiful and healthy, another was knowing a lot of stuff: practical stuff, entertaining stuff and, as my life unfolded, mystical stuff. The list goes on. We look for a unique expression of something, ownership of something, some thing which is going to make us special in our own eyes and in the eyes of others.

And yet, all these pursuits, whether altruistic or selfish, have common aspects. One is that the resulting satisfaction is always fleeting. When we do attain a goal, consider the satisfaction – one latte is never enough in life, the endorphin release from reaching the summit of an 11,000 foot peak always fades, I always want more of ... whatever it is I think I want.

And... there is another side to this game. What about all the things in the world that annoy us? The minor irritations like rush hour traffic, and the biggies like racial genocide. Our own personally-tailored collection of buttons, ours that other people push and the ones we like to push in other people - the ones that when we have had enough of someone's annoying behavior to push us past the limit of acceptance, we usually end up pushing – expressing anger or trying to make them feel guilty. Or maybe our response just stays within us as an unspoken judgment. And then, of course, we have the inevitable guilt when we respond to something in a non-loving way.

On to guilt...the ego is a master when it comes to slapping us with guilt and then immediately helping us to project or repress the responsibility for the cause of the guilt. Guilt can push down into our subconscious very quickly, in some cases faster than the conscious mind can think, so that we can at least do one thing without guilt – and that is to say: “I don’t feel much guilt about my shortcomings, nobody is perfect, and anyhow, I am not bad at some of the things I do.” Positive thinking, right? But all the while there is at the best a general uneasiness, and at the worst severe depression and anxiety over our sense of failure to be happy.

By this time our discomfort usually isn’t even associated with a particular memory or action, which makes the source all the more obscure. And so we try to keep ourselves busy pursuing new goals, mastering new things and new ideas to keep the wolves at bay. We pray for achievement of our goals and look to each other for reassurance that I’m OK and you’re OK.

One thing all these pursuits have in common is that they always seem worthy of attainment, and I am justified in pursuing them. After all, the collective of 6.5 billion people can’t be wrong, can they?

And another thing worth noting here is the maxim that “Appearances are deceiving”, both in terms of what we try to get out of our pursuits, and what they really have to offer us.

So, I’ll come back to me and try to illustrate. Let’s see, where was I...oh yeah, I was building my brick house so that the big bad wolf couldn’t huff and puff and blow it down. Marriage, wealth, respect. My big three. As it turned out though, there were more basic building blocks that I needed to work on in my life.

At the time, my ideas of growth were standing in the way of how real growth would happen. The opportunities for real growth eventually did show up. My marriage ended and so did my career. And with those breakdowns, I stuffed enough anger, resentment, loathing and guilt down into the corners of my mind-- conscious and subconscious, to keep me busy for a very long time.

And you know, the ego is so crafty ... it wasn’t so stupid as to tell me “It’s not your fault”, and that it was the circumstances and people around me who were to blame for my issues. That would be too easy to see through. So I carried around a good size load of conscious guilt for what I had made of my life. And at the same time, I projected a lot of it onto the people around me (my business partners and of course, the big Kahuna...my ex). Of course I had problems, but she obviously had a lot more, and I had good reason to resent her, no, dare I say it, hate her...and then of course the ‘Top Ten Reasons I Hate my Ex’ mental tape would play in my thoughts to completely obscure any attempt to see the real cause of my upset.

So here was this cauldron of nastiness merrily bubbling away inside of me, happily stirred by the ego, being sugar-coated by this image of myself as a fundamentally spiritual person. After all, I was the one who had entered a monastery as a young man

and been blessed with a number of revelations over the years. But the truth was that the nastiness wasn't far beneath the surface, totally poisoning and covering over any fulfillment of the desire for peace and understanding that shared a portion of my mind with this seething cauldron.

This is important to note: Although the natural awareness of peace may be subverted by the guilt we so freely lavish on ourselves and project onto others when we are experiencing periods of prolonged stress, no amount of darkness can ever put out the desire for peace entirely. In a sense, that desire is confirmation of who and what we are as human beings, and there is nothing of this world that can touch that. Our first prayer should always be thankfulness that we can't truly change in any way what we really are.

But we can sure be mistaken in our attempts to bring that peace and happiness into our awareness, and that is another thing we all share on our worldly journeys. We share variations of the same mistake. Trying to be happy in this world is like trying to get rid of quack grass in your garden by cutting the grass. **If you want to get rid of the quack grass, you have to get rid of the roots.**

The case of the jungle of guilt within us is actually even easier to deal with than quack grass. There is only one root instead of a bunch of roots, and although it will try to squirm away from our grasp when we try to get rid of it, the bottom line is that there is only one root, and when our desire sincerely asks for only one thing, it gives our desire a lot of power. So what does this have to do with a Course in Miracles and finding Sacred Ground? Everything!

When we are ready to take on the responsibility to let go of our resentments and anger, from the least to the greatest, our whole life will become one moment: In this moment we have but one lesson, function and purpose, and that is to let go of the blocks to the awareness of Love's presence.

- It is an opportunity to let go of the hope for a better past.
- An opportunity to understand that every circumstance of our life is not what it seems on the surface but is the exact same lesson no matter what the form.
- And what is that lesson? Our life is intended to present to us our anger, and our resentments in a form we can understand and consciously release. Here and now. And the only way to move past this world we perceive within our minds to the real world is by digging up all the subconscious roots of hatred and guilt within our minds, and looking at them with our Guidance, our Guides, Holy Spirit, our Higher Self, however you want to view and call the Bridge between you and God. They are the same thing. They don't *represent* the same thing, they *are* the same thing. That is the lesson that your life is really presenting to you. It is not what you feel guilty about, or what makes you angry, or what fills you with resentment. It is the fact that the circumstance is simply something you can perceive in your conscious mind, a gift, a mirror, given to you to see the blocks to love that you hold in a form you can recognize.

A Course in Miracles teaches that until we have removed every last vestige of guilt, we remain blind to the true immortal holy Self we share as One, the Christ within us.

And thus we come to the meaning of sacred ground in Chapter 26 of the text in A Course In Miracles.

“The holiest of all the spots on earth is where an ancient hatred has become a present love.”

I think that says it all. We need not think sacred ground is outside of ourselves. Our work, our real work, is within ourselves, with our thoughts. Everything you need to know to heal yourself and the world is already a part of you right now. It is not the form of the ritual you choose. It is the intent you hold in your mind. I’ll say that again...It is your inmost, sincere intent and how well you learn to hold it in your mind moment by moment that will bring the peaceful being you are to the foreground.

Our desire, our intent, is a powerful force, and when it is brought in line with the singular desire our Creator has for us to regain our real memory, a truly miraculous understanding and vision will start to dawn in our minds.

I would like to close with a quote from a popular author who has been inspired to help many people approach the lofty and ponderous ideas of A Course In Miracles. This is the closing paragraph of Gary Renard’s second book, ‘Your Immortal Reality.’ And by the way, I think his first book, ‘The Disappearance of the Universe,’ is a must read for those interested in finding out more about the A Course In Miracles.

“Each day that you forgive, the effects of all the world’s mistakes are melted as snow into a burning fire, No more guilt, no more karma, no more fear of what may be. For you have met yourself and declared your innocence, and all that follows is as natural as God.

No more birth, nor old death, these were just ideas. If you should come again to help a few more to find the way, so be it; but you are not a body, you are love, and it matters not where love appears to be. For being love, it cannot be wrong.

The day will come when pain is impossible, love is everywhere, and truth is all there is. You’ve longed for this forever, often silently and without knowing it. The knowledge of what you are is more certain now, and love has forgotten no one.

The day will come when the world will sing the song of spirit instead of weeping tones that hide the Voice for truth. The day will come when there is nothing left to forgive, and celebration with your sisters and your brothers is in order.

And then the day will come when there is no more need for days. And you will live as one forever in the holiness of your immortal reality.”

Thank you for listening.

