Greetings, and today is the fourth day of a five part series on refuge. And it's a probably the central religious emotion that classically Buddhists engage in. It's also a classic kind of a ritual or movement of commitment, of involvement, expressing the deep trust and faith that Buddhists have. In fact, sometimes your person is defined as a Buddhist, when they've gone for refuge. There's no one who can say who and who is not a Buddhist. So everyone's welcome to self identify as they wish. And I've known people who have been dedicated Buddhist practitioners and students for decades really, who do not call themselves Buddhist and happily so and I've known people who first time they hear Buddhist teachings say I'm a Buddhist, this is it. So it's not that important whether you're a Buddhist or not. But there is this kind of emphasize the importance of refuge for many. The ideas of refuge is what kind of makes a person a Buddhist than a kind of formal way of maybe. And, as I've been saying here, these days, the Buddha actually didn't really encourage people to go for refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha. He really emphasized when he emphasized refuge, he was finding a refuge within and one of the passages that I read maybe yesterday, that I would like to read again. The Buddha said, I will teach you the refuge and the path leading to the refuge. And what is refuge? So here's a very clear definition of what the Buddha wanted to define as the refuge. It is a triple refuge, and maybe not coincidentally. And the refuge, he says, is the destruction of greed, the destruction of hatred, and the destruction of delusion. This, the Buddha said, is called the refuge. And that's powerful language talking about the destruction of these things. It means really they're uprooted. The possibility really being finished with them once and for all. And this is kind of like the great kind of potential that Buddhism champions, emphasize, celebrates. That we don't have to accommodate greed, hate and delusion. We don't have to just only learn to be wise with it and navigate with it, be mindful of it so we don't give into it. It's possible to somehow get down to the roots of where it kind of lives dormantly and pull those out is the classic metaphor. And here in this language to destroy. Even well short of that, to have some qualitative experience of real peace or real absence of clinging, absence of greed, hatred and delusion that really experienced the heart that way without it, and to recognize oh this is possible. And for some people in the course of their ordinary everyday life, it's kind of rare to really feel the full
potential for a deep abiding peace or openness or sense of deep connectedness and intimacy, and
closeness which in the Buddhism, over and over again, defined by an absence, the absence of greed,
hate and delusion. And it's difficult at many people in daily life to really have a deep, fully embodied,
fully integrated experience of this. For some people, it's going on meditation retreats or regular
meditation that really opens that possibility. For some people that's going into nature or being at the
beach for the day or, or sometimes it's a certain relationships we're close to and it feels like though so
there's a relationship, something very deep can happen and let go of, be like to make it that go. And
so if that letting go is the refuge, what refuge here means is we trust that. We trust that place where
we don't cling. And short of destroying greed, hate and delusion, they will come back, clinging we'll
come back, will get caught up and contracted and resistant and we will complain and resist or cower
away. And, but to this idea of refuge, it's like where our faith is what we trust our lives with. We trust
more than almost anything else this place of tremendous goodness, this freedom of peace. And
people might easily question well, you can't be that good. It's dangerous out there in the world. And we
have to take care of ourselves and just trusting being peaceful and not clinging is, you know, not good
enough. But if you can turn this over around, and that is to really appreciate, to understand, because
we know peace, to really see very clearly that getting caught up in hostility and resentments and
regrets is not a good deal. They getting caught up in resentment and hostility is a kind of way of
harming ourselves, is a loss, is a diminishment of who we are. That is we're danger is. It's dangerous
to be caught in those things. To be caught in clinging or greed or lust, to actually feel how we lose the
peace and the calm and the subtleness of the openness. Or as we lose this place where there's no
greed, hate and delusion, because of greed. We very clearly feel that what's precious, what's valuable
is lost. Something profound and wonderful is lost in the process of getting clinging and greedy. And it
feels that this is not worth it. This is this is a loss. This is also a kind of harming for myself. This is a
diminishment of myself. I'm no longer whole, integrated. Now I'm becoming fragmented around this
kind of tightness and preoccupation with something. Same thing with delusion. It's possible, a little bit,
it can be hard and maybe even hard to imagine. But it's possible to watch delusion arise, watch,
judgment, bias, prejudice arise, and see how that diminishes ourselves. See how that a loss. That to
treat someone or relate to someone through the filter of prejudice. It's awful for them. And it's also
awful for us. It's a loss. So to have this visceral experience within of absence of greed, hate and
delusion, and then say this is where I want to live from. Because to not live from there is a loss, is a
harm, is not really worth it. Maybe living without greed, hate, and delusion is not the full story of a
satisfied life. But it certainly is a pretty wonderful beginning for if you have some other ideas of what's
important for your life. But whatever is important for you to do in your life. That is not directly tied to the
absence of greed, hate and delusion. Don't pick up greed, hatred and delusion to accomplish those
other things. The baseline is to find a way of living where we really have faith, trust, confidence, in that
place of freedom. So refuge in Buddhism makes the most sense. It's not a logical, you know, it doesn't
have to be a logical thing. It doesn't have to rely on reason to get you there. But as we practice or as
we have a really deep experience of the possibility of peace or freedom, inner freedom, then refuge
makes sense. Then refuge can be, this is what I have faith in. This is what I trust. And then the work
begins. Because it's not that easy to stay that way. Unless greed, hate and delusion had been
destroyed totally. All these things will return. And then the arguments will begin and then the struggles
and the questioning. What do I need to do here? Maybe the idea that I'm supposed to be angry, I have to be angry, the other people want me to be angry. I'm supposed to be upset. All these kinds of movements and judgments and ideas of how we're supposed to be. That's different than the absence of greed, hate and delusion. The other ways of being that there's authority from society and family that we have do sometimes have to want and be greedy or be angry or be even deluded. And so do we succumb to that, we give into that? And we can feel we have refuge, we trust the place of freedom. But you know, what about this circumstances? What about here? And that's where the practice is. Right on that line between where the freedom is and where there's tendencies to lose that freedom. That is a fascinating place of practice. A really important place of practice. And if a person has clearly, decisively gone for refuge, meaning they decisively decided to orient their lives, from that place where there's the potential to be without greed, hate and delusion, then it gives the context of practice are very powerful momentum and very powerful direction and guide. And it's a wonderful life. And my hope is that the ability to really figure out learn how to navigate their life without greed, hate and delusion. To navigate the life without clinging will also enable us to live with great motivation, to live courageously. And so we don't complain. But we might protest. And allow us when we should protest against social injustice, for example, that because we have refuge, we're able to do it without fear. We're able to do it with courage. And so this idea of refuge is not a passivity. It's only passive in the sense that there's no greed, hate and delusion. It's not passive in terms of living from our compassion or care or kindness or generosity in our wisdom. I hope that this refuge can. I hope that this refuge can give you lots of peace and allow you to go through the world in a relaxed way, in a peaceful way and make the world a better place. Thank you