

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 196 It can be but myself I crucify.

Sarah's Commentary:

Jesus tells us, it is impossible that anything that happens to us does not come by our own choice. The power of our own decision determines every situation in our lives, but it is important to recognize to whom Jesus is talking. He is not talking to me, Sarah, the self I think I am as the body and personality in this dream. No. He is addressing the decision-making mind. It is the part of the mind that can now choose to reverse the faulty choice to side with the ego because the ego will never undo itself. Thus, we must turn to the power available to us outside of the matrix of this world.

To the ego, attack is necessary for its salvation. It relies on the thought system of "one or the other," meaning that my needs come first. It originated with the attack on God through which we seemed to establish our separate existence. Thus, to the ego thought system, attack means gain. The ego keeps us invested in the idea that we must attack in order to make it in the world. It is invested in this game of attack and tells us that this is what we must do to succeed. **"Perhaps it seemed to be salvation."** (W.196.5.2) It seems this way to us because we think it is how we achieve protection for ourselves, all the while maintaining we are innocent and have no other choice. To us, it seems like we must continue in this activity of crucifying others in order to gain for ourselves.

This is the way of the world in which the end is death. The ego's system of defense used to maintain itself is to keep us in this prison and the never-ending cycle of birth and death. It is the basis of all our fear; although, we never knew where that fear originated until Jesus showed us how this was all set up. Because we bought the setup, we have the power to change our minds. He is showing us that there is another way. We have a choice. There is a way out. Our initial decision for the ego that took us into this seeming imprisonment can be reversed.

We will continue to follow the dictates of the ego until we see that we gain nothing except more pain and suffering. When we recognize this, we will not want to attack anyone because we will see it is always an attack on ourselves. Only then will we **"be free of the insane belief that to attack a brother saves yourself."** (W.196.1.3) The fact that our brother's safety is our own (W.196.1.4) is based on the recognition that our brother's freedom, from the prison he has made, is our own freedom because we are One. What we give, we receive. This is the basis for the holy relationship, which undoes all specialness and recognizes our interests are the same.

We are now asked to make room for truth. We do this by withdrawing our investment in the belief that we are victims of the world we see and by taking responsibility for our attack thoughts. The world and body were made so that we would not have to take responsibility for our condition as a

separate self. We don't want responsibility for what the ego tells us we have done in attacking God in order to gain our independent self. We feel guilt though we have no idea where it came from. The guilt is intolerable so the ego came up with a solution, which is to make others guilty for how we feel. We project the guilt that is in our own minds onto our brothers and see ourselves unfairly treated. The world was made to shield us from the horror of what the ego says we have done by making others responsible for how we feel and blaming them for our condition. We see the world as an uncaring place that has no concern for us and **"where we are badgered ceaselessly and pushed about without a thought or care for us or for our future."** (W.195.9.3)

The ego tells us we have committed a horrendous sin in separating from God and now deserve punishment for having killed Him so we can exist. Our guilt is projected in the mistaken belief that we can now be rid of it. When we come to see that we are responsible for stealing our identity from God and He is now our enemy, Jesus says this moment can be terrible. It is a moment of realization that we have been wrong in buying into the ego's myth. **"There is an instant in which terror seems to grip your mind so wholly that escape appears quite hopeless."** (W.196.10.1) It is the realization that our fear is of ourselves! It is a realization that our own minds are split. It is not my brother who is terrorizing me, but myself.

In this recognition, we see the enemy is never outside of us. We have feared attack from outside where it never was. It was just an attack thought in our own minds. Mind is cause and the world is effect. Our self-attack thoughts are projected onto God, believing He too is outside of us and to be feared. **"And thus a god outside yourself became your mortal enemy; the source of fear."** (W.196.10.5) Jesus says, **"Until this form [thought] is changed, there is no hope."** (W.196.6.2) When we give up the idea that God is our enemy, nothing is there to hold the ego thought system in place.

The final obstacle to peace is our fear of God. One way this fear comes to our awareness is when we look at events and circumstances in our lives and wonder why God is bringing these "Lessons" to us, or why He let this tragedy happen, or why He took our loved one away, or why He didn't stop this tragic situation from happening since He is all powerful. It is a belief that somehow God is behind all of the tragic events in the world. It is as if He is getting back at us for what we have done, and he is now bringing all kinds of calamities to punish us. We think somehow God is behind it all, pulling all the strings. We trace back all the forces that seem to be working against us and keeping us in the struggle to forces outside of us, including the most powerful force of all---God.

"Now, for an instant, is a murderer perceived within you, eager for your death, intent on plotting punishment for you until the time when it can kill at last. Yet in this instant is the time as well in which salvation comes. For fear of God has disappeared. And you can call on Him to save you from illusions by His Love, calling Him Father and yourself His Son." (W. 196.11.1-4) Now there is the realization that the ego has sold us a bill of goods. It is all a myth. There is no need for sin if nothing real has happened, and with it, all fear and guilt go as well. It has all been made up by the ego to keep us from changing our allegiance to it because when we do, it is the end of the ego. That is why Jesus lays all of this out so carefully for us, so we can see the ego "dynamics" and recognize their nothingness. We come to see we have not sinned at all, but we have simply been mistaken in choosing the ego. We never left God.

It is through our special relationships, in which healing happens, that we show mercy to our brothers instead of attacking them. **"Thus do you also teach your mind that you are not an ego."** (W.196.3.1) If you are not an ego, you are also not a body, and you are not this terrible

person the ego says you are and that you believe you are. You are no longer willing to listen to the ego's distortions, nor be deceived by its lies. Jesus tells us, "**Your mission is very simple. You are asked to live so as to demonstrate that you are not an ego, and I [Jesus] do not choose God's channels wrongly.**" (T.4.VI.6.3) (ACIM OE T.4.VII.89)

The ego tells us that we deserve to be crucified and to die. Pay attention to how you crucify yourself and you can see these words are true. Resurrection in the Course is about awakening from the dream of death, but first, we must see it is a dream. We start by seeing that we are responsible for our condition and not our parents, not the education system, not our boss, nor anyone else we may want to blame. When we blame others for our condition, it moves responsibility from ourselves to others. Even if we blame ourselves, there is someone we see as responsible for our condition.

What the ego really wants is our death. It plots punishment for us until it kills us at last. It tricks us into attack on others by telling us it is how we can gain in the world. "**The dreary, hopeless thought that you can make attacks on others and escape yourself has nailed you to the cross.**" (W.196.5.1) As we keep the attacks going, we feel more and more guilt, and with guilt comes the belief that we deserve to be punished and ultimately to die. While guilt invites punishment, the ego keeps this out of our awareness by convincing us that attack brings us benefits. The ego needs to keep us invested in its program to keep itself in business because it knows its days are numbered since we can choose against it anytime we decide to withdraw our allegiance.

How willing are you to give up attack? To choose God's grace is to choose to give up attack and to turn to the Holy Spirit for His interpretation of any difficult situation. We can be a happy learner by seeing the opportunity for forgiveness and healing in every situation that shows up in our lives. By giving up our need to be right in how we perceive our brother, we willingly turn to the Holy Spirit for His interpretation. He consistently reminds us of our brother's innocence and of our own.

It just takes an instant to undo a thousand years. "**For what would seem to need a thousand years can easily be done in just one instant by the grace of God.**" (W.196.4.5) With our practice, "**Today's idea is one step we take in leading us from bondage to the state of perfect freedom.**" (W.196.4.1) When we experience a transition in our journey through these Lessons, we feel the burden of guilt lifted from our lives. This Lesson is a significant step in the direction of our healing. The Lesson that follows is another big step. First, we see that "**It can be but myself I crucify,**" (W.196) and in the Lesson tomorrow, "**It can be but my gratitude I earn.**" (W.197) With each step, our motivation increases, as light dawns on our minds. Our fear is such that we need to take these seemingly small steps in undoing the ego thought system. We need to be gentle and patient with ourselves. The grace of God is always there, but we need to be willing to choose it.

Because nothing really happened by our attacks, there is no need for fear. "**If it can but be you you crucify, you did not hurt the world, and need not fear its vengeance and pursuit. Nor need you hide in terror from the deadly fear of God projection hides behind.**" (W.196.9.2-3) The fearful God we see pursuing us is our own belief in punishment that we have projected onto Him. Behind all of this is our fear of release. We actually fear our salvation. We fear our own strength and our own freedom. Thus, we keep ourselves bound to this ego cycle and keep ourselves small and fearful and make others responsible for our wretchedness, thinking this is how we will escape God's punishment for the separation. "Who me? This weak, ineffectual self?"

How could I possibly have done all of this? I am innocent. It is my brothers who made me the way I am. I can't help it." It is our greatness we fear. Why? We fear our greatness because then we would have to take responsibility for our lives and accept that no one has done anything to us. Everything that seemed to happen to us is our own choice. It is our release that frightens us the most.

As we learn to acknowledge that only our *own* thoughts can hurt us, we increasingly withdraw our projections from the world and see that the problem is in our own minds. The problem is no longer outside in the world. We realize that the problem is not in this relationship. It is not about my body. It is not about the money or the boss. It is not in this person who seemed to hurt me. It is only my own thoughts and the interpretation I have given to these events.

The problem is that we don't trust. We don't love. We feel alone, and we feel continually under the threat of things in the world. We grab onto any specialness we can, believing that if we can keep others from messing with our stuff, our peace, and our goals, then we could have some semblance of peace. It is putting the responsibility for our happiness and our peace on events, situations, and circumstances outside of our own minds, thus making us a victim of the world we see. It is the source of all our grievances where we think that if this were different, I would be happy. This brings the inevitability of a cycle of attack and defense. If you believe everyone is trying to take from you, then your defenses and your attacks on others are justified.

It all sounds pretty dark, doesn't it? Well, this Lesson assures us that if we start to question what we have come to accept as true about being at the mercy of the world, and if we take back responsibility for what we see "out there," it is a beginning step in breaking this cycle of sin, guilt, and fear. It is a step toward freedom and a way to get off of this painful path. If we are really honest with ourselves, we will admit to how painful it is. Our only escape from it all is to be vigilant in watching our thoughts and accepting them without defending. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can bring our minds to their natural state of abstract Oneness. It all depends on our willingness to take the required steps. We start to welcome God back, seeing that it is not God that banished us, but it is we that have banished Him by seeing Him as the enemy. The fear comes from our decision to listen to the ego. The ego convinced us that we can only be free on our own and that we must keep escaping the tyranny of God. We have been wrong about everything, and when we accept that, we can make another choice.

When the ego strategy is exposed and we see it for what it is, it will make no sense to keep hurting ourselves. When the plan that the ego has enacted is exposed and released, we are no longer bound by it. It can only operate when it is not in our awareness. We made an alliance with the ego, but as we increasingly see how it causes us pain, we choose to withdraw from its seeming control. The only power it has is what we give it. When we see what is going on, we can do something about it. Until then, we have been mindlessly reacting according to the ego dictates. There is another choice! Take this step today from its bondage.

We have help in this process. It is the Holy Spirit in the right mind. We turn to Him for His interpretation. We lose interest in the ego's obsessive voice, telling us that we must attack and defend ourselves. Be willing to see that your happiness, contentment, and peace do not come from anything in the world. It is not about any relationship changing or any situation being different than it is. There has never been anyone who can give us our happiness.

Will our healing take long? It is just an instant. We just need to be willing to withdraw our projections as they come up. **"It is not time we need for this. It is but willingness."**

(W.196.4.3-4) We just need to be willing to be very mindful in watching our thoughts and in recognizing their falsity. With desire, willingness, and our heartfelt intent to keep forgiving the world for what it has not done to us, we heal our wrong-minded perceptions. It is all about recognizing the illusory nature of this world by stepping outside of the ego's dream and seeing that it is all an outside picture of our inward condition. **"How kind and merciful is the idea we practice! Give it welcome, as you should, for it is your release. It is indeed but you your mind can try to crucify. Yet your redemption, too, will come from you."**
(W.196.12.3-6)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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