

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 245 Your peace is with me, Father. I am safe.

Sarah's Commentary:

How would you feel if you really knew that God's peace was with you? Let yourself feel that now. Your peace surrounds me, Father. Feel it surrounding you, hovering over you, and holding you up. ***"Where I go, Your peace goes there with me. It sheds its light on everyone I meet."*** (W.245.1.2-3) The truth is, the peace in our right minds is always there, and when it is no longer blocked, it shines on everyone who we think about or who crosses our path. Clearly, this is not something we do, but it is something done through us. What is required is for us to surrender our way, including our expectations, demands, and requirements. The radiance of the Holy Spirit shines through us when we bring awareness to the debris of the ego mind and moment by moment are willing to surrender the thoughts that block the light in us. God in His Mercy wills that I be shared from this thought. When judgment arises in my mind, I look at it and recognize that I have thought wrongly about a situation or a brother, and now I can choose again.

I had an instance recently of being very angry with a brother and the justification for this anger seemed very compelling, but I was willing to take responsibility for it and accept that it was my mind, projecting guilt onto someone who seemed "deserving" of it. We always find the perfect target for the guilt in the mind. It is why the world and specifics were made. I asked for help to see my brother as he really is. I asked for help to loosen my mind and give up my judgments so I could know peace. I used this experience to inquire more deeply as to what was underneath my upset. I allowed the mind to rest, and I breathed in slowly and softened into the question, without attacking myself. When I looked more deeply at the belief that I had been betrayed by this person, I found a place in me where I had left my center and felt abandoned. Out of this place where I felt abandoned, I noticed the expectations I was holding of her. I recognized that I felt unfairly treated. I saw that the belief in unfair treatment has been with me forever and is one I came here to heal. I believed the situation should be different than it was. I willingly gave over the belief that I could ever be abandoned by love. This kind of inquiry assists me to put on the inner altar these painful beliefs when they are uncovered through this process. It is not up to us to fix ourselves. Putting our fears, our guilt, and our beliefs on the inner altar allows the Holy Spirit to do His part. It is a journey of trust.

I have been extremely overwhelmed lately with all the requirements I put on myself to meet expectations. When I don't get everything done, I feel guilty. I looked at what this guilt was about and noticed it was all about self-judgment so when I don't meet all the requirements I put on myself, I feel unworthy. I have decided that my worth depends on meeting everyone's needs. My concept of myself is that others can count on me. If I don't meet those assumed expectations, I have failed my idea of a good person. I am holding a concept of myself that is not the truth. Jesus reminds me that goodness has nothing to do with what we do or don't accomplish. When we measure what is good about ourselves by our accomplishments, we judge ourselves whenever we do not meet our own expectations. These judgments keep us locked in the trap of the ego. It keeps

us focused outside of ourselves to assess how we are doing. The only way out of this trap is to release ourselves from our self-judgments and to recognize that our inherent nature is goodness. We don't have to earn our way to Heaven. There is no opposite to love. We need to release all false concepts of ourselves and recognize they keep us trapped. It takes willingness to let go of what no longer serves us.

Everyone who shows up in our lives, even those who cross our minds, offers us another opportunity to wake up from this dream. ***"Send them to me, my Father. Let me bring Your peace with me."*** (W.245.1.6-7) Our brothers are our saviors. They are our saviors because they help us see the guilt and self-attack in our own minds that we project on them. In other words, they provide us with a helpful mirror of what is unhealed in our own minds.

Those brothers are part of the script of our movie and are precisely the ones we need to help us wake up from this dream. By forgiving ourselves for how we see them and for what we perceive they have done or not done, we learn of our own innocence. Through our relationships, we come to recognize that we are all innocent. Our brothers are there to reflect perfectly for us what is in our own minds. Whatever we have come to believe about ourselves, the truth is that we have not done anything to deserve God's wrath, and thus there is nothing for which we need to atone.

Peace is an attribute in us. It is always there, but it is not consistently our experience. Peace seems to be dependent on how things go for us in the world. We are peaceful when things go our way and not peaceful when they don't. Thus, it seems our peace is determined by outside circumstances, but this is not true peace. Peace is an attribute in us, and it is our changeless nature. It is not dependent on what is going on around us. Peace seems to be gone when we choose to listen to the ego, but it is only gone in our awareness. When I am not at peace, it is because I have turned to the ego as my guide.

Today, I started my day in peace only to have a conversation that resulted in conflict. My peace vanished in that instant. Peace is an attribute in me, so if I do not have peace, it is only because I chose to throw it away. I gave power to this situation to take my peace. But it is only my thoughts about the situation that hurt me. It is ultimately a neutral event. How often do we throw peace away for the most trivial of reasons? Someone cuts us off in traffic and our peace is gone. When we are not at peace, further opportunities to stay distressed seem to show up. Have you noticed how this happens in your day? This is because when we attack anyone, we experience guilt; and we believe guilt requires punishment. When we betray anyone, we expect betrayal. It is not a conscious process, yet we can bring it to awareness and with willingness give over our interpretation of the situation to the Holy Spirit. When we turn to the Holy Spirit for His interpretation in place of our own, He reminds us that our attacks have no effect, and we simply have failed to learn, which is a mistake that can be corrected. The only requirement is to be willing to change our way of seeing.

This is where application of these Lessons assists us to return to peace. I am not always successful in making this choice instantly. It helps to remember that we are not guilty because we failed to learn in that instant. When I simply look at the ego without judgment, it loses its power. Mistakes can be corrected when they are seen for what they are. This is how we learn.

The Holy Spirit teaches through contrast. I feel I am making progress when the upsets are no longer there for very long. What might have kept me out of peace for days, has now been shortened considerably. It may now take a few hours, although more often it is minutes or even seconds. We are just a thought away from the miracle. When we stubbornly resist and refuse to release the thought, we keep ourselves in hell. How long we stubbornly hold onto our position is up to us. If we tell ourselves it is hard and that we will never make it, then this becomes the truth for us. It

means we are listening to the ego. When we withdraw our interest in what the ego has to say, it no longer has any power over us. The Holy Spirit waits patiently for our decision to release and surrender to Him what no longer serves us. He cannot heal what we hold back from Him.

With each difficulty we experience with a brother, another opportunity is being offered to us to see the innocence in him and know it for ourselves. Any irritation or frustration can quickly be identified and turned over to the Holy Spirit. My gratitude for this teaching increases with each moment of recognition of the power in it. Where would we be without awareness of this power within us, except lost in the world of the ego where there is no hope?

It is not for us to try to superimpose peace on any situation. That is not our job. It is what the ego tells us to do, but the ego does not have a clue. Our responsibility is to be like the inventory manager, who watches the mind and brings to the attention of the Holy Spirit all judgments, frustrations, and thoughts that disrupt our peace. We need to maintain vigilance when our need for specialness arises and our desire to win at someone's expense. When we willingly take responsibility for our thoughts, and truly desire healing it is given.

We cannot be the ones to fix ourselves. The ego will never undo itself. The problem is that we have spent our lives trying to make a nicer, kinder, and sweeter ego, but it is only a concept of a self we think we are. It is the face of innocence. We need to look under the face and uncover our real motivation, which is our desire to benefit at someone's expense and to get for ourselves what we believe is lacking in us. It is why we need the Holy Spirit. Nothing we have done can change what we are. I'm sure you have noticed how much resistance comes up and how much self-honesty is called for. Our part is to keep bringing awareness to our egoic thoughts and be willing to have our minds healed by not interfering with His function.

What gets in the way is stubborn pride, defensiveness, specialness, and our belief in a unique self with special characteristics that we try to maintain. We are called to do the work of deconstructing this self-made identity with willingness to look beneath the surface. We must be willing to give up our spiritual pride and allow the Holy Spirit to shine away the dark places in our minds. We must be willing to expose these places we have kept hidden from ourselves. It takes courage, honesty, and willingness to be vulnerable to uncover aspects of the self we have kept from awareness in the unconscious mind. We need not go alone. Jesus invites us to take him with us.

The ego thought system is the program that continually runs under the surface of our minds. It is the basis of all our judgments, our plans, our wishes, our comparisons, and our categorizations. As a result, we react or feel a certain way, which seems "natural" to us. We have become habituated to a way of being that brings with it a lot of pain and suffering. We are so habituated to the pain we no longer recognize the extent of it until we experience something that triggers it. For example, the immense pain that comes from separation may be triggered by someone leaving us. The pain was already there, but it came into our awareness only when there was an experience of separation in our lives.

How do we recognize the thoughts that keep us from peace? We simply need to proceed with willingness, vigilance, and total responsibility, knowing that everything comes from our own minds. We are not used to mind watching, but by looking at our thoughts without judging ourselves, we can become very practiced at acknowledging them and turning them over. We can learn to question every thought that shows up and choose not to invest it with truth. The ego lies. The people and situations in our lives provide us many opportunities to see what is unhealed in us when we are willing to take full responsibility for our thoughts about every situation that arises. Everything and everyone reflect the thoughts we hold in our minds.

In a storm, there is a quiet place in the center where all is still. That is the place in our minds where peace resides. It is always there despite what is going on around us. It is always available. We know what we need to do to allow the blocks to light be brought for healing, yet sometimes we obsessively cling to being right about the way we see things, rather than giving them up and choosing peace instead. This kind of stubborn resistance is the purview of the ego. Yet today we are reminded that we are continually surrounded by God's peace. It goes with us wherever we go. **"It sheds its light on everyone I meet."** (W.245.1.3) Every meeting is truly a holy encounter.

There are no accidents in salvation. Every difficult encounter can be given over to the Holy Spirit. There is a reason behind *every* encounter and there is the potential in every one of them for our healing. **"There is no one from whom a teacher of God cannot learn, so there is no one whom he cannot teach. However, from a practical point of view he cannot meet everyone, nor can everyone find him. Therefore, the plan includes very specific contacts to be made for each teacher of God. There are no accidents in salvation. Those who are to meet will meet, because together they have the potential for a holy relationship. They are ready for each other."** (Manual for Teachers 3.1.3-7)

Mostly, we leave this potential unfulfilled because we think we know what the relationship is for, or we have our own objectives interposed on it, rather than asking the Holy Spirit what it is for. As Jesus said, **"No one is sent by accident to anyone. Relationships are always purposeful. Whatever their purpose may have been before the Holy Spirit entered them, they are always His potential temple; the resting place of Christ and home of God Himself. Whoever comes has been sent."** (Psychotherapy Pamphlet 3.III.6.2-5)

Today, we pray, **"Send them to me, my Father,"** (W.245.1.6) or the prayer of St. Francis, "Let me be an instrument of thy peace." Jesus reminds us in Chapter 6, **"To have peace, teach peace to learn it,"** (T.6.V.B) (ACIM OE T.6.V.b) Every encounter today can offer an opportunity to teach peace to learn it, thus we can know we have it in us. We will know it is in us when it is extended through us. In giving, we receive; and in this place of peace, we know where our safety lies.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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