

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 240 Fear is not justified in any form.

Sarah's Commentary:

To us, who identify with this body and the world, fear certainly does seem to be justified. There are many dangers we have learned to protect ourselves from. We fear being hurt by others, getting sick, losing money, losing a job, aging, and dying. We are afraid of germs, of pollution, and of insects. We fear losing our material goods, our friends, those we are attached to, and ultimately, we fear death. I could go on and on, but you get the point. We have thousands of fear thoughts. Our lives here are all about fear. Fear is the content of the ego mind. In fact, all the ego is is a fear thought. It is the imposter, the false self, that seems to have invaded our pristine home. It is deception because, although we have bought into it, it is not real. And now, **"It attests that you have seen yourself as you could never be, and therefore look upon a world which is impossible."** (W.240.1.2)

In Lesson 153, Jesus tells us that this sense of threat we live with is much deeper than we even realize, but we cover it up with our many distractions. The ego needs to keep us from seeing how much fear is in the mind. If we were more aware of this deep level of threat, we would become more motivated to investigate its source and bring it to the light. All of our fear comes from our belief we have sinned and done something so terribly wrong that we deserve to be punished.

The core of our learning today is, **"Not one thing in this world is true."** (W.240.1.3) If that is so, what would there be to fear? All our fears would be seen to be foolish because if there is nothing true in this world or about this world and all the forms of this world (including our bodies) are false beliefs, then our fears are about nothing. In fact, the ego is nothing but a false belief. Now we can choose to withdraw our investment in what it speaks to us about. Whatever it has to say is not the truth, but to hear what is running in our minds, we must tune in. Otherwise, we continue to listen without awareness to what it is telling us about ourselves. Our decision not to listen to the ego is to surrender it to Spirit. We are not the victim of its control over our lives. We are not trapped in its grasp. Because we are the ones that chose it, we are now responsible for giving it up. How we experience the world depends on which voice we follow---the ego or the Holy Spirit.

The Course has been summed up by the words, **"Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God."** (T.IN.2.2) (ACIM OE T.IN.4) This is it in a nutshell. It is all there is for us to recognize. No more than that. Jesus tells us this in any number of ways in the Course. Yet it does take some effort for us to become sufficiently motivated and determined to no longer choose to listen to the ego's seeming dictates and no longer experience its effects on us.

The world of form is all an illusion, but it is valuable for your learning because **"It witnesses but to your own illusions of yourself."** (W.240.1.5) In other words, we can see our own guilt and self-attacking thoughts reflected back to us. It mirrors to us what is in the mind and is thus very

helpful as a classroom for healing. Everything starts in our own minds and all effects are a result of our own thoughts. The guilt in our minds is projected onto people and situations in the world. Now the world delivers what we think we have coming to us. The punishment that seems to be delivered by the world simply reinforces the belief that we are bodies, guilty of having killed God in order to experience our individual will. We believe we have caused pain to others. We believe there is a real world that has real effects on us. It all witnesses to the thought system of the ego. Whatever is in our own minds is now reflected in everything we see in the world.

Since our experiences in this seeming reality are all witnessing to our self-attacking thoughts, we can use these experiences as learning opportunities to look at our fearful thoughts and release them to the Holy Spirit. Increasingly, we recognize **"How foolish are our fears!"** (W.240.2.1) We then gain faith in our true reality as the Son of God, unlimited, eternal and **"each a part of Love Itself."** (W.240.1.8) What can we fear if we accept this as the truth? The truth is that we are completely innocent. Nothing we think we have done has actually happened in reality. As we start to accept the truth of this for ourselves, our sense of safety and security is enhanced. When we put the truth to the test in our life experiences, we gain faith in the strength and power available to us.

When I am afraid, I don't think I am deceiving or fooling myself. I think there is something real, threatening my well-being, so my defenses go up, and I put strategies in place to protect myself. When we look deeply at our experiences here, we will become aware that we are afraid all the time. Oh, we might have moments of peace and release from fear in the holy instant, but mostly we are reminded daily of our fears. We look out at a world that we think has the power to hurt us. By valuing anything outside of ourselves, we give it power. We feel manipulated and controlled by forces seemingly outside of our own minds, and we build defenses against them and try to control the outcome. Thus, we keep reinforcing our fears. Yet Jesus reminds us that through forgiveness our fears are released because our guilt is released. He assures us that when we accept our innocence, we know nothing can harm us because we no longer identify with the body. When our minds are healed and we live in the happy dream, we are no longer controlled by anything outside the mind.

Recently, I picked up some stinging nettles out of my garden. Unfortunately for me, I was not wearing gloves. The pain felt very intense. My immediate reaction was to look to magic for relief. I checked on the internet for remedies and went through any number of options, only to experience continued discomfort. It was when the remedies had no effect that I put my mind to a higher power, rather than relying on my own attempts at solving the problem. I realized that I did not have to see this situation as a problem, nor did I need to identify with the pain. I reminded myself that I am not this body and the pain I was feeling was being projected by my mind. I inquired further and noticed I had recently made a judgment about which I felt guilty. I reminded myself that a healed mind would not be upset but simply be willing to release the mistake. I inquired why I thought this punishment was warranted for my judgment. What I uncovered when I went deeper was a feeling of unworthiness, or the "I am bad" thought. I recognized that this could not be the truth about me. I gave this thought over to the Holy Spirit. It was not the truth. With this deeper work, the pain eased considerably, and I gave it no more attention. I gave thanks for this experience, as it was an invitation to inquire more deeply into the source of the pain in the mind.

We do think our bodies and our personalities define us, but as we progress on this journey and continue to apply these Lessons to the situations in our lives, our hold on the false beliefs loosens. We no longer put our trust in the elusive, changeable, and temporary things of this world. We are not called to stop enjoying the things of this world, nor do we have to give them up. We simply stop believing they can ever bring us happiness, or that we can be threatened by anything in this

world. To withdraw our beliefs is to question their reality. To go within is to ask for another way of seeing every situation that confronts us.

In the Manual for Teachers, Section 16 **"How should the teacher of God spend his day?"** we are reminded, **"There is one thought in particular that should be remembered throughout the day. It is a thought of pure joy; a thought of peace, a thought of limitless release, limitless because all things are freed within it. You think you made a place of safety for yourself. You think you made a power that can save you from all the fearful things you see in dreams. It is not so. Your safety lies not there. What you give up is merely the illusion of protecting illusions. And it is this you fear, and only this. How foolish to be afraid of nothing! Nothing at all! Your defenses will not work, but you are not in danger. You have no need of them. Recognize this, and they will disappear. And only then will you accept your real protection."** (M.16.6.1-14)

We can continue to lock our doors and take our medicine when we are sick if we are still too fearful to put our faith in God. Nor should we increase our guilt by deriding ourselves for not being further along in our healing. As a friend and teacher reminded me, "The slow way is the fast way." In other words, we may wish to be further along in our undoing process than we are, but this is not helpful because it is a self-judgment. It is better to be in acceptance of where we are, which will allow us to stop and look more deeply at the roadblocks we are setting up. It is not unlike the tortoise and the hare. Slow and steady will get us to our goal, but we must be clear on our goal. What is it we want? If we want to wake up, we simply continue to use each situation that arises in which our fear comes up and bring it forward for healing. **"By not supporting them, it [salvation] merely lets them quietly go down to dust."** (W.PII.Q2.3.3)

When we do this kind of healing of our own minds, we give healing to the world. **"The song of our rejoicing is the call to all the world that freedom is returned, that time is almost over, and God's Son has but an instant more to wait until his Father is remembered, dreams are done, eternity has shined away the world, and only Heaven now exists at all."** (W.PII.Q2.5.2)

Remember to be content with your learning and not to be impatient with yourself, which is just another attack on the mind. We have guilt and fear as a result of our belief in separation from God. We have now chosen to heal the belief that we are separate from Love. The entire Course is one of making this choice over and over with each problem, with each seeming difficulty, with each fear that comes up, and with all our grievances. This choice seems to be spread over a long period of time, but time, too, is an illusion. We are already what we are seeking, but we can now use time for our benefit to remember the truth of what we already are.

To remember God is to see in each brother the innocence of the Self we are. Every attack we make reinforces our guilt and keeps us unaware of our Oneness. It is what the ego would have us do in order to keep us locked into this cycle of guilt and fear. We have been given a way out. Jesus is the way-shower. He tells us that in giving up grievances and attack thoughts, we can return to the truth of what we are, and thus fear dissipates because there is no longer any justification for it. In other words, we no longer see any basis for fear. It is simply a thought to which we have given a power it does not have.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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