

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 285

My holiness shines bright and clear today.

Sarah's Commentary:

Are you feeling your holiness shining bright and clear today? Did you awaken with joy with the knowledge that you have another day of healing as a gift to you? Have you invited the happy things of God to come to you today? It is always good to start every day with what you want, what you desire, what you value, what you wish for, and what you set your goal to be for the day. When our goal is to use each day for healing and peace, every day can be a happy day, regardless of the events that come our way, because everything in our day becomes a beautiful opportunity for letting go of the blocks to love and stepping deeper into peace and joy. When our days are used in this way we can approach each day with confidence that everything is orchestrated for our highest good.

"The Rules for Decision," (T.30.I) (ACIM OE T.30.II) are helpful in setting us up for each day. They are more ideas than rules of thought, initially, but Jesus says that as we practice these ideas they become habitual rules by which we live. **"We seek to make them habits now, so you will have them ready for whatever need."** (T.30.IN.1.8) (ACIM OE T.31.IN.1) Thus, we focus the day on not judging what shows up nor the situations where we will be called upon to make a response. **"For if you judge them, you have set the rules for how you should react to them."** (T.30.I.2.5) (ACIM OE T.30.II.5) We are called instead to turn to the Holy Spirit for guidance in every situation. Our problem is that we forget to ask and make our own decisions. When our desire for truth is deeply sincere, we remember more and more in each moment that we have a Guide to turn to in every situation. We turn to this Guide rather than listening to the ego that keeps us rooted in the illusion, affirms our problems are real, and wants us to believe we have to find our own way to solve them and only cry out for help when our way gets us into difficulty.

Perhaps we woke up today with foreboding and heaviness in our hearts. We may be running scenarios of gloom and despair through our minds. The ego is obsessive in ruminating over thoughts. I find too often that I start my day thinking about what has to be accomplished and feeling stressed before I even get out of bed. The good news is that the thoughts running through our minds are thoughts we are choosing. These thoughts are actively keeping the joy and contentment away. We are doing this to ourselves so we can choose not to listen to the thoughts that forecast a joyless day. We can choose not to make decisions with the ego. When we do, we are turning to the part of the mind that does not know. We are turning to the false self, asking it how to see our day.

When that is the case, Jesus asks, **"What answer that the Holy Spirit gives can reach you, when it is your specialness to which you listen, and which asks and answers?"** (T.24.II.4.3) (ACIM OE T.24.III.15) In other words, we are just talking to ourselves and listening to our own judgments and perspectives coming from past experience and conditioning. In order to loosen this position, Jesus says that we can at least decide that we do not like what we feel now. He says, **"This much is obvious, and paves the way for the next easy step."** (T.30.I.8.3) (ACIM OE T.30.II.17) That step is the recognition that possibly we are wrong in our thinking. What this does is it opens our minds to another way of looking. All we need is **"this tiny opening."** (T.30.I.9.4) (ACIM OE T.30.II.20) We are called to look at why we want to hold onto our sadness. **"For what would be the use of pain to me, what purpose would my suffering fulfill, and how would grief and loss avail me if insanity departs from me today, and I accept my holiness instead?"** (W.285.1.4)

Many things come about during the day that tempt us to be upset. While the events of the day may trigger fear, sadness, anger, worry, specialness, or some kind of distress, they reflect back to us our own lack of self-love. It is never about anything going on in the world. The source of the feelings we experience is from within our own minds. The situations and events of the day are just bringing the unhealed aspects of our mind to our attention. They need not distress us, but indeed can be seen as helpful mirrors of what is in the mind. Yet we do not have to learn through pain. Jesus says, **"The Holy Spirit needs a happy learner, in whom His mission can be happily accomplished."** (T.14.II.1.1) (ACIM OE T.13.VII.54) This means we can be happy to have a day in front of us that we can use for healing. **"They will be happy learners of the lesson this light brings to them, because it teaches them release from nothing and from all the works of nothing."** (T.14.II.4.5) (ACIM OE T.13.VII.59)

Suffering and grief are used by the ego to keep us in the illusion by trying to prove that pain is real and what is going on in our lives is real. Yet when we choose to use every situation to heal the guilt and fear already in the mind, whatever shows up in our day is perfect for that purpose; and we can be happy to see it because we remember it is all for our healing. When our day is used for the purpose of forgiveness, what goes on in the day really does not matter. The only thing that matters is that each situation is being used to bring us closer to awakening to the holiness we are. Thus, we can wake up every morning with a clear goal---we want the joy that comes from waking from this dream. Now we see that everything that shows up is there to help us reach that goal.

When we defend against what shows up or deny responsibility, we are resisting the opportunities presented to us for forgiveness regardless of how they look in the dream. No, they may not, and probably will not, meet the ego's requirements for what makes for a happy day. If we maintain awareness of our goal of healing, everything that shows up becomes useful for that purpose. Lesson 153 says, **"In my defenselessness my safety lies."** When we are perfectly defenseless, we proclaim that we have nothing to defend against. We are safe, invulnerable, and have no enemies. **"Defensiveness is weakness. It proclaims you have denied the Christ and come to fear His Father's anger. What can save you now from your delusion of an angry god, whose fearful image you believe you see at work in all the evils of the world? What but illusions could defend you now, when it is but illusions that you fight?"** (W.153.7) We generally tend to think God is punishing us when we have troubles. We wonder why God is doing this to us. This is the god we have made that we fear, but the God of love does not bring us any of the things that we fear and defend ourselves against. God brings us no lessons, nor is He about testing us or building our character.

In our undefended state, we become willing to look at every thought and feeling that comes up. Yes, even our murderous, hateful thoughts are valuable when they are revealed, as they are not true. The trick is to observe them without judgment. The ego operates very effectively in the dark, but when these thoughts are brought to light, they show us the nothingness of the ego. It only seems to have power in the darkness. When we are willing to look at all we are hiding from ourselves and are willing to be vulnerable in the process, the ego becomes weak. We increasingly come to recognize and accept that we are not the ego, and our reality is invulnerable.

Why do we suffer? Why do we believe suffering is even good for us? Why do we believe we need hardship in our lives? Why do we make things hard for ourselves? Why do we self-sabotage? Do we hold the belief that this is somehow what we need to do in order to show how well we can endure? We choose to suffer because we have chosen separation. Separation from God is at the root of our suffering. We chose the ego thought system of sin, guilt, fear, suffering, loss, and death, and now we hold onto that thought system as a way to preserve our identity that comes with the separation. Suffering proves that separation is real and shows us that our vulnerable bodies and personalities are real, and there are events outside of ourselves that cause pain.

When we set our goal for healing, we can rejoice that not only are forgiveness and sanity restored to us, but along with the healing comes the recognition that all healing is of the mind. It is the recognition that nothing outside of ourselves is the source of our pain. The only purpose for pain is to maintain our identity as a separated being, living in the world. As long as we want to hold onto that identity, we will hold onto our belief that we can be hurt by events and people outside of ourselves.

Today, let us choose to welcome the possibility that we are wrong about everything and that what Jesus tells us is the truth. What he tells us is that we can use everything in our day, if we choose, to remember who we are. If that is how we are using time, is it not a joyful thing to know that we have another day in front of us to forgive all that stands in the way of the truth? Is it not a joyful thought to be told that we can never alter our holiness no matter what we think we have done? Is it not a joyful thought that all we have to do is ask and our invitation will be answered? We are not alone in this. We have the Holy Spirit in our minds, Who answers every call and is the bridge between what seems so real in this world and the holiness that is ours.

It reminds me of the Section in Chapter 20, "**Entering the Ark,**" where he says, "**You may wonder how you can be at peace when, while you are in time, there is so much that must be done before the way to peace is open. Perhaps this seems impossible to you. But ask yourself if it is possible that God would have a plan for your salvation that does not work? Once you accept His plan as the one function that you would fulfill, there will be nothing else the Holy Spirit will not arrange for you without your effort. He will go before you making straight your path, and leaving in your way no stones to trip on, and no obstacles to bar your way. Nothing you need will be denied you. Not one seeming difficulty but will melt away before you reach it. You need take thought for nothing, careless of everything except the only purpose that you would fulfill. As that was given you, so will its fulfillment be. God's guarantee will hold against all obstacles for it rests on certainty and not contingency. It rests on *you*. And what can be more certain than a Son of God.**" (T.20.IV.8) (ACIM OE T.20.V.35) This is how it looks to us when we are in the flow. We learn through inspiration rather than through

pain. We are happy learners where all is well even when it does not appear that way to the ego mind.

Remember, today you are deserving of joy. You are still as God created you, and nothing can alter the truth. Only your own thoughts can hurt you, but we have a remedy, and that remedy is forgiveness. Have you perceived someone today as attacking you in any way? Do you have grievances showing up against a brother? Did someone do something to irritate or upset you? In Chapter 25, Jesus asks, "**How can misperception [by a brother] be a sin? Let all your brother's errors be to you nothing except a chance for you to see the workings of the Helper [Holy Spirit] given you to see the world He made instead of yours. What then, is justified? What do you want?** [Only our Love, Forgiveness, Holiness, Peace, and Joy] **For these two questions are the same. And when you see them as the same, your choice is made. For it is seeing them as one that brings release from the belief there are two ways to see. This world has much to offer to your peace, and many chances to extend your own forgiveness. Such its purpose is, to those who want to see peace and forgiveness descend on them, and offer them the light.**" (T.25.III.7.1) (ACIM OE T.25.IV.28)

The only way to know our holiness is to use every opportunity that seems to justify our attack and instead see it as an opportunity to forgive and receive the miracle. It can all be used as a gift to open the door to the peace and happiness within. That is what this worldly classroom is for, and there is only one lesson to be learned. The lesson is to forgive. Forgiveness, in the Course, does not mean forgiving anything real. It is not about overlooking what we have made real in the mind, but it is to recognize that all attack is a call for love. It is about releasing our judgments, grievances, and interpretations of a situation. Forgiveness is to recognize that what we thought our brother has done to us has not occurred because it is all our own dream. Holiness is always in us and only obscured by our thoughts. When they are released for healing, the holy Self we are is experienced and the light in us can shine bright and clear.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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