

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 255

This day I choose to spend in perfect peace.

Sarah's Commentary:

This is a day we commit to spending in perfect peace. How can we choose peace in the midst of what appears to be disruption in our day, which puts our minds into turmoil? Precisely at times like these, I remind myself that everything that seems to happen to me I have chosen at some level. It is what I want. I am reminded, **"I rule my mind, which I alone must rule."** (W.236) I remind myself that whatever seems to be happening is what I have asked for. I am not a victim of the world I see. Everything can be seen as helpful to my learning when given to the Holy Spirit for His interpretation. If someone seems to be attacking me today, it can be a perfect opportunity for me to look at my own anger and recognize how it is interfering with the peace God assures me is mine because I am like Him.

We read in Chapter 21, **"Responsibility for Sight,"** that we are responsible for what we see, the feelings we experience, the goal we would achieve, **"And everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked."** (T.21.II.2.5) (ACIM OE T.21.III.15) In other words, our minds are the cause and the world and everything we experience is just the effect, not the other way around. Salvation is available to us through our decision to choose how we will look at the events showing up in our lives. It is a question of whether we will turn to the ego for its interpretation or look to the Holy Spirit for His help in how to see every situation in our lives. Everything that happens is a choice at some level. The script for our lives was determined by the mind before we showed up here. We are reminded that there are no accidents and nothing happens by chance.

We had a lovely encounter yesterday. While walking down the street in Vancouver, we ran into a friend from Indiana. We had no idea he was visiting here. We turned a corner and there he was. All of our encounters are so beautifully orchestrated by Holy Spirit. We were meant to meet and enjoy an amazing connection with this lovely being. We were visiting from Edmonton and he was visiting all the way from Indiana and yet, on a street corner in Vancouver, we collided into each other! And most amazing, we were just talking about him prior to seeing him. Our minds are joined. Our thoughts are not private!

When we make a decision to use every situation as another opportunity to release grievances and choose healing, we open up more and more to the peace within us. When we fully accept that we want peace above all else, we will use everything in the world that comes our way as an opportunity for healing. We can now choose to turn over the way we typically think about what is happening "out there" and ask for help to see it differently. It is at this time that we are highly motivated to get in touch with the peace within us that we continually ask for help to see everyone through the eyes of Christ.

Just because I believe what I am seeing in the world is true doesn't make it real. What is true and real is that we are all innocent, no matter what we may believe to the contrary. What is true and what we can depend on is that the Holy Spirit shows us the doorway out of every situation. Everything we experience in the world is an opportunity to change our perception through forgiveness and to experience the miracle. What is true and real is that peace does not come from external situations, but is already in our minds. If I am not experiencing peace, I am actively choosing against it.

I recently watched a movie called "The Words." The movie illustrated the idea that there are consequences for all of our decisions. The character in the movie acted without integrity, stealing a manuscript written by someone else and pretending it was his own. The manuscript he had stolen became a best seller. When he was confronted by the real author, the guilt and remorse he felt were overwhelming. He wanted to fix the problem and correct the situation, but it was impossible because the implications for the publishers were too dire. He had to live with what he had done. Rather than recognizing his innocence, which is something innate in us, he chose to live with the guilt and, as a result, he became a bitter and angry man. He crucified himself. Yet redemption was always available to him, as it is for all of us. The ego approves of us crucifying ourselves for what we have done. It considers this a holy thing to do. It tells us we must atone for our "sins" and this will take time. This is not true because we can choose peace now. There is no need for atonement. To accept Atonement for ourselves, as described in the Course, is to accept our innocence now. Innocence is simply waiting for our acceptance. We block it when we believe our guilt is too big to accept the peace within us now.

I am God's Son, with all the attributes of God. Peace is an attribute of God, and my Identity rests in Him. Only my own thoughts and beliefs about my reality, as separate from God, block peace from my awareness. As I let go of my grievances, my expectations, my plans, my guilt, my fears, and my belief that something should be different than it is, I go to that place in my mind where peace has never left because it is already in my mind. It is not something I have to go looking for. I only have to be willing to bring to light everything standing in the way of the quiet place within.

When things seem to be going wrong, the ego quickly looks for who is guilty and wants to blame others. Yes, it does seem as though someone has done something wrong because there are many mistakes made by our brothers daily. It is not what others are doing, but our interpretation of their behaviors that is what disrupts our peace. We are tempted to listen to the ego's judgmental interpretation of the situation, rather than see it as a call for love. We seem to be the victim of the situation. **"Deceive yourself no longer that you are helpless in the face of what is done to you."** (T.21.II.2.6) (ACIM OE T.21. III.16) **"Listen to what the ego says, and see what it directs you see and it is sure that you will see yourself as tiny, vulnerable and afraid. You will experience depression, a sense of worthlessness, and feelings of impermanence and unreality. You will believe that you are helpless prey to forces far beyond your own control and far more powerful than you. And you will think the world you made directs your destiny."** (T.21.V.2.3-6) (ACIM OE T.21.VI.50)

What makes forgiveness seem hard for us? First and foremost, it is our unwillingness to take responsibility for our anger, our upsets, our frustrations, and our lack of peace. We are eager to justify those feelings. We make up stories to support what we are feeling and who is to blame.

We look for allies who will support our position. Secondly, we hold the belief that we can handle our feelings of distress by fixing things we don't like, which is solving the problem in form "out there." We try to fix problems in the world where they can never be fixed. Left to our own

devices, we will always lack certainty about what to do. We fear that if we don't do it ourselves, it may be handled in a way we won't like, in which we won't have the control we crave. The ego is all about control. Yet the miracle that comes from turning all of these thoughts and fears over to the Holy Spirit blesses everyone. Despite the fact that I have experienced this time and time again, I still find myself listening to the ego much of the time even though I know it does not know anything. Every time I come to this juncture, I wonder---can I really just put all my faith and trust in God once again to lead the way?

There is such sweet release in turning to Him and just letting go. It is just a matter of a decision to do so. The decision is within my power to make and only mine. I can simply look at my lack of peace in any situation and ask for help over and over until turning to the Holy Spirit in everything becomes a habitual response. I just need to take this step in faith---the faith that I can just accept what is already mine---and **"I could see peace instead of this."** (W.34)

We have misplaced our faith in the illusion, making it real in our minds. We have made ourselves small and helpless victims of the world, forgetting the power we have. Truly, nothing in the world can stand in the way of our faith. The power of our faith is everything. Jesus asks us, **"Why is it strange to you that faith can move mountains?"**(T.21.III.3) (ACIM OE T.21.IV.31) Our misdirected faith has done something even more awesome than being able to move mountains. It has actually bound the omnipotent Son of God in chains. That is what we have done to limit the unlimited power of the Son of God. We have placed self-imposed chains on our own omnipotence, but now we can make another choice.

Yesterday, we were once again reminded of the 9/11 crisis and many other situations in the world where wars ensue, storms and earthquakes take towns, cities down like little matchstick boxes, and famine strikes. It reminds us of the vulnerability of our human condition, which indeed would be vulnerable if our reality were a body and if the powerful forces of nature and violence were real. Our fears come from the belief that we really are these vulnerable creatures, inhabiting a hostile world of other vulnerable creatures, trying to survive against great odds, and finally giving it all over to death. Jesus recognizes our perspective when he says, **"It does not seem to me that I can choose to have but peace today."** (W.255.1.1) He knows we always see the world and relationships impinging on us. Events in this world, as well as those in our lives, clearly do seem to make peace difficult for us.

Yet Jesus says that nothing can take away the peace our Father has already given us in our creation---not earthquakes, not storms, not attacks, and not assaults of any kind. Our reality is not that of bodies, and the world is nothing more than an illusion, which will not last. Our thoughts of lack, our feelings of unworthiness, our guilt and fear, the appearance of the world attacking us, even our bodies themselves---all of them---are illusions, mirages, and symbols representing nothing. And sin is our belief in this separated state. It is our belief that we are alone in this world, struggling for our survival and bits of happiness before death claims us.

We say we want peace, but we want to be right about the way we see ourselves and the world. We say we want peace, but we actually justify reasons for holding onto grievances. We stubbornly persist in listening to our own counsel. While the thoughts offered to us by Jesus are new and, yes, even threatening to the way we see things now, the choice we make in practicing them is our way out of this illusion and our way back to our reality as the eternal, holy Self. It is a step-by-step process and it is ultimately practical. We are not being hurled into Heaven. We go at our own pace, as quickly or slowly as our fear will allow.

In the Lessons of the Holy Spirit, Jesus teaches, "**To have peace, teach peace to learn it.**" (T.6.V.B) (ACIM OE T.6.V.b) Today is a day to learn peace by sharing it with others through forgiveness. If we choose not to release our brothers from our projections, we are not releasing ourselves to experience the peace within us. Let us choose sanity today!

Love and blessings, Sarah
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