

## Your Secret Superpower

1. Warm-up question: Jeff began Sunday's sermon by asking us to think about the ways in which we are like our parents. Is there something quirky that your parents did that you now find yourself doing?
2. Many of us are like our parents in uncanny ways. It's the same with our spiritual heritage. Each of us is created in the image of God, our Heavenly Father. That means we have the DNA of God, the DNA of Spirit within us. One of God's chief characteristics is an endlessly creative Spirit. As children of God, each of us has been given that same creative impulse.
  - a. Ephesians 5:1 says, "Be ye imitators of God, as dear children." How does the impulse to be creative express itself in your life? What's one of your creative outlets?
  - b. Romans 4:17 says, "God . . . **calls** into existence things that do not exist." In other words, God has the power to create new realities out of nothing simply by "calling," *i.e.*, speaking, them into existence. "Let there be light, and there was light!" As children of God who are called to imitate God, we can do the same thing. Through the power of our words, we too can call into existence things that do not yet exist. Can you think of a time when you – or someone you observed – used the power of words to create a new reality? What happened?
3. The story of the renaming of Abram is a great example of the power of words to shape reality. God called Abram to leave his homeland and travel to an unknown remote land where God promised to make a great nation of Abram's offspring. At the time, Abram and his wife were getting up there in years and had no children. It must have been hard for Abram to keep believing, but God kept offering encouragement. Read Genesis 17:1-8, as printed on p. 3.
  - a. In this story, God changes Abram's name from Abram (which means exalted father) to Abraham (which means father of a multitude). At the time, Abraham was 99 years old. How do you suppose Abraham's family, friends, and neighbors reacted when Abraham announced his new name?
  - b. By embracing this new name, despite the scorn or skepticism of people around him, Abraham was deliberately trying to call a new reality into existence. Eventually Abraham and Sarah bore a child, that child had two sons, and one of those two sons had twelve sons whose offspring became the twelve tribes of Israel. If Abraham had not stubbornly spoken this new reality into existence, how would history have been different? How would your life have been different?
  - c. Niki Cruz was born to parents who practiced witchcraft and often referred to Niki as "Son of Satan." When Niki got into trouble, his parents sent him to New York to live with his brother. Niki ran away, joined the Mau Maus gang, and became

their chief Warlord. But a preacher named David Wilkerson kept telling Niki, “Jesus loves you and will never stop loving you.” Wilkerson’s words began to awaken something in Niki. He eventually converted, went to Bible school, and became a well-known preacher, featured in the movie “The Cross and the Switch Blade.” Think back to when you were a kid. What were some words or labels (positive or negative) applied to you? How did those words or labels affect you? Do you still embrace those words or labels?

- d. Imagine that you, like Abram, were going to be given a new name. Suppose you were allowed to choose that new name and you wanted to choose a name designed to call the best of you into existence. What name (or word) would you choose to be known by? Explain your choice.
  - e. Joel Osteen says, “What you’re constantly saying, you’re moving toward.” What do you think he means? Do you agree or disagree – and why?
  - f. Proverbs 18:21 says, “Life and death is in the power of the tongue.” What do you think that means? Do you believe it?
4. From all the foregoing, Jeff drew a conclusion: The words we use to frame reality (both positive and negative) have the power to shape reality (for better or worse). Jeff said, “You can never live with resurrection power unless and until you recognize the power of words and start consciously using that power.” As a way of applying this principle, Jeff suggested we get in the habit of asking ourselves four key questions. Let’s practice by having a couple people answer each question:

**Question #1 – What words am I using to frame my day?**

Think about your day today. What words were you consciously or subconsciously using to frame your day? Were those words designed to create a positive reality? If not, what would have been a better way to frame your day?

**Question #2 – What words am I using to frame challenging situations I face?**

Describe a challenging situation you’re facing. What words are you consciously or subconsciously using to frame that challenge? Are those words designed to create a positive reality? If not, what would be a better way to frame the challenge?

**Question #3 – What words am I using to frame my current season of life?**

What season of life are you now in? What words are you consciously or subconsciously using to frame that season? Are those words designed to create a positive reality? If not, what would be a better way to frame the season?

**Question #4 – What words am I using to frame the meta-narrative of my life?**

Your meta-narrative is your reason for being, *i.e.*, Who am I and why am I here? How would you describe who you are and why you are here? Are those words consistent with a positive reality? If not, what would be a better way to frame your reason for being?

## **Genesis 17:1-8**

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. <sup>2</sup>And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.'

<sup>3</sup>Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, <sup>4</sup>'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. <sup>5</sup>No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations.

<sup>6</sup>I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. <sup>7</sup>I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. <sup>8</sup>And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God.'