

Original Faith

Pulse of Spirit

April 12, 2023



DAVID KARCHERE *is a speaker and workshop leader who assists people to renew their Primal Spirituality—an experience that virtually all human beings know at birth, and that ideally grows as they mature.*

I encourage the follower of any faith to tune in to that original experience that is at the heart of their faith, whether it was the experience of Mohammed, Guru Nanak of the Sikh tradition, the Buddha, or Jesus Christ.

For people who feel an affinity with Jesus, here is what I suggest to follow out this practice.

I propose that, in our mind and heart, we walk back through history to the original experience of Jesus. Two thousand years is a long time. There has been a lot of water under the bridge since he walked the earth—a lot of religious practice, politics, war, and government based on religion. For Americans, we can go back in time through the history of evangelical Christianity in America; back through Protestant history to Martin Luther, who protested the religious practices of his day; and all the way back to the history of the Roman Catholic Church; and even the Roman Empire. We can go back through the days of the early Christians and the ministry of Peter and Paul, who brought their best vision and understanding of Jesus' message to the world.

In our minds and hearts, we can land ourselves in Israel at the time of Jesus' ministry. We can become a disciple of Jesus' original faith, shared with others. We can tune in to who he was, what he did, and what he taught, and let it become real for us now.

Christians have the same opportunity that the follower of any faith has, which is to, in their own heart and mind, sit at the feet of the great Teacher and become a disciple of their original faith and their original message.

Religion and spiritual teaching can be like a game of Telephone. There is the original experience of someone at the point of initiation. As they seek to share the experience, they bring a message to those who will listen. The message is repeated from person to person, spiritual community to community, from year to year, and from century to century. In many cases, by the time it reaches us, the message is a twisted shadow of what was originally experienced.

English-speaking people interested in Jesus' teachings benefit from the red-letter words in the King James Version of the Bible, which are purportedly a translation of Jesus' own words. Who knows what mischief authors and translators got up to over the millennia? But still, there is a simple, profound truth available to us in those words. And there is a record of the shining spirit of a man of great Love, courage, and compassion—a man who knew who he was and who he served.

Why is it that the spirit of this man shines so brightly through these words that have come down to us? Why is it so easy to feel his great heart and acknowledge the simple truth in the record of what he said? All this is hidden in plain sight in the red-letter words of the portion of the New Testament that is referred to as the Gospels.

Here is one of his sayings that is central to his message. If you want to look up the King James Version of it, it is in the 15th chapter of John, verse 13. This is my version, expressing an acknowledgment of male and female that was implicit in the King James Version but couched then in terms of masculine pronouns and references, as was common in that day.

Greater Love hath no woman or man than this, that they lay down their life for their friends.

Of course, there is a death-oriented way of looking at it. *I will die for you.*

Do you want your friend to die for you? Not really! That does not help. I do not believe that is what is being said.

Have *you* had the experience of laying down your life for another person? Being there for them, laying down your life energy, your Love, for them?

I am laying it down for you. I am here for you. Whatever is going on, I am with you. I am for you. I protect your heart. I commit my life force to uplift and support you.

With Keahi Ewa, I just conducted a 4-day training, *Becoming a Sun*, based on my book of the same name. The program has all kinds of opportunities for learning and experience. The way Keahi and I do it, as much as possible we participate in the process just because it is more enriching that way—we share the experience.

The training is a safe container. And where there is a safe container—a sense of being seen and understood instead of judged—a deeper truth reveals itself.

One of the things that comes out is that we really do, at the root of things, love one another. That fact gets clouded in the culture in which we live. So, to have a context where that Love is apparent—where it can be clearly felt and known—is a gift. It is a gift to be able to love another person. That was my experience.

Loving is not *trying* to love, is it? That is a whole different thing.

Love is laying down your life for another person, giving something that might make their path easier, that gives them a boost, that lends your insight, wisdom, and care to them.

This 4-day training is an exceptional circumstance where things can happen that do not necessarily occur in everyday life. But still, in everyday life, is it not an honor to love someone and to be allowed to love them? To be allowed to lay down your life for them? And to have what you are laying down for them be accepted and received? It *is* an honor.

Greater Love hath no woman or man than this, that they lay down their life for their friends.

I want to relate this message of Jesus to something else in the story. It is his prayer in the Book of John, chapter 17.

That they may be one, even as we are one.

It is a prayer for the oneness of humankind.

Today many people declare the oneness of all humanity. And it is a lofty and true vision. We are made to be one body of people, one race across the planet, no matter what culture, ethnicity, nationality, or race. We are one people.

At the same time, something is broken in that oneness, is it not? Near and far, there is fracturing between people. There is misunderstanding and a lack of compassion or care.

When you get right down to it, there is often a “me” attitude full of self-concern, with a reckless disregard for the fabric of life we are meant to know with other people. And so, we declare that oneness is the truth.

When there is brokenness, it is good to have a vision of what is true. But how is that belief actualized?

Think of a relationship. What if it explodes for whatever reason? What if it goes totally south, awful things are said, and the relationship fractures? And then, the very next day, the other person in the relationship says, *We are one, and it is all better now. Let's forget about what happened and live in the wonder of our oneness.*

What are you going to be thinking?

Yeah, it is true, theoretically. But there is some repair work to do. Something has to be rebuilt so that what is true in principle is known by us in the real world.

And how does that happen? How do we create a human experience of oneness?

Jesus says it like this:

I in them, and thou in me.

That was the formula he followed.

The first step is *Thou in me*. If you are not having an experience of oneness with the source of life—God by whatever name within yourself—how do you bring that to anybody else? How do you lay down your life for another person?

If you do not have Love to give, how do you lay down Love for another person?

Theoretically, we are all one. But it is not real for us until we receive the anointment of Divine Presence from within. When we do, letting it fill us up so that we have it to give, it overflows from us and we are in position to lay down our life for another person. We have it to give out of our overflowing.

The record of Jesus' life, and especially the record of Easter, is about that overflowing. He uttered this prayer on the eve of his crucifixion. *That they may be one*. You can imagine that it was a horribly stressful moment. And it was a time of reflection on the path he had trod, what had come through him, and what he had shared with the people around him.

The result of what he had shared was mixed, at best. There was a spiritual thickness in the disciples, who were not really receiving the full message. It was not fully penetrating their hearts and

minds. And yet there was a great sense of privilege and appreciation for what he shared.

But from his standpoint, you can only imagine. He had offered the depth of himself—his heart and soul with the people he met—and laid it on the line for them. He had laid down his life, even before he endured the agony of the crucifixion.

In the *Pulse of Spirit* last week, I wrote about Palm Sunday. Whatever was happening, whatever the apparent risk, he would not back down. He laid down his life for his friends.

There is another context in which laying down one's life is relevant. We have the opportunity to lay down our lives for the sake of Divine Presence. Divine Presence is the source of Love. It is the source of Life.

This was very real for Jesus. In his prayer, he says this:

I have glorified thee on the earth.

He had laid down his life for the sake of Divine Presence.

Divine Presence is the source of Love. It is the source of Wisdom. But it is more than these things. It is Selfhood. It is Being. It is not only a power or an intelligence. It is a *Personage*—not only a something but some-one.

Acknowledging and honoring Divine Presence, laying down our life for Divine Presence, we are given the experience of *our* Presence, our Selfhood, our Personage as a human being. And we have that to lay down for our friends.

Greater Love hath no woman or man than this, that they lay down their life for their friends.

And when we give someone our Love and our life, we are giving them ourselves.

This is the message I receive when I tune in to who Jesus was and to the message of his life and teaching. It is what I feel as a disciple of the truth he brought to the world. I feel his original faith, and I touch the experience he attempted to share.

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