

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 308 **This instant is the only time there is.**

Sarah's Commentary:

Jesus talks to us where we think we are---in duality; but it is a non-dualistic teaching, which says there is only reality and nothing else. In other words, truth is true and *nothing* else is true. Anything that is not of the infinite, formless, changeless, and eternal cannot be true. This physical world we think is real has none of these characteristics and is therefore just an illusion---a dream. Everything here changes. We have made it real by imposing on it the idea of space and time. We think in terms of a past, present, and future where there is a passing of events in time and space. **"I have conceived of time in such a way that I defeat my aim."** (W.308.1.1) If our aim is to wake up by reaching **"past time to timelessness,"** (W.308.1.2) it is incumbent on us to use time only for the healing of the mind so we can experience the fact that the only reality is love.

Reality is perfect Oneness. There is nothing outside of this Oneness. In fact, there is nothing outside of us. All is mind. Even the body is a reflection of the mind and is not outside the mind. It is no different than the rocks or trees except we identify with the body and so we think it is what we are. The body is on the screen of this world and is just a projection of our thoughts. It all happens within Mind, which is all there is.

God did not make this world. It is made as a place to hide from God. The world is a reflection of ego thoughts, where we **"keep the past and future as one"** (W.308.1.3) by our investment in sin (which is in the past), guilt (which is the false present where we are still attached to the belief in sin and thus feel the guilt of what we have done), and fear (which reflects our imagined future kept alive through our belief that we must atone for sins of the past, heal the guilt in the present, and expect to be punished for our misdeeds in the future). The only way out of this cycle of sin, guilt, and fear is through forgiveness. When we forgive, we are set free of the belief in sin and guilt and are restored to **"timelessness and love."** (W.308.1.7) This is the true present. It is the eternal moment—the NOW. In this eternal present, there is no body. The body only exists in the past and future.

"Whatever you accept into your mind has reality for you." (T.5.V.4.1) (ACIM OE T.5.VII.63) As we let go of the past, we recognize it had no reality. It was all made of our false associations and interpretations. Of course, the ego will chastise us for this and will tell us that we have a lot to feel guilty about, and so it approves of the need to keep punishing ourselves. **"If you identify with the ego, you must perceive yourself as guilty. Whenever you respond to your ego you will experience guilt, and you will fear punishment. The ego is quite literally a fearful thought."** (T.5.V.3.5-7) (ACIM OE T.5.VII.61) In fact, to the ego, to feel guilty is holy. Declaring ourselves as sinners is noble. Our responsibility, if we want to know who we are, is to choose not to listen to this inner voice of fear and to let it go. This is how we are released to

the peace that is within and is no longer blocked by fearful thoughts. We are called to accept the truth of who we are as innocent *now* and to recognize that we have been mistaken about ourselves. We have simply forgotten who we are, which is not a sin to be punished but a mistake to be corrected.

"The ego cannot oppose the laws of God anymore than you can, but it can interpret them according to what it wants, just as you can. That is why the question, 'What do you want?' must be answered. You are answering it every minute and every second, and each moment of decision is a judgment that is anything but ineffectual. Its effects will follow automatically until the decision is changed." (T.5.V.6.6.1-4) (ACIM OE T.5.VII.66) What is beautiful is that there are only two choices available to us, **"The Holy Spirit and the ego are the only choices open to you."** (T.5.V.6.8) (ACIM OE T.5.VII.67) It makes it simple.

The world is a place where we have come to escape from God, Who we believe is intent on punishing us for choosing to leave His love. We are like the Prodigal Son, who seemingly ran away from his Father and now is afraid to return home. Yet this is all just a dream where we have come to accept as the truth. None of this has happened. This is the foundation for the statement in Chapter 10: **"You are at home in God, dreaming of exile but perfectly capable of awakening to reality."** (T.10.I.2.1) (ACIM OE T.9.VIII.65) In Chapter 4, Jesus asks us an interesting question. **"Who is the 'you' who are living in this world?"** (T.4.II.11.8) (ACIM OE T.4.VII.81)

When we found this Course, or some would say when the Course found us, we had a sense that there was "Something" in us that responded to this Call and this "Something" recognizes truth when it is heard. It is the Self that knows and resonates with the truth. This is the Self that Jesus is addressing. He is not speaking to the character in the dream. He is speaking to our sleeping mind, calling us to choose again. The ego rides along on this journey as well, although it is threatened by it. Now two interpretations are available in every situation and every circumstance. One is given by the ego that always speaks first and tells us how we should see the situation. The other is the Holy Spirit, Who reinterprets what the ego tells us.

"Do not interpret against God's Love, for you have many witnesses that speak of it so clearly that only the blind and deaf could fail to see and hear them." (T.16.II.8.1) (ACIM OE T.16.III.18) **"Reality is safe and sure, and wholly kind to everyone and everything. There is no greater love than to accept this and be glad. For love asks only that you be happy, and will give you everything that makes for happiness."** (T.16.II.8.6-8) (ACIM OE T.16.III.19) Happiness is not something we can give to ourselves, much as we try. When we listen to our own voice, which is the one that always gives us the first interpretation of everything, it will always be wrong. What we offer ourselves that we think will make us happy always brings pain instead of the happiness we seek. Something in us knows this. The ephemeral will never bring happiness, and everything we choose in the world will not meet the conditions of the eternal, which is unending joy and peace. Our release from suffering comes with our refusal to listen to the ego's perspective on everything.

We have mostly accepted this world as our reality. We may say that it is all a dream and that we are at home with God, but until we experience this, we only hold it as a concept. Our experience is of an individual in a body, living in a world of form. Yet Jesus teaches that separation is

impossible and has never been achieved at all. How do we experience what this Lesson teaches?---"**This instant is the only time there is.**" (W.308)

Jesus tells us, we need the experience of the holy instant as a way to connect with the present moment which is the only time there is. "**The only interval in which I can be saved from time is now.**" (W.308.1.4) This is what restores us to timelessness and love. We can't know this if we drag the past with us. When we hold grievances and feel shame and guilt, it is all related to the past. Even something someone said five seconds ago that concerns us or preoccupies our minds must be released. "*Now*" is the only time there is. Forgiveness is the means to come to this truth. It also means letting go of future plans and dreams and leaning on the Holy Spirit to guide us. We must learn to trust in His support. Imagine that only "*now*," this very moment, is all there is, and you can quickly see how nothing of the past, or what is yet to come, matters. In the stillness of this moment, there is instant release.

I remember when I knew for certain (or so it seemed at the time) the last moment of my life. I was driving to my office and a car was coming full speed at me, failing to stop at a stop sign. There was no escaping what was about to happen. In that instant, time stood still. Everything went quiet in my mind as I approached this moment, which to me seemed like the end of my bodily existence, with complete calm and peace. I'm still here and was not meant to leave this classroom yet, but I will never forget the impact of that moment.

The Course has led us to the place where we learn to enter the eternal moment of *now*. Jesus assures us that if we are not feeling the release, we should just practice the mechanics of it until the experience comes. In Chapter 15, Jesus talks of the uses of time where he describes, in some detail, the practice of the holy instant. He says that time is for learning what we are, and nothing else. "**Can you imagine what it means to have no cares, no worries, no anxieties but merely to be perfectly calm and quiet all the time? Yet that is what time is for; to learn just that and nothing more.**" (T.15.I.1.1-2) (ACIM OE T.15.I.1)

"This lesson takes no time. For what is time without a past and future? It has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be what you are." (T.15.I.9.1-3) (ACIM OE T.15.II.10) Later he says "**Take this very instant, now, and think of it as all there is of time. Nothing can reach you here out of the past, and it is here that you are completely absolved, completely free and wholly without condemnation. From this holy instant wherein holiness was born again you will go forth in time without fear, and with no sense of change with time.**" (T.15.I.9.5-7) (ACIM OE T.15.II.10)

In practicing the holy instant as described, we connect with the Self and can come back into this seeming world of time with our fear diminished. Why? The fear is lessened because we have had a taste of reality and have had the experience that we are not these bodies. We don't begin with birth and end with death, and with each experience of the holy instant, where we leave the world of time, we develop more trust in the truth of our eternal nature.

We are told that it takes a lot longer to get us to the point of willingness than it does to teach us how to experience the holy instant. Our minds can resist this for a long time, but since time is an illusion, let's just be happy to use it to become willing to do this work on behalf of our own happiness and release. Jesus reminds us, it is never just for us alone. It is for the salvation of the

world. In the present, Christ is known to us as our Self. Now we can give His present blessing to the world, restoring it to timelessness and love.

The beauty of it is, we do not have to clean the slate of our past to be restored to timelessness and love. The only way to let go of the burden of the past is through forgiveness and through the practice of meditation and contemplation. He has appointed this instant and every instant for our release. Think of this moment as all the time there is. The past can't reach you here. You are free of self-condemnation. Let it go and see this instant as an untarnished birth where you can know your innocence. It is a moment of willingness to see no past or future. Indeed, if our aim is to know this state, we must use time as a classroom for the undoing of the ego. **"Time's purpose cannot be to keep the past and future one."** (W.308.1.3) Isn't that what we do when we keep perpetuating the past by ruminating on our thoughts? If my aim is to know my innocence, I must change my perception of what time is for.

How much of my time is used to defeat this aim? That is the question we can ponder today. It can be addressed simply by asking, "What is it that I want?" "What is the desire of my heart?" If I truly want to wake up, then every encounter, every event, and every situation can be used for that purpose.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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