

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 293 All fear is past, and only love is here.

Sarah's Commentary:

The real world is described as "**bright and clean and new, with everything sparkling under the open sun. Nothing is hidden here, for everything has been forgiven and there are no fantasies to hide the truth. The bridge between that world and this is so little and so easy to cross, that you could not believe it is the meeting place of worlds so different. Yet this little bridge is the strongest thing that touches on this world at all. This little step, so small it has escaped your notice, is a stride through time into eternity, beyond all ugliness into beauty that will enchant you, and will never cease to cause you wonderment at its perfection.**" (T.17.II.2.2-6) (ACIM OE T.17.III.8)

Jesus assures us that we can cross over the bridge into the real world when we are ready. He tells us that it is easy to cross. It is just a change of mind from grievances to miracles. It is about letting go of our fears, especially our unconscious fear of God. A friend called me last night to tell me two of her AA sponsors deserted her and she wondered if this was an indication that God wants to punish her. The question startled me because it seemed laughable that anyone could have a thought like this. Yet ultimately, we all hold the belief that whatever is going wrong in our lives, it has something to do with God. We often wonder aloud how God could allow this (whatever the concern is about) to happen.

Jesus speaks of the simplicity of salvation in crossing this bridge to the real world. "**The real world is attained simply by the complete forgiveness of the old...**" (T.17.II.5.1) (ACIM OE T.17.III.11) And what is the old? The old is the world of form. It is "**the world you see without forgiveness.**" (T.17.II.5.1) (ACIM OE T.17.III.11) It is a world of "one or the other," of attack, betrayal, and of all the other distorted forms of fear. It is our old, conditioned thoughts that keep us going around and around on this hamster wheel. As Regina Dawn Akers has said, it is a hamster wheel of thoughts that go nowhere. We start with a thought, "I can't do anything right." Now we see evidence in the world of this thought and we experience failure. As a result of this experience, it affirms, for us, our original belief that we can't do anything right. It is a self-defeating cycle that needs to be released if we are to know who we are. It is all based on unconscious guilt, which results in the belief that there is something wrong with us, and with this belief, we experience self-hatred. This self-hatred is expressed as self-attack. The self-attack comes in many forms, whether sickness, problems with money, addictions, relationships, or in the form of accidents and attacks from others. The world becomes the delivery system for the punishment our guilt demands.

Jesus says that to forgive is merely to remember only the loving thoughts you gave in the past and those that were given you. All the rest must be forgotten. We are asked to forgive our brother for

what he did not do. **"Forgiveness recognizes what you thought your brother did to you has not occurred. It does not pardon sins and make them real."** (W.PII.Q1.What is Forgiveness.1.1-2) This is the only way we can understand why forgiveness can be so complete, because, in this dream, nothing real has happened. Nothing we have done has any effects. All of it is a dream. We have not sinned and there is thus no cause for guilt. **"The major difficulty that you find in genuine forgiveness on your part is that you still believe you must forgive the truth, and not illusions."** (W.134.3.1) Forgiveness too is an illusion, but it is an illusion that ends illusions. **"Forgiveness, then, is an illusion, but because of its purpose, which is the Holy Spirit's, it has one difference. Unlike all other illusions it leads away from error and not towards it."** (Clarification of Terms 3.1.3-4) **"Forgiveness is the only gift I give, because it is the only gift I want. And everything I give I give myself. This is salvation's simple formula."** (W.297.1.1-3)

No matter how long we have studied this Course or how well we think we understand the material, we still stubbornly hang onto this world, our thoughts, and our dramas. While we are in this world and believe in sin, guilt, and fear, we must continually be willing to bring our dark thoughts to the Holy Spirit. On this side of the bridge, we are all insane. We don't know our true Self. When we choose to let go of our alien will, **"He guarantees that only joy can be the final outcome found in everything. Yet it is up to us when this is reached;"** (W.292.1.2-3)

In this Lesson, Jesus tells us that the mistakes we think we have made are the source of our fear. When the source of the fear is gone, which is a belief in our past mistakes, there is only peace. Fear comes from the belief that we will be punished for the mistakes of the past. We replay our past mistakes in our memories and this brings up feelings of guilt and shame. Notice the fear that comes up when these come to mind. When we feel guilty over these past mistakes, we expect punishment and live in fear of the consequences of what we have done. Now the world feels oppressive and dangerous to us rather than bright and welcoming. In this Lesson, Jesus assures us, **"Love remains the only present state, whose Source is here forever and forever,"** (W.293.1.2) and love and fear are mutually exclusive. We can only experience love when fear is gone. **"Can the world seem bright and clear and safe and welcoming, with all my past mistakes oppressing it, and showing me distorted forms of fear?"** (W.293.1.3)

What do we do with this guilt? We hate the guilt. We can't handle it in our minds, so the ego has given us an answer, which is to project it onto others and see it in them. There are many targets for our guilt, but projecting it solves nothing since this is how we keep it. Yet the ego does not want us to see its strategy for keeping us in guilt. The guilt in our minds is what makes us think we deserve punishment. The world becomes the delivery system for that punishment. No wonder we expect conflict, difficulties, attacks, disappointments, betrayals, and all kinds of problems and issues in our lives. They are all manifestations that come about as a result of guilt. Jesus shows us how all this is a setup by the ego. When we see this, we become motivated and willing to take responsibility for the guilt on behalf of our own happiness.

When we don't defend against the guilt but take responsibility for it, it is an indication of our willingness to be wrong, to learn another way, and to be vulnerable, which is where our strength is. When we defend, we proclaim weakness, demonstrating that there is an enemy outside of us. **"Who would defend himself unless he thought he were attacked, that the attack were real, and that his own defense could save himself? And herein lies the folly of defense; it gives illusions full reality, and then attempts to handle them as real. It adds illusions to illusions, thus making correction doubly difficult. And it is this you**

do when you attempt to plan the future, activate the past, or organize the present as you wish." (W.135.1.1-4)

You might say, "But I don't feel any guilt." Yet if you feel fear, the guilt is there. It is fear of God's punishment for the belief that we killed Him in order to achieve separation from Him and establish our independence. Without belief in sin and guilt, fear would be gone. The sins of the past bring guilt into the present, and this creates fear of punishment for what we believe we have done. Without the past, there can be no fear. When there is no fear, there is only the experience of the present, where love always abides and has always been. **"Love remains the only present state, whose Source is here forever and forever."** (W.293.1.2)

Love is never obvious in form. Why is that? I say I love my son unconditionally, but if there is any fear present, it is not unconditional, total, and pure love. Whenever we focus on form, such as on another body, fear will always be present. Our fear is about loss, danger, sickness, and all kinds of calamities that may come to them. We worry that something may happen to those we say we love. We focus our "unconditional love" on our partner, yet hold in our minds the fear that our partner may leave us, disappoint us, or hurt us in some way. There is always fear attached to our special relationships. **"The miracle returns the cause of fear to you who made it."** (T.28.II.11.1) (ACIM OE T.28.III.26) That source, of course, is in our own wrong mind, where we hold mistaken thoughts and beliefs about who we are.

Jesus tells us, **"Yet in the present love is obvious, and its effects apparent."** (W.293.1.4) It is all about undoing past mistakes through forgiveness. When we willingly take all fear thoughts to the Light of Truth---to the Holy Spirit---they are quietly dispelled. We bring these fear thoughts out of the closet, admit them truthfully to the Holy Spirit, and trust Him to bring the miracle. Thus, we shift our perception from a world of separation, where we believe our reality is a body that is impermanent and where fear is a reality, to a world of holiness. This is the real world. Here, **"All the world shines in a reflection of its holy light, and I perceive a world forgiven at last."** (W.293.1.5)

Our part is to watch the mind for fear thoughts as they arise. They may show up as worry, a sense of vulnerability, anger, fear of rejection, impatience, hopes that we cling to, expectations we have, judgments and thoughts of hate, belief in unworthiness and anything that detracts from our peace and joy. When we are willing to look at these thoughts with the loving presence of the Holy Spirit, they are released. Behind these thoughts is the truth of who we are. Then we can know, **"All fear is past and only love is here."** (W.293)

For me today, thoughts of mice have been swirling in my mind. As the cold weather arrives, mice are looking for a warm place for the winter, and we are seeing evidence of their presence. I have been terrified of these creatures from a young age when we lived in the country and the house was overrun by mice. It has taken me many years not to freak out when I see them scurrying about. I am much calmer now, but the mind is not at rest at the thought of their appearance. Recently, I chose to go deeper and inquire what the real fear was about. A healed mind would not obsess about mice in the house. We had already taken all the action necessary for prevention and eradication of this problem. In my inquiry, I saw the first level of fear was that I was not in control. Under the belief in my need for control, I uncovered a deep sense of vulnerability. And going deeper, I recognized that when I feel vulnerable, I feel a lot of fear. I asked Holy Spirit to help me to release this fear. I was willing to see that the fear had nothing to do with mice. My deep

desire for peace was the motivation to give over to Spirit my wrong-minded perspective and allow the healing to happen.

"The outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guiltless is a world in which there is no fear, and everything is lit with hope and sparkles with a gentle friendliness. Nothing but calls to you in soft appeal to be your friend, and let it join with you. And never does a call remain unheard, misunderstood, nor left unanswered in the selfsame tongue in which the call was made. And you will understand it was this call that everyone and everything within the world has always made, but you had not perceived it as it was. And now you see you were mistaken. You had been deceived by forms the call was hidden in. And so you did not hear it, and had lost a friend who always wanted to be part of you. The soft eternal calling of each part of God's creation to the whole is heard throughout the world this second lesson brings."
(T.31.I.8.1-8) (ACIM OE T.31.I.8)

Everything in this world is impermanent. Everything can be threatened. It is all destructible, including our bodies. It is a world of time and space in which pain, sickness, and death prevail. It is a world where we are continually under threat and in a struggle for personal power, hoping for fleeting happiness, and living with expectations that the next thing will bring the happiness we are seeking. We work to maintain our individuality, personality, and self-concepts, believing we are in competition for limited resources, and always feeling under threat of attack.

Yet Jesus tells us right at the beginning of this Course, **"Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists."** (T.IN.2.2-3) (ACIM OE T.IN 4) We must conclude that if everything in our seeming world can be threatened, it cannot be real. We might ask, "What is real that can't be threatened?" It is the totality of perfect love, the truth of who we are---perfect, whole, and complete, shining in innocence, peace and joy, completely and totally safe, radiant and eternal. The truth about us can never be changed or threatened, no matter what we currently believe about ourselves. Our reality has nothing to do with the body.

The real world has none of our past mistakes in it. We are currently blind and deaf to the real world because we believe the senses that show us this world of illusion. Behind the fear, we are all joined in singing together a hymn of gratitude to God. We are not limited to a body, with a mind stuck in our brain. In truth, we are unlimited beings surrounded only by God's Love. ***"Father, let not Your holy world escape my sight today. Nor let my ears be deaf to all the hymns of gratitude the world is singing underneath the sounds of fear. There is a real world which the present holds safe from all past mistakes. And I would see only this world before my eyes today."*** (W.293.2.1-4)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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