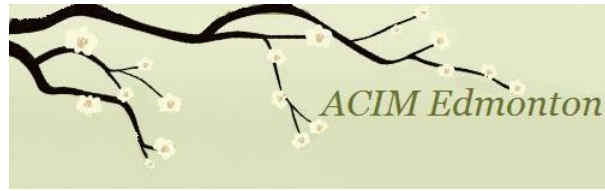


ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 348

**I have no cause for anger or for fear,
For You surround me. And in every need
That I perceive, Your grace suffices me.**

Sarah's Commentary:

We experience anger and fear and think that they are triggered by conditions outside of ourselves. Jesus tells us, this is not the case. Nothing outside of us is responsible for our condition, amazing as that may sound to us. The cause of our anger and fear emanates entirely from our own minds. The power is within us to bring our fear-based thoughts to the truth and thus experience the miracle. This is the healing power of forgiveness. What is required is that we surrender our ideas of who we are, what we currently believe is the cause of how we feel, and what we believe we need for our safety and well-being. All of what we think is currently true is actually not that way at all.

We see the world as cause, and we are its effects. We come to this world as dependent on those around us and feel victimized by situations over which we have no control. The fact is that we set it up so we could make others responsible for our condition. We develop defenses and strategies to protect ourselves from the slings and arrows of our world. Yet Jesus is a demonstration of the invulnerable Self we all are. God's Love surrounds us in every moment. When we don't experience the protection of that Love, we feel vulnerable and at the mercy of the world. What we do to protect ourselves is that we try to take control over our circumstances and look for substitutes that will take the place of God's Love. We look to those substitutes to surround us and protect us. We think that we know what we need to feel safe and protected.

Our identification with the body and the personality has taken us off course. The personal self becomes stressed by the changes going on around it. We lose a job, a spouse, or our home and, if we identify with the ego, we will feel distressed. Yet when we devote ourselves to going through the layers of protection that we have set up around the personal self, we come to see that these things do not define us. We are safe and protected in God's Love.

I was reading the *Holy Spirit's Interpretation of the New Testament* where it speaks beautifully of this. It is a rather long piece, but I will include it as I found it very helpful and hope you might see the relevance of it for yourself.

"When Jesus left his hometown, he went from village to village teaching the good news. He let his apostles ask many questions, always answering them to their full. When the time came that he knew they were ready, he sent them out, two by two, to fulfill the purpose for which he had gathered them, the spreading of the Word. He knew that it was through their own participation as teachers that they themselves would learn and see, and so he was very grateful for this plan of healing.

"Jesus gave the apostles instructions before sending them out. Mostly he wanted to emphasize the importance of trusting the Holy Spirit in all things.

"'You do not know,' he told them. 'Only the Holy Spirit knows, so trust His guidance within you. Do not think for yourself about what to do or say. Ask Him and listen in faith for His response. He shall lead you truly. It is His plan you are sent to carry out.

"'Do not look to your own effort for food or drink or shelter. Think only of the work He has sent you to do. All else will be offered through His Grace. When you go into a town, sleep where a bed is offered you, and be grateful for everything you are given. It comes from Him, that you may focus on His work.

"'The Word of the kingdom of God is for everyone, but everyone may not be ready for it. If you go into a town and they do not want to listen to the Word, give them your greetings of peace and leave that place. Hold no grievances against them. The time will come that they will listen. Shake the dust from your sandals and go joyously to the next place, always remembering that it is the Holy Spirit's plan you follow. You do not know.'"

This lesson is about choosing God's Will in everything, recognizing that we don't know what anything is for. We are called to see the power of His grace and the blessedness of the Guide available to us in our daily activity. Jesus reminds us, in the Manual for Teachers, **"God turns to you for help to save the world. Teacher of God, His thanks He offers you. And all the world stands silent in the grace You bring from Him."** (M.29.8.2-3) We are remembering our purpose and living in a state of trust where all our needs are met without our own effort.

When I experience fear, I am inclined to rely on my own resources. In my state of confusion, I don't know what to do. I try to rely on my own thinking to figure things out, even though I can never know with certainty if I am doing the right thing. Yesterday, I was referred to an Insurance Agent whom I had never met. My mind was spinning with fear thoughts around what to do to ensure a sound financial future for my family. I felt a lot of anxiety about the whole situation and asked for help to remember that my only need was to connect with the Love within. Miraculously, the conversation turned, and the agent asked me what I do. I briefly explained my work in writing and teaching, at which point he wanted to know more. Incredibly, our whole conversation went to the teaching of *A Course in Miracles* and his interest in it. I don't know what I will do about insurance, as there is no clear guidance at this point, but it became clear that the purpose of this encounter was not what I had thought. As we parted, I was guided to give him Gary Renard's book, *Disappearance of the Universe*. Following guidance and doing what the next step invites us to do in the moment erases all confusion from the mind.

I loved the movie, *The Letters*, about the life of Mother Theresa. What this movie illustrated, along with many other things, was the simple steps that she took in listening and following by doing what was in front of her to do. She had a big mission, but the steps to take in that mission were simple and clear when she did the obvious. Sometimes we get ahead of ourselves and try to see the end of the process instead of just doing what is the next step right in front of us.

"Can I be afraid, when Your eternal promise goes with me? Surrounding me is perfect sinlessness. What can I fear, when You created me in holiness as perfect as Your Own?" (W.348.1.6-8) Fear thoughts are made by me. They are based on the concept of myself as separate and alone. When I hold onto these thoughts, I deny the perfect safety within. To know ourselves as the eternal Self is our only need. What then is there to fear? Our reality is

eternal. I was watching the fear thoughts show up in my mind as I watched the movie, *Lucy*. As the movie begins, Lucy is captured by a gang and finds herself caught up in a ring of violent drug traffickers. I projected how I would feel in this situation. Fear is in the mind and movies such as this trigger what is already there. As the movie unfolds, through the process, Lucy gets in touch with her inner power and experiences a transformation of consciousness until all the fear is undone. I came to see that fear comes from the belief in the body because mind cannot die and is eternal beyond the realm of time and space. Thus, fear falls away as nothing in the world can affect the Self that we are. When we know who we are, **"Nothing real can be threatened."** (T.IN.2.2) (ACIM OE T.IN.4) We no longer see ourselves from the personal perspective of the small self, but from the higher perspective of awareness.

We are never on our own. If we think we are, it is only our own thoughts that frighten us. Our mind creates false stories. The truth is that we are supported in every moment by His Everlasting Love. It wraps us in Its warmth. Feel His benevolent support, always there in every moment of our lives. Trust it. Embrace it. Know the truth of it, which you can know when you bring to truth all the pockets of hidden guilt and fear in your mind. All else is taken care of without effort. Our only problem is that we don't completely believe this. Fortunately, belief is not required. It is only by doing the forgiveness work and applying the teaching to our lives that the truth is demonstrated. With each step we take, our trust in Him increases. He invites us to keep testing out the truth of these words. It is only through experience that we can learn---truth is true and nothing else is true.

Whatever the struggle is in your life today, remember **"God's grace suffices us in everything that He would have us do."** (W.348.2.1) His Love is enough. Will you choose to join your will with His? We do so whenever we remember to rely on Him in all things. There is nothing to defend against. Only then do we know there is no cause for anger or fear. Yet it requires that we step away from our own thoughts, rise above the battleground, and look from outside the dream. Now we see the world from another perspective and can laugh at the idea that it can hurt or harm us in any way. Yes, the figures in the dream can be hurt, but we are not these characters, playing out the roles we identify with. Yet we won't be convinced of this until we experience miracles and achieve vision in our lives.

Today, we set our intention to experience His grace in every need we perceive. We do so by remembering there is only one purpose for anger, judgments, and grievances---to keep God's love at bay and feed the ego instead. The ego's heaven is this world it made. The ego would have us believe that this is all there is. Until we know there is another choice to be made, we are imprisoned in the confines of the ego. To maintain the self we think we are, we hold onto anger and fear, which denies the fact that we are perfectly safe. Be willing today to look at all the choices you make throughout the day where God's Love is kept away and decide to choose against the ego.

Be willing to bring your attack thoughts and judgments to the Holy Spirit. Our part is not to fix the ego, nor to try to let it go, nor make ourselves spiritual. Our part is only to take responsibility for our attacks and bring them to the truth with sincerity and willingness to see how faulty our thinking is. Be a happy learner, not by judging yourself for your mistakes, but by seeing how perfectly they are orchestrated for your learning. This is a hard one for us because the spiritual ego resists this kind of self-honesty and wants us to believe it is more advanced than it is. The undoing process requires tremendous self-reflection and a high degree of honesty. As the layers of the ego are peeled back, we may feel we are not making progress, or worse, that we are regressing. The fact is that the ego is being unmasked, and in the process, its ugliness is being exposed, and we are seeing what was unconscious in the mind; but remember, it is nothing. It is

not to be loved or feared, but simply undone. Undoing requires this kind of exposing, which we must welcome if we are to heal.

As we accept Atonement (healing/correction) for ourselves, space is made for God's peace to be extended through us to every brother we encounter or even think about. The peace extended through us is returned to our minds the instant it is given. And so, today, we remember that **"God's grace suffices us in everything that He would have us do. And only that we choose to be our will as well as His."** (W.348.2.1-2) All God would have us do is offer forgiveness so we can remember who we are. Today, we embrace every opportunity to do so in the face of the temptation to be afraid and angry.

Behind every seemingly difficult situation is a gift. Problems are simply the interpretation we give to any situation. When we place faith in the miracle, we see witnesses to validate our faith. Let us be willing to release the blocks to love today. Let us be willing to let forgiveness light up our minds and be blessed by the miracle. Desire and willingness for the truth are our powerful allies.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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