



LESSON 168

Your grace is given me. I claim it now.

Sarah's Commentary:

We are speaking to God directly in this Lesson as we affirm, "**Your grace is given me. I claim it now.**" (W.168) We are told, "**God speaks to us,**" (W.168.1.1) so why would we not speak directly to Him? Of course, it is His presence in our right minds that is communicating with us all the time. "**He is not distant.**" (W.168.1.3) His presence is with us every moment. Grace is an aspect of God's Love, which can be recognized and received because it has already been given and is already in us and with us. All we need do is return to the place in the mind where He is. If ideas leave not their source, we have never left Him. We are in Him and He is in us.

This Lesson assures us, over and over, how much God loves us. Jesus assures us again and again that God's Love is the only certainty there is and we need nothing else. "**There is no certainty but this, yet this suffices.**" (W.168.1.8) His love is forever and always accessible, always present, continually communicating with us, never changing, and never distant. No matter what we think we have done and how guilty or how lost we feel in this world of illusion, the truth is God is always with us. There is no vengeance and no punishment possible from a loving God Who knows only love and knows His Son. If we really knew how much we were loved, we could never despair. It is not a love from some impersonal, inattentive God. It is not a neutral force, a universal power, nor a void. "**And He descends to meet us, as we come to Him.**" (W.168.6.1) When we experience His love, it is the closest we come to Heaven on earth.

Sometimes we get discouraged on this path. We think we will never make it. We believe God is somewhere "out there" and distant from us. Yet here is our invitation to just say yes to God and to express the willingness to know Him and hear Him. "**His grace is yours by your acknowledgment.**" (W.168.2.5) Jesus tells us that the gifts of God's love and grace are in our hearts, preserved there always, and just "**. . . waiting to be acknowledged.**" (W.168.3.1) They come to us through forgiveness, which is learned. Grace is the result of forgiveness.

This Course provides us with the process where we learn, step by step, how to undo the makings of the ego so we can hear God's Voice. In the undoing of the ego thought system of sin, guilt, and fear, we find our way out of despair, so the joy that is our natural state is restored. It is up to us. We are the commanders of this journey. Jesus is our big brother and our model and the Holy Spirit our Guide. We are the only ones who can decide how much we will accept the message Jesus offers. It is up to us how much we will allow His guidance to be heard. We are in charge of the process. We are the ones who must take the steps along the way, being guided by the Holy Spirit, until God takes the final step. "**But finally He comes Himself, and takes us in His Arms and sweeps away the cobwebs of our sleep.**" (W.168.3.4) Only then is our memory restored to what our sleeping mind has forgotten and will not know until we are fully awake in God.

"Our faith lies in the Giver, not our own acceptance." (W.168.5.2) We don't need to worry about our limitations and our hesitation, but only focus on our faith in God's ability to give us His gifts. How does this happen? It happens by acknowledging we have been mistaken in our perceptions and are now willing to bring them to the Holy Spirit to be Corrected. We clear the mind of the debris of false thoughts and beliefs to clear a space where truth can enter uncluttered by egoic thoughts.

Our acceptance is bound by mistakes, but perfection is not asked of us. Yes, we need to look honestly at our mistakes, but to God, mistakes are unknown, and forgiveness is the means we are given to lay them down. Over and over, we are assured how much God loves and accepts us and does not see our mistakes. In fact, God only knows us to be safely at home—the home we never left. **"Today we ask of God the gift He has most carefully preserved within our hearts, waiting to be acknowledged."** (W.168.3.1) It is all about the desire of the heart to keep our focus on what we really want. The gift that would satisfy all our hopes is awaiting our acceptance when we are ready. Our part is to claim the gift. We are entitled. There is no need for any kind of entreaty to God. We don't have to beg or beseech God for what is ours. All that is needed is our consent. His gifts are freely given. We just need to say "yes." It is about our willingness to say and mean, **"Father, I come to you."** (W.168.6.7)

At times, the complexity of this world, with all its seeming issues, choices, and problems, can feel overwhelming. As I sat in meditation today and turned my thoughts over as they came into my mind, I felt such deep gratitude for this path and for my mighty companions. The light of the Holy Spirit is in our minds, inviting us into His tenderness. Here we can rest in confidence of His love and in this beautiful silent place where Jesus tells us the world cannot intrude. It is the sweet serenity of Heaven where we feel nothing but rest in the Heart of God. It has been given us and needs only to be received. This message is given over and over in this Lesson.

David Hoffmeister writes: "The world of business ends in quiet. The world of distractions ends in single-pointed awareness. The world of sadness ends in joy, and the world of sorrow ends in happiness and laughter! What but the Heart of God offers eternal gifts such as these? Being aware of the silence offered freely without price or condition, why wait for circumstances to change before embracing It?"

Why indeed? There is no need to try to find ways to redeem ourselves. We need not try to make amends, make excuses, blame anyone, numb ourselves, nor hope for death as a release from guilt. **"Forgetfulness and sleep and even death become the ego's best advice for dealing with the perceived and harsh intrusion of guilt on peace. Yet no one sees himself in conflict and ravaged by a cruel war unless he believes that both opponents in the war are real."** (T.13.XI.1.1-2) (ACIM OE T.13.IV.35) All we need do is claim the grace that is given us now.

Later David says, "There is no true change in the world. It is a closed system of denial and the vain attempt to deny the Love of God. Yet anyone sincerely seeking truth cannot long be deceived about the unsubstantial nature of this world. Be glad the world is not real, for nothing of the world can ever offer the eternal Love of God. Be happy to lay the foolish business of the world aside in exchange for Inner Stillness. Sink deep into your mind and open to the experience that has been waiting for you all along. For Love waits on welcome, not on time and it is but your welcome that will bring love into awareness. There is no reason to wait for it, or read about it, or strive for it. It is here Now for the Asking. Ask and ye shall be Given."

All we need to do is return to the place in our minds where He is. We are the ones who chose to leave, and now we take the steps to return. We do so with willingness to look at the ego and keep bringing it to the light. We take time in silence to commune with God and to reflect on the importance of what we are doing on behalf of our happiness.

Let us make this a new and holy day. We open ourselves up to His Love and His embrace, as **"He comes Himself, and takes us in His Arms and sweeps away the cobwebs of our sleep."** (W.168.3.4) To allow this is to do the work of forgiveness by releasing all that stands in the way of our recognition of who we are. **"Your grace is given me. I claim it now. Father, I come to You. And You will come to me who ask. I am the Son You Love."** (W.168.6.5-9) It is a day of surrender. There is nothing to lose and nothing we give up when we open to grace and surrender to love. It is our heart's desire and what we have always yearned for. Nothing is lost except the illusory self we think we are—the one who suffers and feels despair and homelessness. It is not only for us, but for the world, because when I am healed, the Sonship is healed along with me. This is not a journey for myself alone, where only my healing is important. No, it is in concert with caring and compassion for all.

"Your home has called to you since time began, nor have you ever failed entirely to hear. You heard, but knew not how to look, nor where. And now you know. In you the knowledge lies, ready to be unveiled and freed from all the terror that kept it hidden. There is no fear in love. The song of Easter is the glad refrain the Son of God was never crucified. Let us lift up our eyes together, not in fear but faith. And there will be no fear in us, for in our vision will be no illusions; only a pathway to the open door of Heaven, the home we share in quietness and where we live in gentleness and peace, as one together." (T.20.II.8.5-12) (ACIM OE T.20.III.12)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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