

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 314

I seek a future different from the past.

Sarah's Commentary:

By its very definition, when the present is freed from our past mistakes and the guilt that accompanies them, then our experience is one of total peace with no fear of the future. Guilt "casts a shadow" on the future and keeps us in fear of punishment for past sins. Yet the Lesson says, when we release the past, **"Death will not claim the future now, for life is now its goal, and all the needed means are happily provided."** (W.314.1.4) Death is the belief in punishment for past sins, but when there are no past sins, then there is only recognition of the purity and innocence of our Being. With this recognition comes the knowledge that we are eternal beings where death does not play a part. Everything is happily provided. There is nothing we need to strive for or to try to get. Life is a series of miracles, holy instants, holy relationships, and holy encounters. As said in the Bible, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all else will be provided you."

"Father, we were mistaken in the past, and choose to use the present to be free." (W.314.2.1) Our stories of the past and our judgments and self-attacking thoughts are not the truth. We are coming to recognize how wrong our perceptions about everything have been. It comes as a result of being willing to be wrong and to see everything in a new way. When we use everything in our day to free ourselves by forgiving our misperceptions, we free everyone around us. Our past does not determine the future. **"Past mistakes can cast no shadows on it, so that fear has lost its idols and its images, and being formless, it has no effects."** (W.314.1.3) We can choose to release all these past "idols and images" that occupy our minds and instead place them on the altar for healing.

When we judge our brothers, we see guilt in them and attack them. We are then haunted by guilt, which casts a shadow on our future. Our feelings of guilt, which we hold in our mind, keep us hostage to the ego, so we walk this world with the belief that we have done something wrong and now must atone for past sins. Now we expect bad things to happen to us. We also expect to be betrayed and to be attacked because we see our sin in our brothers whom we now fear. If we want a future different from the past, we must choose to see differently. As we bring attack thoughts to the Holy Spirit, we see a future where the timelessness of God's Love is extended through us and we become a clear and shining light, reflecting His Love in this dark world.

Jesus reminds us, **"To forgive is merely to remember the loving thoughts you gave in the past, and those that were given you. All the rest must be forgotten. Forgiveness is a selective remembering, based not on your selection. For the shadow figures you would make immortal are 'enemies' of reality. Be willing to forgive the Son of God for what he did not do. The shadow figures are the witnesses you bring with you to**

demonstrate he did what he did not. Because you bring them, you will hear them. And you who keep them by your own selection do not understand how they came into your mind, and what their purpose is. They represent the evil that you think was done to you. You bring them with you only that you may return evil for evil, hoping that their witness will enable you to think guiltily of another and not harm yourself." (T.17.III.1.1-10) (ACIM OE T.17.IV.14)

Our part is to bring awareness to our attack thoughts and forgive everything that we judge and condemn in ourselves. In holding onto the idols and images of the past, we continue to create more pain and suffering for ourselves. We are keeping the ego's program going, but through forgiveness, we invite the Holy Spirit's help to heal what was never true. Jesus speaks to us directly when he says, **"My holy brother, I would enter into all your relationships, and step between you and your fantasies. Let my relationship to you be real to you, and let me bring reality to your perception of your brothers. They were not created to enable you to hurt yourself through them."** (T.17.III.10.1-3) (ACIM OE T.17.IV.26)

All Jesus wants for us is peace and happiness. What is required of us is to first notice our judgments, worry thoughts, unworthiness, and any thought causing us anxiety and pain and acknowledge that we no longer want to hold onto these thoughts. They are the cause of all our suffering. If we want to be free of suffering, we must turn away from the voice of the ego by being willing to no longer engage in stories of the past or obsessively run the movies of the past in our minds. Instead, we must give all our attention to a willingness to be healed. **"Father, we were mistaken in the past, and choose to use the present to be free."** (W.314.2.1) Jesus can only help us when we bring our dark thoughts to him. We are motivated to do so when we remember that we want to know our divine nature more than we want our stories and the pain that accompanies them.

Letting go of our stories requires that we let go of the blame we project onto others and the justification we hold for our lack of forgiveness. The many painful events we hold onto keep us bound to the past. The only way to experience our true Self, and with it, innocence, peace, and joy, is to release the past. The process of undoing may be experienced as painful for it requires looking at the darkness in the mind, past hurts and grievances, and feeling the pain of them, as well as the pain of our own attacks. But there is no way to get to the love without going through this darkness.

What is it that keeps us stubbornly resisting taking responsibility for our attacks and judgments and defending our positions instead? Jesus says, **"Your mind is filled with schemes to save the face of your ego, and you do not seek the face of Christ."** (T.4.IV.1.5) (ACIM OE T.4.V.56) While a part of us does want to know who we are and to seek the face of Christ, we also want to defend our positions and our perspectives. We want to be seen as good. We justify our part so we can seem innocent and see others as guilty for our condition and for the way we feel.

When the desire for the truth is strong, we willingly sacrifice the shabby image we have tried to hold onto and see that it no longer serves us. **"Who can grieve or suffer when the present has been freed, extending its security and peace into a quiet future filled with joy?"** (W.314.1.5)

In the present, we are free. All our past mistakes can be left behind through forgiveness so we can have a future very different from the past. It does not require anything to change in our world. It only requires that we admit our mistakes and take responsibility for them. We have put a lot of

effort in maintaining the face of innocence. We want to be seen as well-meaning. We claim that if others were different, we could be more loving. Not so, says Jesus. The more we defend, the more fear we have. Byron Katie likes to say that the first act of war is defense. Interesting thought! **"In my defenselessness my safety lies."** (W.153) We must start by acknowledging that we are wrong. **"Father, we were mistaken in the past."** (W.314.2.1) Now we can choose to use the present to be free.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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