

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 106

Let me be still and listen to the truth.

Sarah's Commentary:

The truth is in us, but the raucous voice of the ego must be stilled if we are to hear the Voice of truth. **"If you will lay aside the ego's voice, however loudly it may seem to call; if you will not accept its petty gifts that give you nothing that you really want; if you will listen with an open mind, that has not told you what salvation is; then you will hear the mighty Voice of truth, quiet in power, strong in stillness, and completely certain in Its messages."** (W.106.1.1)

The recent Lessons are about helping us access the truth so we can experience the love, peace, and joy of the Christ Self we are. Through our everyday experiences that offer us all the opportunities for healing we need, we are urged to let go of the ego program that is so entrenched in our thought system. We experience a lot of resistance in this process because we are very invested in our identity as a body and personality. Jesus says we have overlearned the ego programming, which is why it is so challenging to release.

As we apply the exercises provided each day, our entrenched thought system is loosened. The world does not reinforce this teaching which means we may feel very much on our own in undoing the thought system we have learned. When we listen to the voices of this world, we hear messages that reinforce the thoughts we still hold in our wrong minds. Jesus encourages us to listen to our inner Guide, rather than be persuaded by the voices of the world. **"Be not afraid today to circumvent the voices of the world. Walk lightly past their meaningless persuasion. Hear them not."** (W.106.3.1-3)

When we listen to our thoughts, we can see how obsessive they are. They are tapes that play over and over in our minds, ruminating on the same problems, the same grievances, the plans and expectations we have, our frustrations, worries and anxieties—all thoughts that keep us from hearing the truth of who we are. They are fear-based thoughts that block the love that shines in us all the time. Sometimes we are aware of these tapes and other times they play in the background of our minds. Mostly, they run our lives without our awareness until we learn to watch our thoughts so we can bring the conditioned mind to awareness and realize how we have been deceived.

The conditioned mind holds many beliefs. These beliefs run our lives and dictate our actions. Beliefs such as: "Women/men can't be trusted." "Love is dangerous because I always get hurt." "I can only depend on myself." "If I don't defend myself, I will be a doormat for others to take advantage of me." "I can't trust anyone not to hurt me." "I need to get what I can." "I must take care of myself above all." "I am not worthy."

When these beliefs, and millions of others we hold, are not conscious, we do not understand why certain events keep happening to us. We define ourselves as a certain type of person and seem to get stuck in various roles we play as a brother, sister, husband, wife, daughter, employee, loser, gambler, lover, nurturer, and boss. But roles offer no rewards. When we become conscious of our hidden beliefs that run our lives, they can be released.

One way we become aware of these beliefs is to look at what we project on others. Another way is to look at the feelings that come up and trace them back by asking, "What must I believe about myself for this to arise?" Another way is to become aware of how we defend against being hurt. When I get hurt, for example, I tend to withdraw. I feel safety in my aloneness. We each have preferred ways in which we protect ourselves from pain. It is important to look at our strategies of self-protection, as they show us where we feel vulnerable to attack. Another way is with deep inquiry whenever an upset shows up in our perceptual field where we go deeper to ask "what am I thinking and feeling and what are the beliefs that drive these perceptions. Also it is very helpful to join with Mighty Companions so we can be reminded of the truth about ourselves when we forget. When our minds are crowded with self-attacking thoughts, we do not hear the truth available to us in the stillness.

Jesus tells us that the voice of the ego is very loud and boisterous and demands attention distracting us from experiencing the Christ Self. It deceives us into believing what is not true. Stillness is anathema to the ego because stillness opens us up to **"The peace of God which passeth understanding."** (T.2.II.1.9) (ACIM OE T.2.II.18) This is the last thing the ego wants us to experience; but the Christ in us is given birth on fertile ground we help prepare where our holiness is revealed. This ground is a place of stillness in the mind. In the stillness of the holy instant, we enter the eternal present where the recognition of Christ within dawns on us.

The voice of the ego is very persuasive. It insists that the meaningless things of the world are where our happiness lies. It keeps us blind to the truth. It is important to see that we are not asked to analyze the meaning of this voice but to circumvent it. **"Walk lightly past their meaningless persuasion. Hear them not. Be still today and listen to the truth."** (W.106.3.2-4) **"Be not deceived by voices of the dead, which tell you they have found the source of life and offer it to you for your belief."** (W.106.2.3) We are being asked not to listen to the ego in anyone. The voices of the dead are actually the voices of those who are speaking from the ego.

Jesus tells us that the life we seem to be living in this world is not life at all. We have become convinced that the source of our life is our bodily experience in the world, starting with our birth in the body. What we call life seems to come through the body, but the body is nothing. It is a dream figure, and when we identify with it, it becomes an obstacle to the truth. **"What has the body really given you that justifies your strange belief that in it lies salvation?"** (T.19.IV.B.2.6) (ACIM OE T.19.V.b.61) Our reality is the eternal Christ Self. The Bible says that we are created in the image of God, yet it is an image of a dualistic God. Jesus says, do not listen to this as it is not the truth of who we are. God is only love, and we were created in His image as love. As One with God, we have all the same characteristics He has. The voices of this world that seem to witness to an individual self do not exist and have no reality.

We resist what Jesus is teaching and find it difficult to accept because the teaching is not in keeping with the authorities of this world. We must turn away from the influence of those who hold a belief in fear, belief in death, and belief that suffering can offer something of value. If we listen to the voices of the ego, we experience increased suffering and pain. We don't need to do this anymore. We need to see the false as false. **"It [the miracle] merely looks on devastation, and reminds the mind that what it sees is false."** (W.PII. What is the Miracle? Q13.1.3) We

can make another choice. We can go past all the voices of the world and say no to the ego's persuasive voice. It may keep talking, but when we don't give it attention, it drifts off into the background of our minds. We are not the separated self with a name and a body. We are invited to accept the glorious gifts given us in our creation and are with us now. We can choose against the shabby gifts of the ego. They offer us nothing but pain.

Jesus helps us see that our "normal" state of mind is like what the Buddhists call "monkey mind", which is a mind constantly leaping from one thing to another, endlessly chattering and never still. The thoughts that normally occupy this mind are described as **"raucous screams and senseless ravings."** (T.21.V.1.6) (ACIM OE T.21.VI.49) This mind is constantly occupied with **". . . the frantic, riotous thoughts and sights and sounds of this insane world."** (W.49.4.4) The ego is constantly chattering. It lives in the past and future reviewing the past and fantasizing about the future. With our focus on the ego, we constantly narrate our experiences in the world, talking to ourselves about what we are doing, and never experiencing the stillness that is in us.

In a nutshell, this mind is in a state of conflict. It is constantly at war, both with the external world and within itself. When we pause to bring attention to our thoughts, we can see the insanity going on in the mind. Our focus is almost entirely on our survival on the physical and emotional level, constantly defending against threats to our safety. And we hold many conflicting goals. No wonder when we first start with these Lessons, things seem to get worse for us; the thoughts we had previously not recognized now become more apparent to us. It is not unlike a pond that looks pristine on the top until it is stirred up and becomes muddy. The mud has always been there but not seen until the pond is disturbed. This is not unlike the mind where we have not been aware of the mud until we stir it up which is what the Course does so the mud can be cleared away.

If we want to end conflict and find peace, the first step is simply to turn our attention away from both the cacophony of the outside world and the constant stream of warring thoughts in the mind. This is what Jesus urges us to do when he asks us to still the mind and to empty it of its conflicted content, so we can be open to receive new content. **"An empty space that is not seen as filled, an unused interval of time not seen as spent and fully occupied, become a silent invitation to the truth to enter, and to make itself at home."** (T.27.III.4.1) (ACIM OE T.27.IV.32) **"For what you leave as vacant God will fill, and where He is there must the truth abide."** (T.27.III.4.1.3) (ACIM OE T.27.IV.32)

He invites us to take a moment and let go of everything that normally occupies our minds, as in the following passage: **"Let us be still an instant, and forget all things we ever learned, all thoughts we had, and every preconception that we hold of what things mean and what their purpose is. Let us remember not our own ideas of what the world is for. We do not know."** (T.31.I.12.1-3) (ACIM OE T.31.I.12) (See also T.31.II.8, ACIM OE T.31.II.22, and W.189.7) We will only be willing to **"be still and listen to the truth,"** (W.106) when we truly come to believe in His promises. **"He comes with miracles a thousand times as happy and as wonderful as those you ever dreamed or wished for in your dreams."** (W.106.4.4) This is quite a promise. It means no matter how wonderful our manifestations are of what we think will make us happy, they offer us nothing except more guilt. His peace and joy surpass all of this and a thousand times more.

When we experience peace in the mind, we bring it to the world. Sometimes we extend to others with words that come through us and sometimes with just our thoughts and our Presence. But we need to receive the miracles first so we can extend them. **"The bringer of all miracles has need that you receive them first, and thus become the joyous giver of what you have**

received." (W.106.6.5) We are told that we waste a lot of time when we resist our function of forgiveness. We are learning about the meaning of giving and receiving, and he says, **"Your request is one whose answer has been waiting long to be received by you."** (W.106.8.2) It is through forgiveness that we learn to be still and listen to the truth.

Have you wondered what you are in the world for? Why are we here at all? For most of us, we probably don't think of our function in the world as some kind of ministry, yet that is how it is described here. We have an important ministry in demonstrating the choice for healing that all can make. The Healer is available in all minds, and the power of decision is available to all of us when we are ready. The way of the world is to believe that when we give, we lose, yet **"Today the holy Word of God is kept through your receiving it to give away, so you can teach the world what giving really means by listening and learning it of Him."** (W.106.10.1) We teach only by example. We become a demonstration of the healing we have accepted for ourselves. What this requires is that we let go of our grievances, our attacks, our fears, and our belief in sacrifice. Through forgiveness, the love we are extends to the Sonship, as we are One Mind. This is how we bring healing to the world. We hear the message by allowing the truth to be itself as it extends through us. It certainly does not mean preaching or proselytizing.

"Your peace surrounds me, Father. Where I go, Your peace goes there with me. It sheds its light on everyone I meet. I bring it to the desolate and lonely and afraid. I give Your peace to those who suffer pain, or grieve for loss, or think they are bereft of hope and happiness. Send them to me, my Father. Let me bring Your peace with me." (W.245.1.1-7) The whole process of receiving, giving, and recognizing that we have by giving, is foundational to Course teaching. We become channels for the Holy Spirit, receiving everything from Him, and in giving it away, we have it forever. We can only know we have when we give. The Lesson assumes, quite rightly, that we don't understand the kind of giving he is talking about. We think of giving as loss and sacrifice.

"I will be still and listen to the truth. What does it mean to give and to receive?" (W.106.7.5-6) It is a question we might ask ourselves and listen for the answer. The answer given here is the importance of accepting the Atonement for ourselves. To accept the Atonement is to accept the Correction. We need not take responsibility for the error, but we do need to be constantly willing to receive His Correction for our mistakes. It is the realization that the answer is, and always has been, within. Our part is to take our problem to the Answer, rather than listen to the ego whose solutions keep us invested in the illusion and our pain and suffering.

This is about shifting our investment from being right about our perspectives and instead being willing to recognize we don't know. Through His Voice and His message, we can become a light for our brothers and the world. I can extend healing, peace, and joy to everyone by healing my own mind. Thus, I can come to know the truth in me. **"Thus does salvation start and thus it ends; when everything is yours and everything is given away, it will remain with you forever."** (W.106.7.1)

As our individuality and specialness are released, we are no longer so enamored with our own thoughts and opinions, realizing there is just one identity as Christ. We are all the same. We no longer have to defend our way or compete with others for attention. There is no need then to make anything important. Our strength lies in connecting to the stillness within the right mind. We can release our need to show the world our special self, and instead, allow the stillness of God in us to communicate His peace.

"Father, I come to You today to seek the peace that You alone can give. I come in silence. In the quiet of my heart, the deep recesses of my mind, I wait and listen for Your Voice. My Father, speak to me today. I come to hear Your Voice in silence and in certainty and love, sure You will hear my call and answer me." (W.221.1.5)

"Hear Him today, and listen to the Word which lifts the veil that lies upon the earth, and wakes all those who sleep and cannot see. God calls to them through you."
(W.106.5.1-2) All minds are One. As I listen and respond to His Call, as I am guided by His love, my life becomes one where I am clueless, carefree and cared for.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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