



LESSON 98

I will accept my part in God's plan for salvation.

Sarah's Commentary:

What is salvation? "**Salvation is a promise made by God, that you would find your way to Him at last.**" (W.PII.Q2.1.1) It is a guaranteed promise. "**How happy to be certain!**" (W.98 2.1) Jesus says that we can lay all our doubts aside today "**and take our stand with certainty of purpose.**" (W.98.2.1) This is the end of all illusions and the time of our release from the ego thought system. As we experience our own release, we release others by bringing the light in us to the whole SonShip. In tomorrow's Lesson, Jesus tells us that salvation and forgiveness are the same. It is moving from a state of conflict to a state of peace and happiness. In Lesson 101, he says that the theme of all the Lessons on salvation is happiness and is "**a key idea in understanding what salvation means.**" (W.101.1.2)

What is our part in God's plan? It is simply to do our healing through forgiveness. What do we forgive? We experience circumstances, people, and events that may trigger reactions in us that disturb our peace and joy. Forgiveness is to remember that whatever seems to be happening has not actually occurred in truth, so we can let it go. Everything in our day is to assist us in undoing the false. This world and our lives can, therefore, be considered as our classroom to be used for forgiveness. We are learning what we are in truth. This requires undoing all that is untrue. It is undoing how we see our special relationships, how we experience the events of this world, and how the circumstances of our lives affect us. It does not matter whether we judge them as good or bad because they are all helpful when used for our healing. This is how we come to peace through forgiveness.

As we work with the Holy Spirit by bringing our ego thought system to Him, He does all the heavy lifting. All that is required is our willingness to release how we see everything now and give it to Him. Basically, we are putting our dark thoughts on the inner altar and leaving them there. We need not interfere. He will do the rest. Our part is to acknowledge that we are wrong about all our interpretations. As we turn to Him, He will give us another way of seeing. To see independent of the Holy Spirit is to see wrongly. The Holy Spirit abides in our right mind. He is not separate from us. He is the Divine Wisdom within the mind Who shows us another way of seeing. We just need to be willing to ask for His help and to surrender our own way. We must be willing to be humble by recognizing that we don't know because we are using our senses to gather information, and they inform us incorrectly.

We make mistakes, but they are not sins. When we experience guilt, we are judging our mistakes as sins. Jesus keeps encouraging us to do this forgiveness work on behalf of our own happiness. "**This course requires almost nothing of you. It is impossible to imagine one that asks so little, or could offer more.**" (T.20.VII.1.7-8) (ACIM OE T.20.VIII.58) We have chosen to suffer and are not truly happy here, no matter how well we have adjusted to the world. We can't be happy here because the world is not our home, but a state of separation from Oneness.

Our plans for salvation are to find ways to fulfill our needs, as we define them. We require that our specialness is addressed, and yet this always brings more suffering. Why? It brings suffering because the pleasure we seek is always at someone else's expense, and therefore, it brings more guilt, and ultimately, more pain. While we seem to gain when we get our needs met, someone always pays the price, and all we really gain is more guilt in the end. The world was made as a place to serve our specialness but at the cost of guilt and fear.

With each goal that we set for ourselves comes more disillusionment. **"You have made a thousand losing bargains at the least."** (W.98.5.4) With each bargain we make, we think that this time it will be different. We think that this time we will achieve happiness for all time, but we know it never lasts. All we must do to see this is to look honestly at our own lives.

We are asked to **"dedicate ourselves fully to truth today and to salvation as God planned it be."** (W.98.1.5) When we are dedicated to truth, we let go of insisting where our happiness lies. Jesus says that true happiness can only come from undoing the guilt in our minds. We have our own ideas of what we need in order to be happy. We think it is to support our specialness, but Jesus keeps assuring us again and again that we will never find happiness through our own pursuits. Does that mean it is bad or wrong to go after our pursuits? Absolutely not! We do not need to feel guilty when we pursue what we still think will make us happy, but we need only recognize, more and more, that our pursuits are taking us down the road to nowhere. We can never meet our needs by looking for them outside of ourselves. The beliefs we hold that our happiness is in finding the right job, making enough money, finding the perfect relationship, or the perfect place to live, is not where we will ever attain certainty, meaning, happiness, fulfillment, nor completion. When we finally become disillusioned, and we will, we will realize that our happiness can never be found in the world. When we finally see this, we are ready to look for another answer, and we become motivated to seek for salvation where it really is, which is in our right minds.

When we recognize where our salvation truly lies, we will focus our energies inward. While I still notice the beliefs I hold that things in the world can make me happy, I am more and more willing to stop and question what everything is for. I am more willing to notice my "I know" mind, thinking it knows its own best interests, which is impossible when I don't even know what I am. We are called today to embrace a mighty purpose, which is to recognize how wrong we have been in our pursuing nothing of any value.

If you track the words "certain" and "certainty" in this Lesson, you will find they come up often, reminding us that certainty is always of God. We can have complete confidence and faith in God's guarantee of true happiness when we focus on our one purpose, which is to heal the guilt in the mind. When we live our lives with devotion to our purpose of waking up, everything that happens to us is happily invited because it can all serve this one purpose. Everything is then perfectly orchestrated for us and by us. We are called to be happy learners, which is to accept that everything plays out for our highest good.

We currently experience ourselves as two selves, where confusion reigns, and we are never certain. Truth is only on one side. Nothing is on the other side. Today, we take a stand only on the side that is real and true. When we do, we have certainty because it all boils down to purpose. We will always be in doubt if we hold onto two selves with differing functions. One believes its salvation lies in the things of this world, while the other is about accepting our part in God's plan for salvation.

Our part is to be happy. We are happy when we devote ourselves to forgiveness. Jesus reminds us, **"You do not have to seek far for salvation. Every minute and every second gives you a chance to save yourself. Do not lose these chances, not because they will not return, but because delay of joy is needless."** (T.9.VII.1.5-6) (ACIM OE T.9.VI.38) He goes on to say, we have two conflicting evaluations of ourselves in our minds, and they can't possibly both be true. **"You do not yet realize how completely different these evaluations are, because you do not understand how lofty the Holy Spirit's perception of you really is. He is not deceived by anything you do, because He never forgets what you are."** (T.9.VII.4.2-3) (ACIM OE T.9.VI.41)

My work with the Course has certainly increased my sense of confidence and trust. I have doubts, and I still hold onto goals that I think will serve my special needs, but increasingly, I am willing to turn these doubts over to Him and to ask for guidance in all my busy doings. We just need the little willingness, and He will do the rest, turning our doubts to faith. **"Give Him the words, and He will do the rest."** (W.98.9.1) **"He will open up the way to happiness, and peace trust will be His gifts; His answer to your words."** (W.98.9.3) Through the experience of the truth, we find the evidence that there really is peace and trust in the way appointed for us.

Our part is to choose forgiveness and not to worry about the effects. Our job is to let go of the ego thought system of guilt and fear, and when we do, the Holy Spirit's love can extend through us. **"And you will have conviction then of Him Who knows the function that you have on earth as well as Heaven."** (W.98.9.5) Doubt will be gone, and we will have the certainty of purpose. When we know more and more that we have been absolved of our errors, then our innocence and our safety will become more apparent to us. We will no longer fear punishment for our guilt. **"The guiltless have no fear, for they are safe and recognize their safety. They do not appeal to magic, nor invent escapes from fancied threats without reality."** (W.98 3.1-2) Now, we no longer need magic. In other words, there is no need to seek for substitutes for God's love, which is what magic is. When we feel guilty, we expect punishment and believe we need to protect ourselves by finding magic solutions for our problems.

Imagine that instead of inventing escapes from your fancied threats, you rest in serene certainty, knowing that you are perfectly capable of accepting your function and that you have been given everything to achieve this function. We have the Course, we have our script, we have our Inner Teacher, and we have our classroom. Everything works together for our good. The Correction (the Holy Spirit), which is God's Answer to the separation, has been placed in our minds. Everything unfolds perfectly in time and space when used for healing purposes. Imagine undertaking your function with full commitment and certainty of success every step of the way.

Now we are being asked to suspend our doubts for a while. Jesus knows we have doubts, but when we take a few moments during the day to bring our uncertainty to the Holy Spirit for healing and connect with the certainty of his assurances, guidance, and presence in our lives, we can experience how wonderful certainty can feel. There is a place in us where certainty abides. There is the place in us where we know what we are. It is where we know the Self that has never left us. It is a place of total calm, peace, and joy. We don't need to look for it, as we already have it. It is the awareness that observes, without any judgment, the thinker of the thoughts. It has always been with us.

The world offers us uncertainty and doubt, but when we enter this place of total quiet, it is like entering the eye of the storm where all is still. This is the place in our quiet center where the holy child resides and can breathe the holy air for a while. There is a very poignant passage in Lesson 182 that says, **"It is this Child in you your Father knows as His Own Son. It is this Child**

Who knows His Father. He desires to go home so deeply, so unceasingly, His voice cries unto you to let Him rest a while. He does not ask for more than just a few instants of respite; just an interval in which He can return to breathe again the holy air that fills His Father's house." (W.182.5.1-4) This is the place where our restless minds can have respite.

That is the value of our communion with God in our meditation time. It is when we surrender our goals, plans, and doubt thoughts, and sit in quiet, listening to His Voice. It is a time to let go and let God. We are giving up our plans and saying yes to the part assigned to us. We are allowing and accepting the truth within to guide us.

For some of us, this can seem extremely hard to do. All of us have spent a lifetime building monuments to our independence. We live by the words of Frank Sinatra, "I did it my way." These are words that can be carved onto our headstones and worn with pride in our lifetime, but independence allows us only to fly with the tiny wings of the sparrow when the mighty wings of the eagle are available to us.

There is a hard way and an easy way. I am slowly learning that with God, all things truly are possible, and if we release our struggle to His Answer, we move from dis-ease to ease. Yes, it takes practice. Yes, it takes discipline, but that is what time was made for. That is the only reason we are here. He who has the most toys at the end does not win anything, as all the toys are nothing. We are simply valuing the valueless. All we have done in acquiring our toys is to trade the eternal for nothingness. In each moment, we are making a choice for Heaven or hell.

In doing the five-minute practice, we are exchanging a little of our time for peace of mind, certainty of purpose, happiness, release from pain, and a promise of complete success. All that is asked of us is time, which is really nothing since time is just illusory. In exchange for this, we get everything. If we believe this and truly want it, our practice time would be something we would do willingly, and in between practice periods, we would hardly be able to wait for the next one. Because this is not generally the way we experience it now, he gives us so much encouragement and so many promises in these Lessons, assuring us of the wonderful benefits of staying focused on our practice. Jesus assures us, he is always with us, strengthening our weak commitment and dedication. He knows that we falter and get discouraged, and we wonder if the benefits he talks about are really true. Realizing this, he offers us so many incentives. **"In each five minutes that you spend with Him, He will accept your words and give them back to you all bright with faith and confidence so strong and steady they will light the world with hope and gladness."** (W.98.8.1)

We are still attached to our pain and our stories, and resist full release because we wonder who we would be without our independence, beliefs, and fleeting joys of our specialness. We are addicted to the drama and with it the highs and lows of our lives. We recognize the world gives us pain, but we still have our own idea of happiness, and we are not sure we want to release it. We still do think we know better, and we still fear we will be asked to sacrifice in ways that will compromise our freedom as we have defined it. We still don't trust God, but when we see that the cost to us of following the ego is high and the results in our lives have not been very good, we become more motivated to listen to the Holy Spirit.

He is with us. We are not undertaking this practice alone. We approach this time with thankfulness that we can lay down all earthly tasks for a short time. Our practice periods should be a happy time and not a burden. It sometimes feels very demanding, and since Jesus knows this, he is really trying to encourage us with the benefits of this practice and the discipline of laying

down **"all earthly tasks, all little thoughts and limited ideas, and spend a happy time again with Him."** (W.98.11.1) Can we happily agree to take our part in God's plan for salvation and listen to His guidance on how He can use our strengths, our talents, and our encounters with those around us for His purposes rather than our own?

Finally, as a note of interest, we now have a Lesson written in iambic pentameter, which I always find so very amazing. This means it is written in ten syllables with five pairs each, and the accent is on the second syllable for each of the pairs. It has the sound of a heartbeat when read in a rhythmic way. To me, this demonstrates the absolutely amazing mind that dictated the Lessons with such beauty and wisdom. It is another bit of evidence, for my mind, that the dictation did not come from any earthly intelligence.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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