

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 194 I place the future in the hands of God.

Sarah's Commentary:

When we get this Lesson, even to some extent, it brings forth a sigh of happiness. To recognize there is nothing to worry about when the future is wholly placed in the Hands of God is to rest in a state of trust where there is no need for anxiety, worry or depression. It brings about a sense resting in God that is always a delicious feeling of being absolutely carefree. Imagine what it would be like to have no fear of the future and with it comes the release from sadness, anxiety, despair, pain, death, or any kind of loss. Such a sense of freedom comes through the experience of the holy instant in which we release the past and let go of all thoughts of guilt, loss, and pain of any kind. It truly is a lesson of deliverance from the ego's use of time.

We have bought into the myth that we have sinned in the past, and now we experience guilt in the present and look with apprehension to the future where we are awaiting punishment for our sins. This is the projection of the thoughts of sin, guilt, and fear into form and constitutes linear time. Linear time is illusion. We are invested in it until we are freed in the holy instant, even for a moment, to recognize our eternal state. In the ego thought system, everything here comes to an end. Everything dies. Thus, the ego tries to prove that only its reality is real and true, and God has been defeated.

This is the fairy tale we replay in our minds over and over. It is based on the insane thought system that we have sinned and are now guilty and deserve punishment. The witnesses to sin are the feelings we have that we have done something terribly wrong, and now we feel we are inherently bad. We believe that we must atone for our sin. We hold the belief that we deserve to suffer because of what we have done, so we expect punishment in the future. We expect others to betray us, abandon us, and hurt us, so we set up defenses against what will surely befall us. We believe it is a cruel world that will ultimately forsake us. We hold the belief that we have sinned against God, so He is to be feared. How this shows up in our lives is that we believe that we don't deserve happiness and that we must suffer. If we punish ourselves enough, perhaps God will go easy on us. Jesus continually and persistently invites us to question these false beliefs.

In the Lesson yesterday, Jesus spoke of how we might free each hour from the one before by forgiving whatever events were brought forth from the previous hour. This is how he says we can loosen the chains of time. **"Let no one hour cast its shadow on the one that follows, and when that one goes, let everything that happened in its course go with it."** (W.193.12.4) Let us start the next moment with a new perspective in which the past is wiped clean. We then release ourselves from the imprisonment of the past and instead choose the holy instant. Jesus reminds us, **"The ego has a strange notion of time, and it is with this notion that your questioning might well begin. The ego invests heavily in the past, and in the end believes that the past is the only aspect of time that is meaningful. Remember that its emphasis on guilt enables it to ensure its continuity by making the future like the**

past, and thus avoiding the present." (T.13.IV.4.1-3) (ACIM OE T.12.IV.26) In this view, the past determines the future.

In the holy instant, we step away from this insane thought system. Jesus invites us to question what we have come to believe. Underlying all our unhappiness is our fight with God and our need to prove that He cannot be trusted. When we feel events in our lives conspire against our happiness, we use this as proof that God is not who He says He is. Whenever we feel miserable and suffer, we are actually defending against His Love. As we learned in Lesson 136, **"Sickness is a defense against the truth."** (W.136) We are invested in our separate existence. Proving God wrong is the basis for our misery. It proves that we are who we say we are---unique individuals.

We need to be aware, at any moment, of what we are holding in our thoughts in order to see when we have mistakenly chosen the ego as guide. In the Lesson yesterday, Jesus says that it is quite simple. You know you are seeing wrong if pain seems real in your perception. (W.193.7.1) It means that we need to be vigilant in mind watching. We need to question the values and beliefs we hold. **"To learn this course requires willingness to question every value that you hold. Not one can be kept hidden and obscure but it will jeopardize your learning."** (T.24.IN.2.1-2) (ACIM OE T.24.IN.2)

One of the ways apprehension about the future shows up is when we hold the belief that happiness does not last. The natural state of this world is one of suffering, betrayal, loss, depression, sadness, anxiety, sickness, worry, and all kinds of upsets, with moments of pleasure and happiness incorporated here and there. These beliefs are part of the ego thought system built on the idea of sin, guilt, and fear, projected in linear time. Once we accept that thought system, it becomes our reality; but now we are given an opportunity to examine what we have chosen and to question its reality.

I was listening to a spiritual leader last night who said that if we feel sad, we see this as a state or condition, but it can also be seen as such in this moment. Thus, we might say that, in this moment, I feel sad. In other words, we are not denying that sadness is showing up, but we don't have to accept it as the truth of our condition or describe ourselves as sad. He says that we suffer because we tend to think it is a condition, rather than a moment. In the moment, when the feeling of sadness comes up, we can question what we believe. For example, I may feel sad because someone has said something or done something to me. This may have triggered a belief in my unworthiness. Jesus invites me to question why I make myself unhappy when there is another choice I could make. Why do I give over my power to this situation? Why do I throw away my peace? No one has the power to make me sad. I chose to be sad because I am proving the ego is right about me. This proves to my mind that God is wrong and can't be believed. Can we, for a moment, question this and wonder if God might be right, and we are wrong? Can we consider God's Will for us is perfect happiness, and that when we are unhappy, we are buying into the ego thought system?

"In every difficulty, all distress, and each perplexity Christ calls to you and gently says, 'My brother, choose again'." (T.31.VIII.3.2) (ACIM OE T.31.VIII.87) Jesus knows we will experience all kinds of difficulties, distress, and perplexity in our lives. That is the nature of our experience in this world. In fact, that is why we came. We get distressed, and we get perplexed, and our peace flies out the window. Rather than feel guilty, angry, or depressed about whatever problem seems to confront us, can we learn to accept it as part of our learning curriculum in this classroom of our lives? In whatever form our issues come, they are ultimately of our own choosing. It is part of the ego thought system to prove that we are these limited beings, living in a body. Now we are invited to let these experiences serve another purpose and use whatever seems to be happening for the healing of our minds. When we see it this way, everything that shows up is helpful.

If we were able to accept today's idea completely, it would take us past all anxiety, pits of hell, blackness of depression, and thoughts of sin and guilt. This powerful thought, when accepted totally, will release us from the imprisonment of the world. It is a process of questioning the ego's beliefs that we have accepted as true about ourselves and the world. We question every aspect of our lives, which are based on the belief that God can't be trusted. The heavy chains that seem to imprison us will loosen, as we accept the truth into our minds and the door to freedom is recognized. **"Then is each instant which was slave to time transformed into a holy instant, when the light that was kept hidden in God's Son is freed to bless the world."** (W.194.5.3) Just as we were told in the Lesson yesterday---we have the key to our freedom. The key is forgiveness. Now we must learn to apply it in every situation by being willing to see all of our dark thoughts are false.

Let's not despair about anything going on in our lives, recognizing it can all serve the purpose of healing our minds. There may be someone who is attacking you, and you may wonder how these attacks can be helpful. What they do is help us to see our own self-attack and the guilt we are holding in our own mind. That is why everyone who attacks us is actually our savior from guilt because we are given another opportunity to see what is hidden in the mind so it can be released.

Jesus recognizes that we won't see this all the time and will return to the ego often. We will listen to its stories that tell us we have been betrayed and that our anger and hatred are justified. While the perception of God's Son is faulty at such times, it **"will never lack correction. He is free to choose again when he has been deceived; to change his mind when he has made mistakes."** (W.194.7.7-8) It is such a loving perspective. Jesus does not judge us for making mistakes. He understands we do make them. We must not feel guilty when the ego tempts us to luxuriate in grievances. We can simply remember that we can now make another choice. Love can't replace our thoughts of sin and guilt if we see them outside of ourselves.

What a glorious day we can have today when we apply forgiveness to every thought that is not supremely happy. Let us maintain vigilance of all our thoughts and bring those that disturb our peace to the Holy Spirit for healing. Recognize that none of these thoughts come to us without our choice. Why would we choose them? We choose them because we still are invested in being right about ourselves as separate beings. Every time we choose a thought contrary to the truth of what we are, we affirm that we are right about ourselves. Yet when we give these thoughts over, Jesus says that only then can we **"rest untroubled, sure that only good can come to us."** (W.194.9.2)

"No longer is the world our enemy, for we have chosen that we be its friend." (W.194.9.6) The goal of this Lesson, and every other Lesson, is to use time to heal our minds so the holiness we are is revealed to us. Our part is to bring our attention to the blocks that keep holiness from our awareness, without judging ourselves in this process. We chose to take this path of deliverance, and Jesus says that this giant stride places our feet on the lawns that welcome us to Heaven. In other words, our consciousness is of joy and peace, which are inevitable when the sin, guilt, and fear are removed from the mind. Now we recognize that we have another choice. **"Place, then, your future in the Hands of God. For thus you call the memory of Him to come again, replacing all your thoughts of sin and evil with the truth of love."** (W.194.8.1-2)

Love and blessings, Sarah
huemmert@shaw.ca

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