

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 342

**I let forgiveness rest upon all things,
For thus forgiveness will be given me.**

Sarah's Commentary:

We live in a world that is not real. It is a dream that we have invested with meaning. Now we have been given **"the means to prove its unreality,"** (W.342.1.3) but it is up to us. **"The key is in my hand. . ."** (W.342.1.4) It is up to me to withdraw the meaning I have given the world. No one will do this for me. I can't ask Jesus to take away my fear, my pain, and my suffering because I made it. He calls us from outside the dream to come to where he is. I have to be the one to identify my judgments, take total responsibility for them, recognize that I am the one choosing them, and be willing to release them. I have to be willing to release my investment in my story. I have to be willing to give up my attachments, my values, and my beliefs. I have to be willing to forgive my misperceptions of myself, others and the world. No one is coming to save me.

"Forgiveness is the key to happiness." (W.121) **"And how else can one dispel illusions except by looking at them directly, without protecting them? Be not afraid, therefore, for what you will be looking at is the source of fear, and you are beginning to learn that fear is not real."** (T.11.V.2.2-3) (ACIM OE T.10.VI.40) **"Do not be afraid, then, to look upon fear, for it cannot be seen. Clarity undoes confusion by definition, and to look upon darkness through light must dispel it."** (T.11.V.2.8-9) (ACIM OE T.10.VI.41) Thus, healing is no different than a miracle, forgiveness, or Atonement. It is all about releasing guilt, and the way we do this is to look at everything we have put in the way of the love that we are which is there all the time.

The interesting thing is we are not seriously disturbed about being unhappy. Our desire is mostly to be right about the way we see things. We put a lot of value on our worldview and tenaciously hold onto it. To listen with an open mind and take in what Jesus tells us means that everything we think and believe is wrong. No wonder we have resistance! Jesus says it is really frightening for us to conceive of the fact that **"I do not know the thing I am, and therefore do not know what I am doing, where I am, or how to look upon the world or on myself."** (T.31.V.17.7) (ACIM OE T.31.V.60) We are wrong about everything we believe, including who we think we are. This threatens everything we currently hold as true and creates a lot of resistance in the mind. We have determined reality and believe we are correct in how we perceive things.

Ultimately, we don't want to see ourselves as responsible for our condition. We prefer to see ourselves as a victim of circumstances over which we have no control. After all, we did not ask to be born...or did we? We justify our anger and frustration, pointing our finger at others. "If it weren't for them," we claim, "I would be happy." This is the reason that at a deeper level we want to suffer and want to be betrayed so we can make someone else responsible. We prefer to suffer so we can assure ourselves that someone else is held responsible, and thus guilty, for our

condition. It seems worth paying the price in suffering in order to be right and to secretly delight in their guilt. It may be parents, teachers, ministers, friends who betrayed us or any number of people we perceive outside of the mind that we hold responsible.

We want to be right because then we don't have to look at the fact that we chose separation and specialness, which is the real cause of all our pain because of the choice we made for the ego. We accepted the myth that we stole our existence from God and killed Him, and with the horror of that belief in the mind, we chose to escape into the body and the world. It is a place where the ego tells us we can hide from God and escape His wrath. This is not a conscious thought, but deep down we feel that we have done something dreadfully wrong although we don't know what it is. At our core, we believe we are bad, but Jesus urges us to accept our innocence because we have never done anything wrong. This is all just a bad dream we are having. By showing us how and why we made it up, he invites us to see it is not real; but we resist because for us to withdraw our belief in the ego is to withdraw our investment in our separate self and in the world. We hang on because we think there is still some value in the world and idols we still want to pursue in the belief they will make us happy.

To forgive is to let go of our wrong-minded thinking. It is to let go of the belief that something real is happening that is the cause of our pain. **"Forgiveness recognizes what you thought your brother did to you has not occurred."** (W.PII.Q1.What is Forgiveness?1.1) Yet this can only make sense if the world is illusory. To us, it seems as if real damage has been done, but Jesus assures us, nothing real has happened because it is just a dream. Now we are invited to look at everything that seems to hurt or upset us as an opportunity to turn our judgments over to be transformed by the miracle. **"It [the miracle] merely looks on devastation, and reminds the mind that what it sees is false."** (W.PII.Q13.What is a Miracle?1.3) The happiness that is already in us can only be known when we are willing to let go of our stories, which means letting go of being right about how we see things.

When someone says or does something that seems to take away my peace, I need to recognize that peace is a condition in me and that no one can take it away. Only I can choose to throw my peace away in the face of a challenging situation. Instead, I can turn to the Holy Spirit to help me withdraw blame from someone for taking my peace. The Holy Spirit reminds me of my brother's innocence so I can know my own. Am I willing to see this? This Lesson reminds us that what we give, we receive.

I recently saw a movie about Nelson Mandela's life called, *Long Walk to Freedom*. It is such a beautiful example of forgiveness, love, and reconciliation in the face of dreadful circumstances. He spent 27 years in jail. As I watched the movie, I noticed how everyone played their part so perfectly to allow reconciliation and forgiveness. Mandela's influence was based entirely on his example of grace and forgiveness. I thought of my day and the irritants that I made real. The movie reminded me of the message Jesus teaches us---that we are here to be a demonstration of the love we are. All attack is a call for forgiveness and peace. If we see attack in any other way, we are using it as a justification for anger. Jesus saw his crucifixion as a justification for forgiveness, as did Nelson Mandela. They are beautiful symbols for us of what is possible in our own lives. **"Yet the instant you waken you realize that everything that seemed to happen in the dream did not happen at all."** (T.10.I.2.4) (ACIM OE T.9.VIII.65)

On our own, we do not know how to respond to any situation. When we think we know, we are turning to the ego as our teacher. Jesus asks us to resign as our own teacher, acknowledge that we don't know, step back, and turn to the Holy Spirit in every situation. That is what he means when he asks us not to make decisions by ourselves. On our own, we will always be wrong. The ego speaks first, meaning our first thought about how to respond in any situation is ego-driven. When we ask to see another way, we make space for guidance. This requires us to be willing to let go of our way and be open to receiving a new perception. **"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.II.VI.3.7-8) (ACIM OE T.10.VII.61) I find that for guidance to come I must take the time to step away from a difficult situation rather than reacting to it. When I take the time to be still and do nothing, the answer always comes; and the answer is always to let go of my way. An insight then comes to me that would not have been there if I had relied on my own thinking. Life is then lived in a state of inspiration, rather than trying to figure things out on my own. When I get out of the way by giving over my interpretations and judgments, the channels are cleared for His Love to come through.

Each time we are willing to recognize that all our sense of lack and deprivation is a choice we make in our own minds and is not caused by anything outside of the mind, we choose with the Holy Spirit instead of the ego, and thus, we experience more love in our lives. This is not dependent on the things going on in our external circumstances, as Nelson Mandela illustrated so beautifully. The good news is that if our mind is the source of all our unhappiness, so too is it the source of all our happiness. It is all within our power to choose. We have both the thought system of the ego and the thought system of the Holy Spirit in us to choose between. The script is written and it is the script we chose. Now, in each situation and every decision we make in our script, we choose Heaven or hell. We choose to judge or to extend love.

"Let me forgive all things, and let creation be as You would have it be and as it is. Let me remember that I am Your Son, and opening the door at last, forget illusions in the blazing light of truth, as memory of You returns to me." (W.342.1.7-8)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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