



## LESSON 169

### By grace I live. By grace I am released.

#### Sarah's Commentary:

This Lesson facilitates readiness and prepares our minds for grace, which is not something we learn. We merely clean up the altar of our minds and prepare for this holy gift. We prepare a table **". . . where it can be gently laid and willingly received."** (W.169.1.4) How do we do that? We do the forgiveness work by maintaining vigilance in mind watching. The familiar responses we make to every situation must be released so it is no longer our default program. To do so requires courage and honesty to investigate what is underneath these responses. What is driving our reactions? What are we defending about ourselves? What beliefs are we holding in the mind? We must inquire deeply into our motivations and become very honest with ourselves to expose what the ego is up to if we are to heal. It keeps its agenda hidden from our awareness. It needs to be seen and exposed to make room for truth.

**"It [the mind] has become aware that there are things it does not know, and thus is ready to accept a state completely different from experience with which it is familiarly at home."** (W.169.3.6) We must come to acknowledge we don't understand anything and become willing to be taught. When we think we know, there is no room for the experience of grace. Thus, humility is called for so we can come to a state of readiness to receive.

We think we can trust our senses and understand what we see and experience in the world. We seem so certain about how we see things. We tell our stories, talk about the "state" of the world, affirm some "truth" or belief we hold, and provide evidence or justification for what we hold as true. When we justify our position, we stubbornly refuse to keep the mind open and to consider another way. Forgiveness shows us that what we see in the world is not true. **"Forgiveness is the central theme that runs throughout salvation, holding all its parts in meaningful relationships, the course it runs directed and its outcome sure."** (W.169.12.1)

There are things that happen in our lives that make no sense to us, but as we overcome the world more and more, we see everything is a meaningful learning opportunity. Now it all serves a purpose for undoing our judgments and misperceptions. We still see behaviors that are attacking, but now we don't judge them as "bad." Instead, we see them as our classroom in order to learn to undo our judgments. Events are still unfolding in the world as before, but we now experience them from a new perspective. As we do the forgiveness work called for in each situation our perceptions are healed and increasingly, we see that events and circumstances of the world have no reality.

With Christ's vision, a new interpretation is given us, when the mind is open and there is acceptance of the fact that we don't know anything. We step into unknown territory in which we leave behind our current familiarity with our way of seeing and judging. It is an advanced state. **"It is the world's most lofty aspiration, for it leads beyond the world entirely."** (W.169.1.2) It takes us to the real world in which the dream of this world is no longer.

Jesus says we need not be concerned about the time it will take to accept the Atonement. Why? This is because the time has already been determined, and Jesus assures us that the end is certain. **"Nothing can prevent what God would have accomplished from accomplishment."** (T.13.XI.5.3) (ACIM OE T.13.V.39) Whatever we might do, and however much we may procrastinate and entertain foolish dreams, weird imaginings, and wild misperceptions, Jesus assures us, **"God's Will is done."** (T.13.XI.5.4) (ACIM OE T.13.V.39) So, while the time is determined, it appears we can hasten our experience of awakening to the truth. (W.169.4.3) This may seem like a contradiction. It is like what we read in Lesson 158 in which he says, **"The time is set already. It appears to be quite arbitrary. Yet there is no step along the road that anyone takes but by chance. It has already been taken by him, although he has not yet embarked on it. For time but seems to go in one direction. We but undertake a journey that is over. Yet it seems to have a future still unknown to us."** (W.158.3.1-7)

What is interesting about all of this is that we are preparing for a time that is already over. The Atonement has already been accepted and is present in our minds. (W.169.8.1) Jesus says that all learning has already been accomplished and is complete, but we have not yet agreed to choose what has already been given. This is salvation's script, which is here now. **"For oneness must be here."** (W.169.9.1) It simply cannot be lost. All we have done is become unaware of this fact and believe we have destroyed Creation. Jesus says that this is impossible and has never happened.

Eternity is totally unaffected by our dreams, and therefore the time, when we accept the Atonement, is irrelevant. He assures us it is available now. We are not being coerced to do anything that we are not yet ready for. Time makes no difference in eternity. Any demands we put on ourselves of where we should be in our healing have not been put there by Jesus, although he does encourage us to do the work on behalf of our own happiness. However, he makes no demands of us.

He only encourages us to accept healing on behalf of our own well-being. He never pushes us or pressures us. This is an enormous comfort to me because sometimes I can start to feel guilty about my seemingly slow progress. Certainly, he urges us not to delay. This is not because something dreadful will happen if we do. It's because he says that we will be happier if we allow a new perception to shift our minds from a state of suffering to one of peace and joy. **"And yet we urge you to bear witness to the Word of God to hasten the experience of truth, and speed its advent into every mind that recognizes truth's effects on you."** (W.169.4.3) We are to become a light in this world and a demonstration of the power of healing available to everyone.

For now, we need to make every effort to keep bringing our misperceptions to the truth to allow more joy and peace into our lives. It is interesting that we have resistance to this. It attests to our insanity. In fact, the first obstacle to peace speaks of our desire to be rid of it. If that seems bizarre to you, watch how many times a day in which you throw away your peace when you could be choosing it. Our part is to prepare our minds for **"true acceptance"** (W.169.1.3) **"Grace becomes inevitable instantly in those who have prepared a table where it can be gently laid and willingly received; an altar clean and holy for the gift."** (W.169.1.4)

When grace comes, we have a foretaste of Heaven, which is so opposite to the world we no longer hold anything about this world as true. The goal of the Course is to prepare us for this gift of grace so we can come to a place of readiness to receive it. And what is grace? Grace is a reflection of the love of God. The altar in the mind, now cluttered with dark thoughts, opinions, concepts, and

beliefs we hold that must be cleared to receive His grace. The beliefs, which keep us hostage to the ego, must first be released. In other words, we must watch our minds and become discerning of what we are thinking, feeling, and believing. We must let go of all we think we know and ask for the Holy Spirit's interpretation of everything we see and experience. An open mind comes through surrender of our beliefs, values, and concepts. I must be willing to acknowledge that I do not understand anything. We are mistaken in who we think we are and who we believe everyone else is as well. Now we need help to come to a new perception of all we think we know and understand.

Jesus speaks to us about Oneness, saying that there are no words to describe it. He makes it clear that we cannot understand it, and we do not even need to. It is enough to recognize, **"Oneness is simply the idea God is."** (W.169.5.1) If we got this, we would not need the rest of this Course. He knows that we cannot understand it, by saying, **"We cannot speak nor write nor even think of this at all."** (W.169.6.1) **"It returns the mind into the endless present, where past and future cannot be conceived."** (W.169.6.3) **"We say 'God is,' and then we cease to speak, for in that knowledge words are meaningless."** (W.169.5.4) This will come to every mind at some point, returning the mind to the endless present in which we disappear into our Father. We are not capable of knowing Oneness. While he explains this to the extent he can, our work is still with the specifics of this world because it is still of significance to us. When we come to the top of the ladder we are climbing in this undoing process and accept our reality, we will remember and understand what perfect Oneness is. In this world, it cannot be known but only reflected.

In the meantime, our job is to use this seeming world of illusion as a classroom to learn forgiveness, which is something **"taught and learned."** (W.169.7.2) Forgiveness **". . . brings with it the experiences which bear witness that the time the mind itself determined to abandon all but this is now at hand."** (W.169.7.2) We are preparing our minds for the attainment of the real world. Jesus reminds us, **"Whatever time the mind has set for revelation is entirely irrelevant to what must be a constant state, forever as it always was; forever to remain as it is now. We merely take the part assigned long since, and fully recognized as perfectly fulfilled by Him Who wrote salvation's script in His Creator's Name, and in the Name of His Creator's Son."** (W.169.9.2-3) The dream of this world has no impact on the truth, as it is the script we have chosen. It is the story we tell about our lives but has no effect on what we are. We can't rush into something for which we are not ready. Acceptance of the truth is dependent on releasing fear. We can be comforted by the thought that all is exactly as it needs to be for our awakening. We can't get it right and we can't get it wrong.

Everything that seems to happen to us is the life lesson we have chosen to return to the state we never left. **"What could you not accept, if you but knew that everything that happens, all events, past, present and to come, are gently planned by One Whose only purpose is your good?"** (W.135.18.1) Thus, all our experiences in the classroom of this world can be used for our awakening. We would welcome it all if we were really convinced of this. There are things we don't understand about this journey, but they are not the focus of our learning. The focus is on the application of what we are being asked to do in these Lessons in our day to day lives. It is to do the forgiveness work by bringing awareness to our judgments and allowing the Holy Spirit to release us from them. We are not the ones who heal our judgments. They must be given over to the Holy Spirit and left on the inner altar. We cannot undo what we have made. We need His help.

As you enter the quiet of your mind and find peace there, you will then see everything differently when your attention comes back to the world. When peace is brought to your relationships, people respond accordingly. You become a reflection of the love and peace you have accepted in your mind. Our investment in the world is lessened, so while we seem to be in the world, we

nevertheless no longer feel as much a part of it. Our experiences in the world no longer have the same value they once did. While we are in the world, we do not invest in the experiences of this world in the same way as before we started on this journey. We can bring peace to any situation when peace prevails in the mind. We will be ready for the real world only when our identification with this body and the world of time and space no longer has a hold on us.

This is our work while we are here. (W.169.11.1) We will have moments when we experience being outside of time ". . . **but for a little while.**" (W.169.12.3) Jesus says, that is enough for now. "**The interval suffices.**" (W.169.13.1) It is what comes as a result of true forgiveness. "**It is here that miracles are laid.**" (W.169.13.2) The experience of the holy instant, evident to others, is a result of the glow coming from us and is the gift we bring to our brothers and sisters. Therefore Jesus says, "**Be grateful to return . . .**" (W.169.14.1) to the world of time, as we need to bring our gifts back for everyone because they are all part of the One Self. What we receive, we give. Now we identify less with the body and more and more with the love in our minds. This journey will take as long as it needs to take. Jesus is loving and patient with us and is not hurrying us along but only encouraging and supporting us and walking with us. We too are called to be gentle with ourselves and with everyone else as he is with us.

Love and blessings, Sarah  
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