



**LESSON 230**

**Now I will seek and find the peace of God.**

**Sarah's Commentary:**

It is important to recognize in this Lesson that the state of peace and happiness is not something we need to achieve. Yearning for peace is based on the belief that we do not have it in us now. It denies the reality that the peace and joy we seek have been given us by a merciful God and given us forever. ***"What was given then must be here now, for my creation was apart from time, and still remains beyond all change."*** (W.230.2.2)

The Atonement Principle guarantees that we cannot change the truth of what we are. **"It is not given me to change my Self."** (W.230.1.3) When we do not have peace, we are actually choosing against it. This is the case every time we choose the ego thought system, which is a choice to listen to our specialness and our attack thoughts, rather than the Thought of God. If I am upset, I am actually choosing to be separate from the love that I am. And if I stay upset, then I am stubbornly resisting surrendering my story. It seems insane to choose against our own peace, and it is. Our very identity in this world carries with it the insanity of the ego thought system. It is the belief that the innocent, unlimited Son of God could make of itself a separate, lacking, and limited self. Why do we continue to hold onto our limited beliefs? We hold onto them because we have a fear of God's Will. We abandoned Him, but now we blame Him for abandoning us. In other words, we project onto Him our own self-abandonment. Now we see Him as a punishing God, Who we no longer trust because we believe He wants to extract from us what we value and want to hold onto.

What we value most is our individual will. We think that we will have to sacrifice everything that is ours to this "god" made-up by the ego. The final obstacle to peace is the fear of God. The mind is split and is in conflict between the truth of what we are---always and forever at peace as we were created and remain---and the part of the mind that the ego has taken over. In our minds are both the belief in separation (the ego) and the memory of Oneness (the Holy Spirit). **"The ego's goal is as unified as the Holy Spirit's, and it is because of this that their goals can never be reconciled in any way or to any extent. The ego always seeks to divide and separate. The Holy Spirit always seeks to unify and heal."** (T.7.IV.5.1-3) (ACIM OE T.7.V.36)

So while we seek peace, we are actually afraid of it. This puts us in conflict with ourselves. Total peace means the end of our specialness, the end of our unique personality, and the end of the body identification to which we are attached. This brings up fear, but we must remember that we are not being hurled into reality. The Course is very practical. It offers us a daily process of undoing the thought system of the ego that keeps us in hell. **"The ego is the symbol of separation, just as the Holy Spirit is the symbol of peace."** (T.5.III.9.4) (ACIM OE T.5.V.41)

We do whatever we can to fulfill our needs, based on our idea of what will bring us peace and happiness and avoid pain. When we see that this will never bring us what we want, we pursue real peace by following guidance and trusting in the path set out for us. However, while we straddle two separate and distinct thought systems, we will experience conflict. We continue to seek for happiness in the world and yet blame the world for our condition; and at the same time, we try to follow the teachings of Jesus and release our misperceptions about ourselves. The result is inconsistency in the way we experience our day.

We say we want God as our only goal and we want the healing of our minds, yet we stubbornly hold onto our perspectives, argue for our positions, and demand that our needs be met at the expense of others. We cannot stubbornly hold onto our perspectives while still showing up fully in our own lives. The answer is to choose the Holy Spirit more and more consistently so that joy and peace can be more prevalent in our lives. This requires considerable vigilance. Clearly, once on this path, the choice to revert entirely to egoic thinking is no longer possible. Once we have started on this path, it is like we have swallowed the blue pill (The Matrix) and have said "yes" to the Call. Now it is impossible to make a total reversal back to the ego dictates. The "blue pill" has taken hold in our experience.

When we have an experience of the holy instant, it is an experience of the peace within us. Whenever we choose and value our ego goals instead, we bring this peace to an end. The peace is still in us, but we are blocking it. We are always choosing between the truth in us that brings peace, or the falsity that maintains our suffering. As I look at my concerns, my feelings of being overwhelmed, my excitement over plans I have, and the busyness of my life, I sometimes feel as if life is conspiring against me and actually robbing me of my peace, but it is just the ego's game. When my mind has made a choice for the ego, I become distracted by my thoughts and conflicting goals. It is all a set-up, but it is set up by me! We continue to choose it because we think we know our own best interests and want to maintain the separate self.

Jesus is showing us that we are not victims of external circumstances. He is showing us that all we have to do is learn to recognize the mind's choice by paying very close attention to our feelings and judgments. Every time we feel the loss of peace, whether it is in the form of anger, depression, irritation, anxiety, concern, distress of any kind, excitement, or frustration, we have once again made a decision for separation from love in the mind. By recognizing this, we can become more vigilant about the choice made by the mind to listen to the ego. We must now step away from our story about what we tell ourselves is the cause of our angst, accept our thoughts and feelings, turn them over to the Holy Spirit, and trust Him to do the rest.

It is only by this kind of attentiveness that we can undo our denial and let the Holy Spirit bring us to the truth. This is what salvation is all about---to be saved from our mistaken thoughts. But, like the miracle, salvation does nothing because nothing needs to be done. We are already perfect. We just need to bring our mistaken perceptions to the truth. When we become aware of how painful it is to choose the ego, we get very motivated to choose differently. Without this awareness and recognition, we become very confused about what seems to be coming at us. We feel like helpless victims of the world, but this victimhood is a way of not taking responsibility for our lack of peace. It is not because someone took it from us, but it is only because we have chosen to throw it away and blame our brothers for taking it. We blame and attack because we do not want to be responsible for our own condition. We would rather put the blame on conditions and circumstances that we believe are outside of our own minds, than put it on ourselves.

When we identify with our ego and our specialness, we will always feel guilt, which is inevitably projected in some form of judgment against ourselves and others. This happens very quickly. Because of the mind's speed in forgetting (denial), we do not even notice what we have done. This is why it appears that everything is coming from outside of our own minds. It is why we need to pay attention to our thoughts and become aware of our judgments because they show us that we have once again chosen separation.

We may judge ourselves when we are not at peace. We may feel like poor Course students, who aren't getting it. Yet both the conditions of peace and lack of peace are very valuable experiences for our learning. Through them, we can see how peace feels and how judgments cause us pain. Through these contrasts, we become aware of the choices we are making. When we are not at peace, it is for no other reason than we have chosen the ego. The world is just an outside picture of our inward condition. Thus, it is a reflection of the choice we have made in our minds of which voice we are listening to, the ego or the Holy Spirit. It is not helpful to judge ourselves, but it is helpful to look at our mistaken decisions. Everything can be used by the Holy Spirit. It all has value when used for healing purposes.

And now we conclude our section on **"What is forgiveness?"** (W.PII.Q1) **"Do nothing, then, and let forgiveness show you what to do, through Him Who is your Guide, your Savior and Protector, strong in hope, and certain of your ultimate success."** (W.PII.Q1.5.1) **"Now must you share His function, and forgive whom He has saved, whose sinlessness He sees, and whom He honors as the Son of God."** (W.PII.Q1.5.3) We have not changed ourselves as a result of our foolish thoughts of sin. We can only become unaware of who we are. I love the line in Chapter 19 of the Text that says, **"What you would still contain behind your little barrier and keep separate from your brother seems mightier than the universe, for it would hold back the universe and its Creator."** (T.19.IV.A.3.7) (ACIM OE T.19.V.a.42) That is precisely the power we have. It is our decision to choose illusion or the truth.

Through our healed perception, we share His function in the world. We are His manifestation in the world, bringing peace to other minds and offering kindness and gentleness; and by doing so, we know it is in us. It is, in fact, what we are in truth.

Love and blessings, Sarah  
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