

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 99 Salvation is my only function here.

Sarah's Commentary:

"Salvation and forgiveness are the same." (W.99.1) Both are undoing the thought system of separation and guilt, which we have made real. **"They both imply that something has gone wrong; something to be saved from; forgiven for; something amiss that needs corrective change; something apart or different from the Will of God."** (W.99.1.1-2) The situation that needs correction is the belief that God is now our enemy. In truth, nothing needs to be done because nothing has come between us and God; but for us, illusion has become the truth, and now we need salvation to undo our false beliefs.

Forgiveness is the means of escape from the false identity and from this world we think is real--- a world that could never be. Thus, what is being undone is **"a state of conflict seen between what is and what could never be."** (W.99.1.3) To us, **"Truth and illusion are equal now, for both have happened."**

Salvation and forgiveness are both illusions because they undo what never was; yet while they are both illusory, they are the means to bring an end to all illusion. They are only necessary while we think we are in this dream. What we think we have done and what has been done to us is not the truth. It has never happened. **"Salvation now becomes the borderland between the truth and the illusion. It reflects the truth because it is the means by which you can escape illusions. Yet it is not yet the truth because it undoes what was never done."** (W.99.2.5) In effect, we need salvation from what never happened. (W.99.2.2) To us, it seems **"Truth and illusions both are equal now, for both have happened."** (W.99.2.1) That is how we experience it. We experience both truth and illusion as coexisting, meaning we believe there is both a state of separation and a loving God; yet they are mutually exclusive. They can't coexist, but to the ego, both truth and illusion seem to exist. Thus, we try to meld God with the world and the body. Despite the fact that only one is true, we see them both as real. Oneness and duality can't both be true. It is one or the other. There is no "me" in Oneness. If duality were true, there could be no God; and if God were true, there could be no duality.

"The mind that sees illusions thinks them real. They have existence in that they are thoughts." (W.99.3.2-3) Our thoughts seem very real to us. They have existence because we give them the power of our mind. Now we are asked to **"Open your secrets to His kindly light, and see how bright this light still shines in you."** (W.99.8.4) This is the only way we can know the light that shines in us. Our thoughts block this light. As long as we hold onto thoughts, we will not be aware of this kindly light that shines in our minds all the time. We need the Holy Spirit as a bridge to bring us to the experience of our loving Self.

Through forgiveness, we achieve Christ's vision, even though we are actually forgiving something that has never happened. **"Forgiveness recognizes what you thought your brother did**

to you has not occurred." (W.PII. What is Forgiveness Q1.1.1) We are therefore called to release our brothers from our perceptions of them. We take back our projections of our own self-attacks that we prefer to see in others rather than in ourselves. **"Forgive him your illusions, and behold how dear a brother he would be to you."** (Clarification of Terms.C5.5.8)

Yet what we don't want to do is dismiss everything as an illusion and thus tell ourselves there is nothing to forgive. It is true there is nothing real to forgive, but to dismiss what we still believe is to deny its hold on our minds. Having said that, neither is it helpful to make the error real and believe we are forgiving a real offense. Jesus is teaching us not to take either side. He wants us to recognize that although what seems to have happened is not real, we have given it reality in our experience and suffered as a result. Jesus speaks about this in Chapter 20, where he says, **"Your question should not be, 'How can I see my brother without a body?' Ask only, 'Do I really wish to see him sinless?'"** (T.20.VII.9.1-2) (ACIM OE T.20.VIII.66) In other words, we will see people in the illusion acting out behaviors that we judge. It is not about denying what our body's eyes show us and what our brain interprets as good or bad but being willing to let these judgments go. What we see in our brothers is our own guilt projected onto them. It all starts in our own minds. None of it is real. **"The mind that sees illusions thinks them real."** (W.99.3.2) Don't deny what you see or how you feel, but just be willing to have it all reinterpreted for you by the Holy Spirit. "Holy Spirit, how would you have me see this situation? What am I to learn from it? What concepts and beliefs am I holding that I have kept hidden that you would have me see? I want your peace that I may know my Self."

Jesus says, **"Unshaken does the Holy Spirit look on what you see; on sin and pain and death, on grief and separation and on loss."** (W.99.5.4) He is completely unshaken by it because **"He knows one thing must still be true; God is still Love, and this is not His Will."** (W.99.5.5) He sees it all as we see it, yet He holds the truth for us of who God is. That is what really strikes me most about this Lesson. God did not give us any of the pain and suffering we experience. We made it all up. And because we are the ones who made it up, we have the power to release it.

By bringing all the darkness of our secret thoughts to the light for healing, they are released through His power. Jesus tells us that this is the best use we can make of time. The plan operates in time because we believe time is real, yet the plan is really apart from time. The Holy Spirit works outside of time as that is the only way change can be made.

So often things seem to happen to us or to others, and we say it must be God's Will. We just accept that God would bring grief and loss into our lives and that He would choose these things for us. We might then believe we just need to accept that He wills this for us in order to bring trials for our "character development." This is the belief that what does not kill you will make you stronger. The Lesson disputes this commonly held view. God wills only our happiness. He only gives us what is changeless. He did not create this world. This world is not real because it is a state of separation from God. **"All the world of pain is not His Will. Forgive yourself the thought He wanted this for you."** (W.99.7.4-5) Now it is up to us to accept the healing for our wrong-minded perspective.

Whatever loss and suffering we feel in our lives or whatever loss or suffering we see in the world, we really need to understand that none of it is God's Will. Obviously, if we believe the world is of His making, we will hold Him responsible for the mess this world is in and for all the pain and suffering here. What comfort can anyone get by being told that the terrible things they are

enduring are God's Will? The truth is that **"God still is Love, and this is not His Will."** (W.99.6.8)

We hear that the trials and tribulations of our lives are there to teach us something God would have us learn. Sometimes, we think we deserve the painful experiences of our lives. Other times, we feel angry and resentful that God has seemingly sent this adversity into our lives. We may also wonder what we have done to deserve this and end up feeling lost and confused as to why something like this tragic event would happen to us. We either become resigned to the experience, blame ourselves, or blame God for it. Jesus asks us to **"Forgive yourself the thought He wanted this for you."** (W.99.7.5) Our most profound pain is that we think God wants this for us. We are punishing ourselves, yet we believe it is coming from Him!

When we experience any kind of pain, it is important to keep reminding ourselves that God does not want this for us. Sin, pain, grief, depression, anxiety, separation, death, and loss are not His Will. We are not asked to overlook or deny pain and suffering but to look on it and realize it is not the truth and therefore cannot exist. The ego says that it is all real, but when we look at it with Jesus, we see it has no effect. He is showing us that we can look beyond appearances when we look with him. God is our refuge. He is our loving and compassionate Father. To think otherwise is to make Him into a capricious God who hands out punishment and goodies at will, so that only some of us can claim to be blessed while others wonder why God is punishing them. Or we may think of a God Who gives, but then takes away. If we have money, we say God has blessed us with abundance; and when it is lost, we blame God for having taken it away from us. None of this is true. His only Will for us is perfect happiness and perfect peace. He knows us as forever innocent and always worthy of His Love.

We have made God in our own image, which just makes him a bigger ego. To us, love is uncertain, full of fear, changing, not to be relied on, and altogether imperfect. Now we think this is how God is, because this is our experience of love in the world. We project onto God our own understanding of love as capricious and constantly changing, and we tell Him that is what His love is like. We have projected our idea of love onto Him, and now we think His love can't be trusted, just as we don't trust our own love.

Freedom, happiness, and salvation all lie in understanding that the world is not of God's making. We made it. It is an illusion. It exists as a result of our thoughts of sin and guilt. Our thoughts need correction, and we do this by recognizing that what we are seeing is not the truth. We need to withdraw our investment in the stories we have made up. We need to withdraw our investment in what we see with the body's eyes. The images we see on TV, the tragedies we hear in the news, the things going on around us in our lives, and our own sad stories of how we see ourselves as victims of the world, are all untrue. They are all fearful images that we project as a result of our fearful thoughts. We do this in order to keep the light of truth away from ourselves. It is all because we still fear God. If you wonder if this could be true, I suggest you look at the feelings that come up as you reflect on turning over everything in your life to Him. Reflect on the fear that shows up in you if you were to give Him total control over your money, relationships, material things, and every aspect of your life. What do you fear might happen? This is the fear of Love.

What we need is the willingness to look behind our defenses. We must have the courage and honesty to bring our ego thoughts to the Holy Spirit for Him to shine His light onto all the dark places in our minds. It is through this process that we experience our healing. When we don't judge our pain, don't hate our hatred, aren't angry about our anger, and don't deny our suffering, it can be the doorway out of the illusion. When we choose to use all our difficulties for the purpose of releasing our guilt and fear, then what we really are is revealed to us.

We are asked to practice the Lesson well today, so we can ". . . **yet work miracles.**" (W.99.7.1) That is our function. That is why we need to accept the Atonement for ourselves; so we can recognize ourselves as the dreamer of this dream. When we do, the love we are shines forth in the world. **"Salvation is my only function here. God still is Love, and this is not His Will."** (W.99.11.3-4) We are told these are mighty words and should be repeated often as we take five minutes every hour. Remind yourself of this thought throughout the day, and respond with these words to any temptation to hold painful thoughts or experience painful events.

We left Bozeman, Montana one Saturday afternoon, believing Don's cousin, who was coming to the end of his life, was doing better. Our time with him was very lovely, with lots of sharing. We were able to be helpful to him in resolving some of his issues, so we felt very good about our visit. However, later, after we returned home, we learned he had taken a turn for the worse and was returned from rehab back to emergency and then placed in intensive care. I felt anxious as we were leaving him, so I turned to the Holy Spirit and asked how I should see this. I received a reassuring message in response to my feelings of anxiety. What I heard was, "Be still. Know that all is well. There is nothing to be done. You are loved and gratitude is offered. Your brother's time is coming to a close. He is ready. Do not interfere. Thy will be done." Within a day of our return, we learned he had passed away. Sadness came over me, and then I was reminded of Lesson 97, **"I Am Spirit."** (W.97) **"Spirit am I, a holy Son of God, free of all limits, safe and healed and whole, free to forgive, and free to save the world."** (W.97.7.2) We are free because the only truth is, we are Spirit. As one of our dear ones seemed to leave, we were informed of the birth of a long-awaited baby, who is a friend's first grandson. The Holy Spirit gives us symbols of seeming comings and goings in this dream. We truly can be grateful. Only eternal life is real.

Jesus reminds us, **"There is no death because what God created shares His life. There is no death because an opposite to God does not exist. There is no death because the Father and the Son are One."** (W.167.1.5-7) Anything that seems to cause me sadness, worry, guilt, or frustration, can never be the truth. There is no cause outside of my own mind. **"Salvation is my only function here. God still is Love, and this is not His Will."** (W.99.6.7-8) If this were the case, God could never let this death, this suffering, this sadness, and this guilt be real. If we really want to experience His peace, we must bring to the light these dark thoughts that obscure the truth and allow the healing to be. Jesus tells us, **"Thus do you lay forgiveness on your mind and let all fear be gently laid aside, that love may find its rightful place in you and show you that you are the Son of God."** (W.99.12.5) Our dark thoughts of fear and guilt have not changed us. Forgive yourself for believing you could be anything else but Love.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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