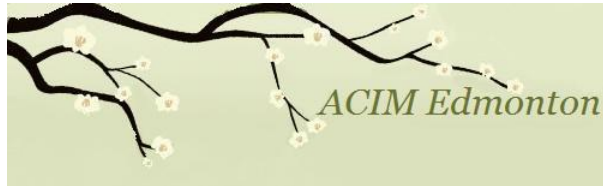


ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 200

There is no peace except the peace of God.

Sarah's Commentary:

The last 20 Lessons were there to **"make a special point of firming up your willingness to make your weak commitment strong; your scattered goals blend into one intent."** (Intro to Lessons 181-200.1.1) Total dedication is not asked of us yet, but the practice of the Lessons leads us to greater peace. It is a journey that is now taking us beyond words. We continue to look at how we defend ourselves against the truth. We continue to apply these Lessons to our daily lives. Great willingness and vigilance are called for in watching our thoughts and going past them to the peace and joy available in the mind. Perhaps you have become aware of more moments of peace, glimpses of the holy instant, awareness of miracles, determination to no longer project blame, and more willingness to let go of grievances.

Perhaps you are also aware of the resistance in the mind as you get closer to the truth. We still fear we are asked to sacrifice what is important to us and we fear where this path may lead. The voice of madness tells us of the folly of using our time for this purpose. We may feel discouraged and wonder if we will ever "get it." Jesus assures us that the outcome is certain. The power of decision is ours to choose our experience and we all have the power available through forgiveness. Darkness has no power without our belief in it. Our task is only to bring awareness to the ways we hurt ourselves when we hold onto opinions, values, desires, points of view, ideas of right and wrong, good and bad, expectations, needs and all our ways of thinking that do not align with the truth. When we bring these misguided thoughts to the Holy Spirit, they are gently dissolved, freeing the love that was imprisoned behind the darkness of those thoughts which are all obstacles to the truth.

We are now at a stage in the process where we are listening both to the voice of the ego and to the Voice of the Holy Spirit. We are not asked to let go of the ego but no longer give it attention. But, as long as these two conflicting voices are there, we will feel inner conflict and confusion, which will continue until we step more fully into right-mindedness and ultimately come to listen and follow only the Voice of the Holy Spirit. The ego will keep talking, but we need no longer believe it.

Jesus tells us that when God calls His Son to **"Come home,"** (W.200.4.1) **"the Son will hear"** (W.200.9.6) because he cannot **"stray forever from his home."** (W.200.9.5) The body is not our home. **"You have not found your happiness in foreign places and in alien forms that have no meaning to you, though you sought to make them meaningful. This world is not where you belong. You are a stranger here."** (W.200.4.2-4) There is no certainty in this world, only hopelessness and despair, but the Call in the mind is certain, and with that certainty, we come to know this world is not our home.

This Lesson is a beautiful conclusion to Part I of the Workbook. The theme of this Lesson is the remembrance of who we are as beings of light and love, given us in our creation by our Father. This is where true peace and joy come from. They come from remembering there is nothing to seek of any value in the world. The world brings pain and misery, no matter how many "intermittent pleasures" distract us. We must remember that the world is a place where we seek and never find. It keeps us on this gerbil wheel of incessant activity with no real purpose. **"But it is given you to find the means whereby the world no longer seems to be a prison house or jail for anyone."** (W.200.4.5) The only purpose of any value in the world is as a classroom to bring us to the recognition of what we are. When we use everything in our lives for the purpose of awakening to the truth, it all has value. Now we must realize that we have been wrong about everything and become willing to be taught so we no longer see ourselves imprisoned.

We do stray in this world, taking this path and that path, always looking for happiness in idols, but Jesus says that it is all to no avail. We will finally come to the realization that everything we seek in the world ultimately ends in despair, hopelessness, and doubt because we are looking for happiness and fulfillment where it can never be found. **"This is the final point to which each one must come at last, to lay aside all hope of finding happiness where there is none; of being saved by what can only hurt; of making peace of chaos, joy of pain, and Heaven out of hell."** (W.200.2.1)

We put a lot of time and effort in pursuits that ultimately end in defeat. No matter how effusive we may feel at the time about that new car, new job, new relationship, new friends, recognition, new romance, new home, good sex, or great holiday, it all ultimately ends in discouragement, misery and pain and the certainty of death. No matter how successful we may feel, what course of action we follow, or how hard we try to hang onto the health and well-being of this body, it will fail. **"Attempt no more to win through losing, nor to die to live. You cannot but be asking for defeat."** (W.200.2.2-3)

"Seek you no further. You will not find peace except the peace of God. Accept this fact, and save yourself the agony of yet more bitter disappointments, bleak despair, and sense of icy hopelessness and doubt." (W.200.1.1-3) How often have we come to this place of deep disappointment? The unhappiest times in my life have been when I have looked to a relationship to fulfill me and make me happy. All the promise of happiness that seemed to be there at the beginning evaporated over time no matter how hard I tried. We suffer because of the loss of our dream, with all the expectations of how things should look in form. If we could turn those times into opportunities to forgive and to find the answer to our inner sense of lack, which we try to fill from the outside, we could make great gains. It is a process of exchanging specialness for holiness through forgiveness. Relationships can now take on a whole new purpose and meaning. Instead of using them to try to get our needs met, we now use them for an entirely new purpose. The setbacks I have experienced in my relationships are what have motivated me to engage in deeper inquiry with more willingness to forgive and heal. Everything that happens in our lives is perfectly orchestrated for our highest good, even if it does not look that way at the time.

To keep looking outside ourselves for happiness is to waste a lot of time on trivial pursuits. Jesus is not trying to deny us happiness by telling us it is not in the things of this world. He is simply reminding us that we will never find peace until we look within. While he encourages and supports us on this journey, we are never being coerced by him to buy into this thought system. We can continue to exhaust all possibilities in the world and keep looking and trying to find happiness in

our own way for as long as we want; but, why keep seeking for answers where they don't exist? Jesus wants happiness for us that we may save time spent in misery. All we must do is look honestly at our lives and realize, **"To ask that what is false be true can only fail."** (W.200.3.4) Yet **"To ask for what you have already must succeed."** (W.200.3.3) Peace and joy are already in us, and when we see that this is what we really want we willingly choose forgiveness and healing. It is always important to remember what we really want because this is what motivates us to release our grievances which block the peace which is within us, from our awareness.

"There is a tendency to think the world can offer consolation and escape from problems that its purpose is to keep. Why should this be? Because it is a place where the choice among illusions seems to be the only choice. And you are in control of outcomes of your choosing. Thus do you think, within the narrow band from birth to death, a little time is given you to use for you alone; a time when everyone conflicts with you, but you can choose which road will lead you out of conflict, and away from difficulties that concern you not." (T.31.IV.1-5) (ACIM OE T.31.IV.33)

We never do leave these concerns behind until they are completely released. Wherever we go, the same concerns go with us because they are in the mind. The world does nothing to us. We are the ones manifesting our experience based on the thoughts we hold. As long as we continue to think that there are choices to be made among illusions that will make us happy, **"All its roads but lead to disappointment, nothingness and death."** (T.31.IV.2.3) (ACIM OE T.31.IV.34) Jesus acknowledges that some of the roads we travel seem to bring happiness for a while. **"On some you travel gaily for a while, before the bleakness enters. And on some the thorns are felt at once. The choice is not what will the ending be, but when it comes."** (T.31.IV.2.12-14) (ACIM OE T.31.IV.34) In somewhat of a tongue-in-cheek way, he says: **"Perhaps you would prefer to try them all, before you really learn they are but one."** (T.31.IV.3.2) (ACIM OE T.31.IV.35)

This is how we **"win through losing,"** (W.200.2.2) by trying so hard to make our time in this illusion one of fulfillment of our hopes and dreams. Can we ever win at a game that keeps us seeking and seeking for peace and joy where they could never be found? It is the ego's game, but so skillfully camouflaged that we don't see it for what it is until it is exposed or until we come to feel the emptiness inside that we have never been able to fill.

It seems that we have a lot of choices in the world. **"The roads this world can offer seem to be quite large in number, but the time must come when everyone begins to see how like they are to one another."** (T.31.IV.3.3) (ACIM OE T.31.IV.35) Eventually, we all get world weary, some to the point of choosing suicide as a result of deep despair. It comes from trying every which way to find happiness until it becomes apparent that there are no other paths to take and what has been tried has not worked. Jesus urges us not to despair about the fact that there is **"no hope of answer in the world."** (T.31.IV.4.3) (ACIM OE T.31.IV.36) When we come to see this, we start our search for a better way. For all of us, it has put us on this path. **"For from this lowest point will learning lead to heights of happiness, in which you see the purpose of the lesson shining clear, and perfectly within your learning grasp."** (T.31.IV.4.8) (ACIM OE T.31.IV.36) Yet giving up searching for happiness in the world is not something we do readily. We are not easily convinced and so we cling to some semblance of hope that happiness can still be found here.

There is no point in continuing to look for the light in the darkness. We are on the wrong track when we look for happiness in the world. We look at what is false and hope to find truth there. What we try to get is our own version of peace and happiness, which is just another useless journey; but, we don't have to give it up. We are not asked to sacrifice the little we have. We will ultimately see that what we valued previously has no value, and it just falls away. We are encouraged to ask in everything, "What is it really for?" And in everything we do, "What is the purpose?" **"But you must change your mind about the purpose of the world, if you would find escape."** (W.200.5.2)

Having said all this, there is a purpose in the world, which does bring peace and happiness. Our ego's purpose is to keep us rooted in this dream, but we can choose to serve the Holy Spirit's purpose, which is to wake up from the dream, by doing the healing work and choosing forgiveness. Thus, we come to see the world as a classroom for the undoing of the ego thought system. Every relationship now is a perfect mirror for what needs to be healed in the mind. Whatever we are projecting on anyone is an opportunity to see where healing is needed in our own minds.

Free everyone of your mistaken perceptions of them. **"You will be bound till all the world is seen by you as blessed, and everyone made free of your mistakes and honored as he is."** (W.200.5.3) Freedom comes from setting our brothers free by taking back the projections we have placed on them and taking responsibility for our own healing. As we bless instead of judge, we receive the blessings we give. **"But peace begins within the world perceived as different, and leading from this fresh perspective to the gate of Heaven and the way beyond."** (W.200.8.2) Now, everything in the world can be used to heal our misperceptions through forgiveness, and we can experience the miracle that ultimately takes us back to our true Self.

"What does forgiveness do? In truth it has no function, and does nothing. For it is unknown in Heaven. It is only hell where it is needed, and where it must serve a mighty function." (W.200.6.1-4) Forgiveness does nothing because the world is illusory and nothing real has happened. It is an illusion, but it is an illusion that undoes the illusions of this world.

Through forgiveness, we find the peace of God. **"Yet can he learn to look on it [the world] another way, and find the peace of God."** (W.200.7.6) We know that when our obsessive thoughts take over, our peace is gone. Only our thoughts keep us from peace. Our thoughts deceive us. We think we get what we want from this world, but the only thing we truly want is the peace of God. Our thoughts about how to achieve peace keep leading us into hell. Only forgiveness brings us to what we really want, which is to escape the misery, pain, and death that are part of "life" here.

Let's stay very aware of our thoughts today. If you are willing to see everything that seems to be happening to you as an opportunity for forgiveness, you will see everyone in your life as a savior helping you unveil the happiness and peace already in you. Everyone in your life is there for a purpose. They show you the way home by revealing to you the unhealed places in your mind. A sure way to know that guilt has come up is when you are not at peace. This is the opportunity to look at what is going on in your mind, bring your awareness there, and be willing to choose otherwise.

When Jesus talks about leaving the world behind, he is not talking of death but of making new choices and setting a new goal for ourselves. Yes, we can continue to waste time, lose our way, delay, and wander off, but we will return because there is nowhere else to go. If we continue to hold out hope that there is something in this world we want, we can continue in these pursuits. We are not being coerced. Eventually, we will all come to the place where our motivation to know the deep peace that can only be found in the truth of what we are will be so strongly reinforced that there will be no turning back.

"There is no peace except the peace of God. And I am glad and thankful it is so."

(W.200.11.9) As Jesus told us in Lesson 185, to say these words is nothing, but to mean them is everything. Today, take a stand for peace by being vigilant with your thoughts and staying mindful. **"For we have found a simple, happy way to leave the world of ambiguity, and to replace our shifting goals and solitary dreams with single purpose and companionship. For peace is union, if it be of God. We seek no further. We are close to home, and draw still nearer every time we say: *There is no peace except the peace of God. And I am thankful it is so.*"** (W.200.11.5-9)

Love and blessings, Sarah

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