

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 273

The stillness of the peace of God is mine.

Sarah's Commentary:

Isn't it beautiful how Jesus gently reminds us that even if we don't feel the undisturbed tranquility talked about here, we can still be content to **"learn how such a day can be achieved."** (W.273.1.2) We don't need to be dismayed if we don't feel a deep peace in our meditation time and throughout the day because we are assured we simply cannot lose the gifts of God already in us. (W.273.2.3) We have them now! The peace, joy, and stillness are already in us. There is nothing to be done to find peace. We need only participate in the process of undoing all of our interfering thoughts, standing in the way of peace. Peace is being offered to us in each moment by the Holy Spirit. His Light shines unabated in our minds, waiting for our willingness to give over our darkness to Him.

Even though a day of undisturbed tranquility may not yet be here, we can still be content. There is no need to chastise ourselves when we think we are not where we should be. In fact, it is only the ego that we listen to when we get upset with ourselves. Jesus urges us to be content with where we are. We are to be happy learners. It would make no sense to throw away our peace because we are not where we "should" be based on expectations we put on ourselves. The idea is to be content, even though we may not yet know peace consistently.

We can be content because everything that shows up in our lives is absolutely perfect for our healing. Everything and everyone in our lives reveals to us places where we hold judgments about ourselves. We can simply invite the Holy Spirit to shine away all pain. It is not necessarily instantaneous, although it can be. We go as fast or as slow as our fear and resistance will allow. We are not being hurled into Heaven. It is a process of willingness to recognize that all things truly work together for good. We are in charge of welcoming Spirit into our lives to the extent that we are ready, open, and willing. Although it is generally not comfortable or peaceful to go through the darkness, willingness to look at our ego preservation strategies is the only way to release them.

When we are in a state of distress or emotional upheaval, it is not to make ourselves wrong or judge ourselves for not being sufficiently spiritual. Instead, try to stay open to welcome the feelings that come up and go deeper into them for the purpose of uncovering what has been hidden from awareness. When we are open and willing to look at the thoughts and feelings that arise, we can then release them to the Holy Spirit. He does the rest. Healing is assured. Any feelings we harbor, project, blame, hold, stuff down, or deny is what is kept from healing. We keep ourselves from healing when we judge ourselves for not being good enough or ready to look at what we have denied. Not looking is what keeps our defenses in place when our thoughts rule our experience.

It is not our job to make ourselves holy. We already are holy, complete, innocent, and whole. There is nothing wrong with us. We are as God created us in our loveliness, but it is not how we experience ourselves. Our experience is one of self-judgment and self-attack. Because of this, we do not consistently feel our purity. In fact, the mind is addicted to darkness and experiences the distortions of the ego. We listen to our own thoughts and believe in our own stories and by doing so, we give them power.

To make space for the miracle we must let our dark thoughts be washed away. It means they first must be exposed. The ego tells us not to go there, saying that there is so much darkness in us that we are better off to keep it contained. This is how we keep the self-attack going. Our holy will has been enslaved by the ego, but this need not be. We can ask for the miracle, which aligns us with the truth of our creation. The miracle offers us moments of joyful opening with no particular reason for that experience. Thus, we see the contrast between the suffering that comes from investing in our own thoughts versus the joy brought about by miracle-mindedness when judgments are released.

Peace is given us in our creation and is always there, behind every thought of despair, worry, distress, concern, jealousy, depression, anger, rejection, sadness, and feelings of abandonment and unworthiness. When such thoughts and feelings are released to the Holy Spirit, space opens up in the mind for the light to shine through. It requires discipline and vigilance. It can't be bestowed on us by some power or some guru. We must do this work ourselves by watching our own minds. While there is no answer outside of our own minds, our mighty companions can hold sacred space for us in our healing. **"You whose hand is joined with your brother's have begun to reach beyond the body, but not outside yourself, to reach your shared Identity together."** (T.18.VI.10.2) (ACIM OE T.18.VII.58) We cannot know Oneness in this world, but we can see our sameness, which is a reflection of the Oneness.

God's Voice calls to us, but we don't hear it because of the cacophony of our own thoughts. We all experience how relentless and obsessive these thoughts can be. When our focus is on personal problems, on problems of the world, on grievances, on what others think about us, on future plans, on past betrayals, on our addictions to sex and food, on fears and doubts, on regrets, on plans for our future, and on money concerns, there can be no peace of mind. So yes, it does take vigilance to see what grabs our attention and distracts us, but we must also be gentle and easy with ourselves in this process. It is not helpful to condemn ourselves for any seeming lack of progress because if we do, we experience more guilt. It is a daily, if not moment by moment, reminder that this world is just a classroom, and every day and every moment, we can choose again. We can offer our brothers a blessing instead of a judgment or curse, and with each blessing, we receive one for ourselves.

When we see sin in our brother and rejoice in what we see in him, we are cutting ourselves off from peace. We are crucifying the brother that God has given us as a teacher of peace. Yes, it may indeed be the one who seems to be attacking us, but we can never be the judge of who provides us with the biggest gift. Each one offers us another opportunity to go deeper into our own feelings and uncover what we have hidden from awareness. Each one who crosses our path brings with him or her the function of salvation because each one offers us a mirror of our own inner condition. They reflect for us the guilt or the innocence in our own minds. Each one thus becomes a portal through which we can see what we could not access in ourselves by ourselves. Yet how often we refuse to see the gift because it does not always appear to be a gift. It may, in fact, look like rejection, betrayal, judgment, or attack. Where this is the case, it is harder to see our brother's need is as great as our own and the blessing we offer him can bless us both and bring the miracle of healing.

We may be tempted to beat up on ourselves for not meeting expectations of ourselves on this path. It is important to remind ourselves that there is nothing to strive for. When we strive, we are anxious. We are struggling with our ego and fighting it instead of just looking at it. Again, it is important to remain gentle with ourselves in this learning process. We already have it all. We just need to keep reminding ourselves that the peace is already ours. **"We need but tell our minds, with certainty, 'The stillness of the peace of God is mine,' and nothing that can intrude upon the peace that God Himself has given to His Son."** (W.273.1.4) If we don't have it, we have actively chosen to throw it away and then blame our brother for taking it from us.

Today, we set a goal for peace and tranquility and remind ourselves with any upset that disturbs us that the stillness of the peace of God is ours. With willingness to look at the upset and bring it to the stillness within, peace is returned to the mind. Nothing can take away our peace. If we don't have it, it is a signal that we are listening to the ego. For me, it is always remembering to ask for guidance in everything. It is to stop the instant I recognize I am disturbed by anything and to take a moment in stillness to look at what I am thinking and be willing to ask for help to see the situation differently. Often, I find I have to withdraw from the conflict by walking away, stepping back from it in order to find a place of sanity in my mind so that I don't take the bait offered me to engage in the insanity.

The belief that we will never "get there" is just another way the ego keeps us feeling stuck. In each moment, we can just start again, and with each mistake, we can ask for the correction, rather than feeling unworthy and guilty. We are called to be a happy learner, meaning to be happy with whatever shows up in our day, knowing it is all for our awakening. We sometimes stubbornly hold onto distressing thoughts because we actually prefer to blame our brother for our lack of peace. This is a conspiracy the ego has set up to keep us imprisoned, wanting revenge on our brother for what he has presumably done. In truth, nothing has happened. We forgive him for what he has not done. Wanting revenge is just an excuse to hold onto our unhappiness and blame our brother for it. It is a picture of the crucified Christ that we hold up to our brother to show him what he has done to us. **"Death seems an easy price, if they can say, 'Behold me, brother, at your hand I die'."** (T.27.I.4.6) (ACIM OE T.27.II.4)

The Lesson today is more about watching our minds and watching our resistance, than pretending we are always peaceful. We need to remain vigilant if we truly want to see how much we are threatened by true peace and happiness. The underlying motivation for our conflicts is the desire to be rid of peace. We read in the Obstacles to Peace that the first obstacle is our desire to be rid of it. **"If you would make it (peace) homeless, how can it abide within the Son of God?"** (T.19.IV.A.1.5) (ACIM OE T.19.V.A.40) Today, we are called to stay vigilant as we look at the remnants of attack that we still cherish against our brothers. This is how we keep ourselves limited. With vigilance and willingness, we turn over each remnant of attack to the Holy Spirit so He can shine them away and return our minds to the peace that is our inheritance.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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