

LESSON 292

A happy outcome to all things is sure.

Sarah's Commentary:

When we read in the Manual for Teachers, Development of Trust that the first stage is a “period of undoing” and that it appears that things are being taken away because they lack value, we may wonder what that is. What is being taken away and being undone and why is it experienced as usually painful though it need not be. (M.4.1.A.3) It seems we are attached to our unhappiness, our victimhood and our way of being in the world. We have a hard time letting go of the image of ourselves as being less than loveable. We hurt ourselves with the attachment to our false identity. To give it up is liberating but while we treasure it, it may seem painful when what we cling to is taken away.

It takes awareness and effort to release our way of seeing things, our beliefs about where our happiness lies, and our control over outcomes. But that is what is required to gain our freedom from suffering. It requires questioning reality as we have believed it to be. We are called to question many things we think are necessary for our happiness including: how we see relationships; the beliefs we hold about who we are; the belief that we can die; the belief that we need to control, manage, and fix things in the world; our investment in competition and winning over others; the belief in the reality of time; and the belief in the reality of the world and bodies. In other words, we need to question our currently accepted frame of reference. Nothing we invest in as important in the world has ever, or will ever, bring us true peace and joy. We experience what we call pleasure, but none of it will last, which is the reason all pleasure is tinged with fear. What looks and feels like pleasure is fleeting and will always bring pain. **"It is impossible to seek for pleasure through the body and not find pain."** (T.19.IV.B.I.12.1) (ACIM OE T.19.Vb.71) Jesus tells us, **"All roads that lead away from what you are will lead you to confusion and despair."** (T.31.IV.9.5) (ACIM OE T.31.IV.41)

But now there is a way out. Why would we not choose it? The only reason we hold back is because of fear. What would I be without my thoughts? We have become so accustomed to listening to the ego—the wrong-mind that we think it is what we are. This voice is insistent, raucous, and obsessive. When we listen to it, it keeps us doing the same things over and over in the misguided belief we can finally get it right and achieve some semblance of peace and happiness in our lives. This alien will, we have come to identify with, is invested in maintaining a state of separation. It keeps us rooted in the illusion, with moments of seeming pleasure to offset the overall sense of pain and hopelessness that is there all the time. We have valiantly worked to adjust to this reality and tried to make it work for us, but true peace, joy, and love elude us. The mind that begins to radically question the nature of this world and our lives is what starts the process of healing.

Jesus says, **"A happy outcome to all things is sure,"** (W.292) but what does a happy outcome mean? Does it mean that my needs, as I perceive them, will be met? Does it mean that I will not experience any problems? What problems seem to be confronting you today? It may be helpful to list them. Now ask yourself, what would constitute a happy outcome to each problem? Are you looking for more money, a better job, a romantic relationship, improved health, a nicer car, better-behaved children, a new wardrobe, a vacation, a retreat, a better body, recognition, better sex, or a new partner? The list of what we think we want for our happiness can be extensive.

Jesus does not make us wrong because we have goals in this world, nor does he suggest that pursuing them should make us feel guilty. All he says is that they won't bring us the happiness we

seek. **"Seek not for this in the bleak world of illusion, where nothing is certain and where everything fails to satisfy. In the Name of God, be wholly willing to abandon all illusions."** (T.16.IV.9.4-5) (ACIM OE T.16.V.38) He wants for us to know our true happiness. When we are radically honest with ourselves, we can see that when we have achieved our hopes and wishes in the dream, peace, joy, and happiness still elude us. But this does not make our pursuits in the world wrong. As Jesus says, **"For this you came, and you will surely do the thing you came for."** (W.131.3.2)

He knows we came to experience this world, and this is where our attention goes until we accept a new purpose. Clearly, while we experience ourselves living in this world, Jesus recognizes there are things we need to maintain our lives. **"You have been told to ask the Holy Spirit for the answer to any specific problem, and that you will receive a specific answer if such is your need."** (Song of Prayer 1.I.2.1) As long as we still believe in specifics, this is how we will be answered. Jesus acknowledges, **"there are decisions to make here, and they must be made whether they be illusions or not."** (S.1.I.2.4) He is, ultimately, practical.

As we go about pursuing the things of this world, we are called to look at what purpose they serve. Is our purpose to stay invested in the illusion, or are we willing to use everything here as a backdrop for forgiveness and healing? When our activities serve the purpose of awakening from the dream, then every situation, every occurrence, every relationship, and every encounter serve as a perfect curriculum for forgiveness and healing. Whether we see the events of our lives as good or bad the Holy Spirit shows us how to use the situation for healing. Thus, there is never anything wrong that shows up. Everything is perfectly orchestrated for our highest good. When we become willing to give all our perceived needs to the Holy Spirit and let Him Guide our activities, everything becomes effortless.

Several years ago, when my mother was 98, I needed to put in place more support for her. I felt overwhelmed by her issues and needs and wondered how I would be able to attend to all her requirements and the amount of time it would take. I had filled out a form for wheelchair transportation, but when I went to visit her, some distance from my home, I had left the form at home. I judged myself for my lack of attention but asked if another form might be available at her facility. The form could not be found but in the process of the search I met several people who helped me set in motion numerous activities to support her needs. It was all so easy. What could have been seen as a problem turned out to be an immense blessing. We can't know what anything is for. The Holy Spirit is always available in every situation, waiting for us to turn to Him so He can meet our needs, as long as we still think they are specific. All we need to do is accept His help and give up thinking that we need to figure everything out for ourselves. It is a matter of leaning on Him and trusting the guidance given us.

Our practice is leading us to a place of deep surrender which takes us to the real world. The timing of that is not up to us. But it does require our willingness to give up our way, our understandings, our perceptions of the problem, our attempts to control every situation, our opinions, and our belief that we know what everything is for. **"God's promises make no exceptions."** (W.292.1.1) We don't yet totally believe this to be true. We still hang onto our own solutions generated by our own will. God **"guarantees that only joy can be the final outcome found for everything,"** (W.292.1.2) but Jesus tells us, **"it is up to us when this is reached; how long we let an alien will appear to be opposing His."** (W.292.1.3) We decide on the pace of our own healing. We choose when we are ready to turn every situation over to the Holy Spirit until forgiveness is complete. The journey goes as slowly or as quickly as determined by our readiness. We will not be hurled into Heaven so there is nothing to fear.

The reality is we need do nothing. We are already on the other side of the bridge. We are already home in God. The Atonement Principle is the assurance we have not changed ourselves. We can only believe we have done so. We have dreamed this existence, but it is not the truth. We are still completely innocent; but to realize this, we need to continue to look at the thoughts and beliefs that block our awareness of who we truly are. As these thoughts are brought to light, healing happens.

We read in Chapter 24 that we must question every value we hold. **"But an unrecognized belief is a decision to war in secret, where the results of conflict are kept unknown and never brought to reason, to be considered sensible or not."** (T.24.I.2.2) (ACIM OE T.24.II.4) Thus, we can only forgive what we acknowledge. When we blame our brother and want to triumph over him, we are hanging onto our specialness instead of accepting the truth. Only when we take responsibility for our thoughts can we start the process of letting go. To forgive is to take responsibility for everything in our world. It is all our own movie of our making.

We are the ones that choose attack instead of love. We are responsible for our interpretations. **"Deceive yourself no longer that you are helpless in the face of what is done to you. Acknowledge but that you have been mistaken, and all effects of your mistakes will disappear."** (T.21.II.2.6-7) (ACIM OE T.21.III.16)

Why do we hang onto our own way? What is this resistance about? We think it is about our physical and psychological survival. We think that the "me" we identify with is our reality, so we try to keep this mythical self safe. Yet the end is the same for all of us. We can't escape the ultimate destruction of the body, and so we hate the body. **"For fantasies have made your body your 'enemy'; weak, vulnerable and treacherous, worthy of the hate that you invest in it."** (T.18.VI.6.5) (ACIM OE T.18.VII.54) We hate our brother's body, **"For what you think is sin is limitation, and whom you try to limit to the body you hate because you fear."** (T.21.III.7.2) (ACIM OE T.21.IV.35)

We still believe there are some grievances that can't be forgiven; there are some addictions that have such a hold on us that they can't be broken; our best efforts at turning over some situations have not brought us peace; and our anger can still get triggered at a moment's notice. What to do? We start feeling despair and wonder if we are beyond redemption! But those are the very thoughts that stubbornly resist healing only because we still *want* to hold onto them. We choose to believe them and, as long as we do, they will be implacable. This place of stubborn resistance in us is not real. It is another false belief, and we have the power within us to release all false beliefs that we hold about ourselves.

"There is no statement that the world is more afraid to hear than this: *I do not know the thing I am, and therefore do not know what I am doing, where I am, or how to look upon the world or on myself.* Yet in this learning is salvation born." (T.31.V.17.6-8) (ACIM OE T.31.V.60, 61) We will never do this alone. He offers the miracle when we are ready, but not until we are ready. The choice is ours. We must ask Him to **"Help us not interfere."** (W.292.2.2) Only we can get in our own way. **"I will step back and let Him lead the way."** (W.155) Only our interfering thoughts and beliefs will **"delay the happy endings You have promised us for every problem that we can perceive; for every trial we think we still must meet."** (W.292.2.2)

We are still deeply skeptical that the Holy Spirit will deliver us. Jesus knows this about us, which is why he gives us a **"guarantee of only happy outcomes in the end"** (W.292.2.1) **"For God's Will is done in earth and Heaven."** (W.292.1.6) Yet it does not get done without us

because His Will is our own true will. Jesus honors our concept of time and our choices. "How long do we want to wait?" "How long do we want to delay?" "How long do we want to suffer?"

Let's give up striving to change ourselves and trying to be better, more loving, kinder, sweeter, and more giving. We can relax now. We don't have to make ourselves into anything. Our only job is to question and uncover all we think we are and all we think we know. We need only give up whatever interferes with the magnificence of who we already are. Our efforts at improving ourselves will never work. We will always fail, and then beat up on ourselves for our failure and decide that we are beyond redemption. Laugh at this nonsense. Realize the ego truly is fighting its last hurrah and the best defense is to laugh at its silliness. Simply witness its futile efforts and don't beat up on yourself for its attempts to keep you in hell. Our reality is unchangeable. We just need to keep doing the forgiveness work of letting go of all that interferes with the truth of who we are. Let the Holy Spirit handle it all. You need do nothing! **"A happy outcome to all things is sure."** (W.292) Today, let us resolve to give up our dreams of misery.

Love and blessings, Sarah