

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 317 I follow in the way appointed me.

Sarah's Commentary:

In this Lesson, Jesus reminds us, we **"have a special place to fill; a role for me alone."** (W.317.1.1) We may wonder what that special place is for us to fill? What am I appointed to do? What is the role I am to fill? In this Lesson, Jesus says that until we understand the answer to this question, **"salvation waits."** (W.317.1.2) Until we take our place in salvation, we are the **"slave of time and human destiny."** (W.317.1.3) What is it we are being asked to do? It seems we only have one requirement and that is to forgive. It is the one role we undertake in relation to everyone in our lives who play their roles perfectly for our healing. Our function is to forgive these special relationships so we can come to know our own holiness. We have a choice in how we use time, but if we don't use it for the purpose of forgiveness, we will not lose the opportunities presented to us. Salvation simply waits on our readiness.

Forgiveness is the means to salvation. When we make the decision to take this path of undoing our misperceptions through forgiveness, time is being used for its intended purpose, which is to remember who we are. To do that, I must **"willingly and gladly go the way my Father's plan appointed me to go."** (W.317.1.4) That sounds to me like God has a plan for us. Yet if we are already safe at home with Him and dreaming of exile in this world, there can be no plan except for us to **"recognize salvation is already here, already given all my brothers and already mine as well."** (W.317.1.4) Until we make this choice, we are the **"slave of time and human destiny."** (W.317.1.3) We are stuck in the ego's cycle of birth and death. Accepting Atonement for ourselves is simply the acceptance of the truth of who we are as eternal beings of light and love, and the way to this acceptance is through forgiveness and healing. To delay is to continue to suffer.

We have a choice whether to follow the ego's plan or the Holy Spirit's plan. It is our decision as to which voice we listen to. Today, we can choose to commit to follow the Holy Spirit and to allow Him to lead us. **"Father, Your way is what I choose today."** (W.317.2.1) As we join our will with His, we find our way back to the home we never left. Sometimes the motivation is very strong in us, and at other times, we may seem to be in the grips of the ego. There is a part of the mind that will do anything and everything to delay. It argues, debates, disagrees, judges, interprets, distracts, analyzes, questions, and tries to control. When we listen to the wrong mind, we believe we need to figure everything out on our own. We believe we can find our own answers for our lives. We may even put ourselves in charge of our own spiritual awakening. When we do, we believe we can fix ourselves and make ourselves loving and holy. We are willing to pay the price in suffering by pursuing our own goals. It is how we put off our awakening until some future time.

To surrender feels hard, for it seems to be an affront to our independence. It is to let go of our way and follow Him in everything we do. To recognize we don't know and to become dependent as little children seems highly unsafe. We think that if we don't take charge of our lives, things won't get looked after. We still don't trust our brothers. **"Specialness is a lack of trust in anyone except yourself. Faith is invested in yourself alone."** (T.24.IV.1.1-2) (ACIM OE T.24.V.34) Yet as we become willing to look at every thought, all beliefs we hold, all our concepts and values that keep us attached to this world of bodies, and acknowledge we don't know the meaning of anything, we become willing to release what no longer serves us. Nothing we hold as true will bring the happiness we seek. Only by releasing all fear thoughts, that keep us attached to the ego, do we become free of its hold over us.

Some time ago, I had an experience of great sadness and longing when I attended a celebration of the liberation of my birth country of Latvia and participated in singing the national anthem and folk songs of my childhood. The experience stirred up so much emotion. I was surprised by all the feelings that came up. Primarily there was a feeling of not being at home. We probably all have had similar experiences, which are a reflection of a belief that we have wandered far from our Father's home and forgotten who we are. We are like the Prodigal Son, who believes he squandered his father's treasure and would not be welcomed back into his father's arms, yet yearns for the experience. Believing there is somewhere in the world where we can feel at home again is just another substitute for Heaven. In my mind, it seems like the memory of my childhood home and my country of origin is what pulled at my heart, yet this Lesson affirms, again, the memory that calls to us is of our Father, Who waits patiently to welcome us back into His bosom. **"And all my sorrows end in Your embrace."** (W.317.2.5)

Jesus tells us that at the root of every sorrow is the feeling of separation from God that we experience. **"I need but turn to Him, and every sorrow melts away, as I accept His boundless Love for me."** (W.207.1.3) He assures us, in this Lesson, that we were mistaken when we thought we had wandered from the protection of His Loving Arms. It is not possible for us to stray. We are not lost. When we awaken, we will realize that we just had a dream of exile while safe at Home.

We need not spend our time exploring this dream. Our job is not to try to figure out our role in the dream, but to remember we are dreaming. The only value of looking at the darkness is to let it go. Our stories are basically all the same. The situations and characters are different, but the ego conspiracies are identical. They are the ego's devices for keeping us separate from the love that we are. As long as we believe the thoughts that accompany these conspiracies, we keep ourselves in enslavement to the ego. They involve thoughts related to issues of abandonment, betrayal, shame, abuse, inadequacy, unworthiness, lack, loss, rebellion, revenge, sacrifice, self-attack, failure, competition, comparison, and jealousy. We play out these beliefs in roles of victim-perpetrator or helper-rescuer. We each have a favorite strategy for playing out what we believe about ourselves. All these beliefs, and the roles we have taken on, have their roots in the belief we have separated from Oneness and thus are guilty and expect to be punished for what we have done. We think we can escape responsibility for the separation by taking on the role of victim. Jesus offers us just one solution to the guilt and to the belief we deserve punishment. That solution is to **"willingly and gladly go the way my Father's plan appointed me to go."** (W.317.1.4) In other words, we let go of what no longer serves us. We let go of the pain that comes from believing we are on our own.

Sometimes our script seems to bring us great pain. I just had a call today from a friend whose baby died on delivery. Everything was going well. She was overdue and the doctors planned to induce the birth but waited a day, and it was on the day she agreed to wait that the baby died. Why? The pain in her is immense. The ego voice tells her she should not have waited. And then it tells her that at her age she may never have another pregnancy. She obsessively returns to the thoughts of what she should have done and how the doctor is responsible for the death because he delayed the delivery. She is in deep pain, wondering why this has happened. The voice of the ego crucifies us and keeps us in hell. It is the voice of guilt, telling us that we are paying for past sins, and the future is bleak.

How do we understand this? How willingly and how happily do we accept the script of our lives and recognize it all as a classroom for forgiveness and for awakening? When we see it this way, we become happy learners. Thus, no matter what shows up in our script, we accept that it is all for our awakening. How can we judge what anything in our lives is for? Did this baby make a choice not to come onto the planet at this time? We can't know all the reasons. Jesus tells us, **"There is Someone with you Whose judgment is perfect."** (Manual for Teachers.10.4.7) We can't know all the facts, but He does. He knows the past, present, and yet to come. He knows all the effects of His judgment on everyone and everything involved in any way. **"And He is wholly fair to everyone, for there is no distortion in His perception."** (M.10.4.10) That is something we can never do. That is why we must come to accept that we know nothing of how things should be. Our healing depends on investigating the upset and admitting that a healed mind would not be distressed. Since we experience distress, we now have an opportunity to look at what is underneath the pain. When it is too emotionally challenging, we can just rest with it and run to the Comforter for support, accept that the answer will be revealed, and trust that all things work together for our good.

Awakening seems to be a process where there is something for us to do while we believe our experience here is real. We are called to do the forgiveness work in the special circumstances that show up for us that are actually perfect for our healing. The ego is restless and wants things to be different than they are. It is forever making plans and trying to control every situation. Yet when we learn to step back and follow in the way appointed us, we can rest in God and simply accept what is given us to do in this process of purification.

Whatever the circumstance seems to be, we can use it for undoing the concepts, beliefs, and thoughts that keep our true reality hidden from our awareness. My function is my happiness, and my function is to forgive the interpretations and beliefs I hold in my mind. My function is to expose and undo the ego. That is the only purpose for time, and we can make that choice now. So much of our time is spent living in the past, looking at all the things we should have done, should have said, shouldn't have done, or shouldn't have said. We justify our guilt when all we need to do is choose the miracle instead by letting go of the past and realize that there is nothing to correct but our mistaken thoughts.

Today, we are asked to trust and be guided to step back and let Him lead the way. ***"Your way is certain, and the end secure. The memory of You awaits me there. And all my sorrows end in Your embrace, which You have promised to Your Son, who thought mistakenly that he had wandered from the sure protection of Your loving Arms."*** (W.317.2.3-5)

Love and blessings, Sarah

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