

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 345 **I offer only miracles today,** **For I would have them be returned to me.**

Sarah's Commentary:

All the Lessons in this part of the Workbook are prayers. This is a beautiful prayer as a reminder to remember the importance of the law of love—that what we give returns to us. Knowing this, we apply this Lesson all through the day so we can have a day of miracles. In this Lesson, we are reminded to see everything that seems to be happening as an opportunity to have the judgments of the ego transformed through forgiveness. Thus, in the undoing of our wrong-minded thinking based on false beliefs, our perceptions are healed.

Course students often say we should not judge and that is true, but to the ego mind, judgment is like oxygen on which it thrives. If we see this as a problem, we tend to crucify ourselves for our judgments. Yet we learn that judgments are not really the problem only our stubborn resistance to letting them go. When we are willing to look at our judgments and take responsibility for them without judging ourselves, we become an objective observer and now we ask for healing by giving our judgments over to the Holy Spirit. With willingness to release grievances we experience the miracle. Jesus is not asking us not to have any impure thoughts, but only to have none that we would keep.

The miracle shifts our perception from the wrong mind to the right mind. This means that we recognize that external events and circumstances are not the source of our happiness. Loss of peace comes from the wrong-minded choice to judge and to hold grievances. The Holy Spirit reflects the part of the mind that remembers we are One with our Father. When we are willing to look at the ego and take our judgments and projections back into the mind, placing them on the inner altar, we experience healing. Now, instead of seeing sin in our brother, we take responsibility for our interpretations and look at them without judging ourselves. As we become willing to have our misperceptions corrected by the Holy Spirit the way is open to experience the miracle. The miracle reflects our willingness to accept the Correction by the Holy Spirit of our wrong minded interpretations and judgments. The Correction affirms our innocence.

What this means practically is that whenever we see a brother as guilty, we withdraw the blame we put on him and acknowledge we do not see him as he is but see our own self-attack and self-condemnation projected on him in our desire to see the guilt in him rather than in ourselves. What we see in him is what we judge in ourselves. He is a perfect mirror, giving us an opportunity to see what is unhealed in the mind. This takes a willingness to acknowledge that we are mistaken in what we see and judge in him. Any lack of peace we experience is a result of the choice that we first made in the mind to listen to the ego, which is always a decision to maintain the separation. To forgive anyone means to release them of responsibility for our state of mind and for our experience in the dream. We remind ourselves that if we don't have peace, it is because we have

chosen to throw it away and hold our brother responsible. Now we learn to **"Be willing to forgive the Son of God for what he did not do."** (T.17.III.1.5) (ACIM OE T.17.IV.14)

We are not asked to deny that others may indeed do hurtful things, but we are asked to accept responsibility for the decision to see the cause of our feelings of hurt and betrayal as coming from our mind. It appears to come from others' behavior toward us, but that is what the conditioned mind believes because it believes the dream is real, and we are its effect. The recognition that we are responsible for the choice we make in the mind to listen to the ego, or the Holy Spirit is the most loving thing we can do for ourselves and for others because this is the birthplace of miracles. It is the recognition that if we are hurt by what someone has said or done, it is because we have interpreted their behavior as an attack instead of a call for love and understanding. When we see that it is just our own call, we are motivated to heal our mind, and with healing, comes the recognition we are the same as our brothers. Sameness in the world is a reflection of the Oneness we are in the Mind of God.

Acknowledging we are all the same means that what we do to another, we actually do to ourselves. Whether we listen to the ego's lie of separation or to the Holy Spirit's message that we are One with our Father, is a choice we make in every encounter. The choice is for Heaven or hell in every instant. It is a choice to forgive and experience the miracle or to hold onto grievances, maintain our victimhood, and withhold love. There are many ways we withhold love. It is important that we begin to notice our way of doing this. To do so requires a great deal of honesty and introspection, as we don't like to admit that we choose to withhold love to protect ourselves and gain at the expense of others.

Think of the ways you withhold your love from someone and the strategies you have adopted to make others feel guilty and punish them when they do not meet your needs as you perceive them. It may be in the form of withholding money, diminishing or delaying payment to someone you perceive has hurt you, withholding communication with your partner, reneging on an agreement, being consistently late, refusing to share your feelings of hurt, withholding praise from someone, withdrawing from others in a relationship, or bargaining to get what you want. We believe we protect ourselves through these and other strategies, but they only hurt us and keep us from the love we say we desire. We are always the ones who lose, as we end up hurting ourselves.

When we become willing to investigate how we withhold love and practice bringing mistaken perceptions to the Holy Spirit, space is made for His love to come shining through. Forgiveness is the reflection of God's gift of love to us. It is simply the undoing of wrong-minded strategies for protecting ourselves from what we most desire.

We can't fix ourselves, but we can choose to take the necessary steps to bring unforgiving thoughts to the inner altar and place them there for the Holy Spirit, Who does the healing. Trust that the healing will come when we are ready to receive it. It is a process where the whole thought system of the ego is being reversed, meaning everything that we have held to be true in the world of form is understood to be false. What we see in the world is no more true than our experience in our nighttime dream state. We are not a character in the dream, but the dreamer of the dream. When we see this, we demonstrate to our brothers that their attacks have no effect on us. We no longer have the experience of feeling victimized by anyone regardless of their behavior in the dream.

"Learning of Christ is easy, for to perceive with Him involves no strain at all. His perceptions are your natural awareness, and it is only the distortions you introduce that tire you." (T.11.VI.3.7-8) (ACIM OE T.10.VII.61). The only "effort" we are asked to make is a "little willingness" to question our interpretations of everything. This is enough to introduce a

slight doubt or suspicion in what we are believing and to help us accept we may be wrong in the belief that we are separate from our Source and from each other: **"Salvation, perfect and complete, asks but a little wish that what is true be true; a little willingness to overlook what is not there; a little sigh that speaks for Heaven as a preference to this world that death and desolation seem to rule."** (T.26.VII.10.1) (ACIM OE T.26.VIII.56) Each time we make this little effort, belief in the ego's thought system lessens and fear of the Holy Spirit's loving perception diminishes. This is the miracle given to each brother and received for ourselves in a form that will be of help to us. **"The miracles I give are given back in just the form I need to help me with the problems I perceive."** (W.345.1.4)

Thus, what is meant by a miracle is a Correction. It is called a Course in Miracles because it is a Course in learning to change our mind from thinking with the ego to thinking with the Holy Spirit. It is a process of undoing the ego by learning a new perspective that reverses the ego's view of everything and everyone. The ego tells us that we are bodies, separate from God and from each other, and subject to change by external forces. The Holy Spirit tells us that we are mind, One with our Father and with each other, subject to change only by the power of the mind to choose. We accept miracles for ourselves to the extent that we accept this teaching and apply it to all events, situations, and experiences in our lives. We offer miracles to others, as we recognize the same power of their mind to choose. As Jesus tells us in the text, **"The miracle extends without your help, but you are needed that it can begin. Accept the miracle of healing, and it will go forth because of what it is. It is its nature to extend itself the instant it is born. And it is born the instant it is offered and received. No one can ask another to be healed. But he can let himself be healed, and thus offer the other what he has received."** (T.27.V.1.2-7) (ACIM OE T.27.VI.44)

A miracle has nothing to do with anything external. Miracles pertain only to what is going on in the mind. In that sense, they are not at all what traditional religious systems have thought of as miracles. Traditionally, conditions in the body and the world have been viewed as the problem and therefore miracles, simply put, were viewed as the healing or removal of those conditions, usually through some kind of divine or supernatural intervention. A Course in Miracles, on the other hand, teaches that the body and the world are projections of thoughts in the mind: **"It [the world you see] is the witness to your state of mind, the outside picture of an inward condition. As a man thinketh, so does he perceive. Therefore, seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world."** (T.21.IN.1.5-7) (ACIM OE T.21.I.1)

If we could really accept that the world is merely a projection of a thought system of sin and guilt in the mind, we would realize that to try to alter things in the world or the body is ultimately futile but to change the mind about the reality of sin and guilt is truly healing. That is why the workbook states, **"A miracle is a correction. It does not create, nor really change at all. It merely looks on devastation, and reminds the mind that what it sees is false."** (W.13.1.1-3) It thus corrects our thinking, which may be reflected in a change in the condition in the body or the world, but this is ultimately not what is important, although it is helpful as a witness to the change of mind.

We are not asked to just dismiss our perceptions as simply illusion. Rather, we are to look at the devastation or problems in our lives and bring our perceptions to the loving presence of the Holy Spirit in the mind. In our choice to join with that Reflection of Truth, we remember that what we perceive is the content of a dream and not reality. **"The miracle establishes you dream a dream, and that its content is not true."** (T.28.II.7.1) (ACIM OE T.28.VIII.22) To dismiss

everything as just an illusion is to fail to recognize that while we still believe in what we see and experience, healing is necessary.

This takes a lot of practice, which is why we have a Workbook with 365 Lessons, at the end of which Jesus says we are just at the beginning stages of this process of thought-reversal. What we are so used to thinking about as the cause of our distress shows us it is all just the effects of our own thoughts. A miracle occurs when we remember and accept, for just an instant, that the cause of our lack of peace, sickness, deprivation, and problems is not something of the body or the world, but rather a choice we are making in the mind based on identification with the thought system of separation, sin, guilt, and fear. **"The miracle is the first step in giving back to cause the function of causation, not effect."** (T.28.II.9.3) (ACIM OE T.28.VIII.24)

A miracle occurs when we do not take someone's attack personally, recognizing instead we all share the same needs and goals. We all share the same insanity of the ego, and we all share the same sanity of Christ's vision. It requires stepping back, for just an instant, from our usual reactions. It requires being quiet when we are tempted to say something reactive in the moment. It requires that we continue to ask how to see the situation and how to respond with love instead of attack.

Miracles occur as frequently as our willingness makes space for them. They come in the form we need, based on our own individual experiences and in the context of our unique special relationships. Indeed, the parking space may show up in answer to a need we have, and we may see it as the perfect miracle today to witness to our choice for the Holy Spirit. ***"The miracles I give are given back in just the form I need to help me with the problems I perceive."*** (W.345.1.4)

"The curriculum is highly individualized, and all aspects are under the Holy Spirit's particular care and guidance." (M.29.2.6) **"If you but knew the glorious goal that lies beyond forgiveness, you would not keep hold on any thought, however light the touch of evil on it may appear to be."** (T.29.V.6.1) (ACIM OE T.29.VI.35) We are called to be highly vigilant and observe our unloving thoughts and actions so we won't tolerate even the slightest irritation. Instead, we are called to turn everything over to the Holy Spirit, so the miracle can shine forth in the mind and extend to all those who cross our path or cross our minds. It is a gift to ourselves that frees us from the imprisonment of the ego mind and releases us from suffering.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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