

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 305

There is a peace that Christ bestows on us.

Sarah's Commentary:

When we experience the peace of God, we experience **"a peace so deep and quiet, undisturbable and wholly changeless, that the world contains no counterpart."** (W.305.1.1) It is a peace where there is only extension outward of the deep quiet within. When we experience this peace, the dream of this world has no effect on us. It does not matter what is happening in the dream because it no longer has any effect. When the mind, which is the cause of everything we see, is quiet and at peace, only peace is reflected in the world.

In the Manual for Teachers, Section 20, **"What is the Peace of God?"** Jesus describes peace as unlike any of our previous experiences. **"It calls to mind nothing that went before. It brings with it no past associations. It is a new thing entirely."** (M.20.2.3-5) Thus, it is called a step out of time. It is a kind of peace not of this world. **"The past just slips away, and in its place is everlasting quiet. Only that."** (M.20.2.8-9) Everything we saw and thought we understood before disappears and, with it, all effects are gone. When the wrong-minded thought system of lack, specialness, neediness, and unworthiness, which is the cause of all our suffering, is released through forgiveness, the mind no longer looks outside for completion.

Jesus says, **"No one can fail to find it who but seeks out its conditions."** (M.20.3.2) He goes on to say it requires giving up anger. Justifying anger in any way **"proclaims that peace is meaningless, and must believe that it cannot exist."** (M.20.3.4) Jesus is not saying we won't be angry or should not be angry, only that we should not justify it as having any cause outside of our own minds. Anger comes from the beliefs, thoughts, values, and concepts we hold. When we look at them with a willingness to heal, we can then bring them to the Holy Spirit. We can choose to release our anger rather than acting on it. Investigating the beliefs that we hold that bring forth grievances will help us recognize the source of the anger in the mind.

When we are triggered by anything, it is an opportunity to inquire more deeply into what is going on in the mind. It is important to look at what this investigation involves. It is not about analysis, but only about inquiring what beliefs we are holding. As we are told, **"The ego analyzes; the Holy Spirit accepts."** (T.11.V.13.1) (ACIM OE T.10.VI.53) Any number of situations show up in our daily lives, where we give up our peace. It might be a betrayal by a friend, feeling victimized at work, having financial problems, experiencing illness, or having a computer that has crashed. These are situations we judge as bad, but the Holy Spirit accepts appearances as neither good nor bad. When we look at what is happening as guided by the Holy Spirit, we don't judge anything as good nor bad, but simply as unreal.

Sickness and health are seen as the same, both being unreal, just as the body is unreal. When we analyze the situation by looking at it with the ego, we start with the belief that the situation is true. Now we wonder how we attracted it or manifested it and start the process of analysis. With investigation or inquiry, we accept that the appearance has no reality. Yes, it may still upset us, but now we recognize we are upset because we are holding a belief in the mind that is causing us pain. We simply investigate what it is that we are believing that is not true, so our false beliefs can be released and the peace, already in us, can shine forth.

God's peace is a gift, which **"has come to us to save us from our judgment on ourselves."** (W.305.2.3) We have judged ourselves as guilty and not deserving of peace. We believe we have to suffer and atone for that guilt. I recently was at a conference where Brent Haskell told the story of the Prodigal Son and asked how many of us believe we could take our father's treasure, squander it, and then return home without a shred of guilt? Wouldn't we think we had to atone for what we had done? Yet Jesus keeps telling us that we are innocent—*now*. All we must do is accept that fact. Brent went on to ask us how we would feel as the good son in this parable. The good son was the one who stayed at home and supported his family. When we identify with him, how many of us would enjoy the celebration of the guilty brother without a shred of resentment? Would not the good son, who stayed at home to help the father, want to be acknowledged as such? The parable of the good son is one that reflects "the face of innocence" that hides attack thoughts and judgments while doing our best to look good and helpful. Always, under this face of innocence, is the belief that someone else should pay for our guilt, while we should get off for good behavior.

Jesus says that though we may identify with the ego it is difficult because it is a condition where there is no peace. It is a state of lack. It is a state where we believe we need to get something from the world that we don't currently have in order to be at peace. We look for affirmation from the world to support the image we have made in place of who we really are. One way to see this in your own life is to look at what you think would make you happy that you don't have now. It is the belief that if you could get it, you would have peace. It may be money, a new job, a relationship, better health, or a new home.

A few years ago I attended a silent retreat with Regina Dawn Akers. It started with the playing of *Amazing Grace* and then the silence was invited. I immediately felt myself sink into the silence and with it came the deep feeling of relief that I no longer had to maintain the "self" image. I was in a place now where no one needed anything from me, and I needed nothing from anyone. There was no need to "perform"—only to be. It was a sense of a deep letting go, and in the process, the relief I felt brought tears of gratitude. Then, these words poured forth from the Holy Spirit which I wrote in my journal:

"You can relax now. I have your back. I always have had. You think that everything depends on your own efforts. You believe that if you are not taking care of things, they would not be done. You have been mistaken, my dear child. You have carried a burden that has never been yours to carry. I am your strength and support. I have always been there. I have loved you ceaselessly and consistently. You have never been alone. You have never been without Me. You have been mistaken in your belief that it is all up to you.

I love you my child with a ceaseless, boundless love. All is well. It always has been. When you took My place on the throne, you took on all the stress, all the responsibility that was never yours to take. It was all unnecessary. Breathe in the love; it has been waiting your acceptance. Open your heart, open your arms, embrace the beauty of You, My beloved. Always and forever..."

As I listened and breathed in these words, sobs wracked my body and I was overcome with gratitude.

In our choice for the ego identity, peace was thrown away, and now we feel a lack that we try to fill from outside ourselves. If God has given us peace, what could be more powerful to take it away? Only our own choice for the ego could take it away, but the truth is that there is no other will. Thus, we have no free will and are not the doers of our actions. There is nothing more powerful than God. Yet when we made the decision for the ego, we seemingly made another will, which now rules our lives to the extent that we believe in its power. **"You see what you believe is there, and you believe it there because you want it there."** (T.25.III.1.3) (ACIM OE T.25.IV.23)

The truth is if we do not have peace, it is only because we don't want peace. The first obstacle to peace is our desire to be rid of it, which is startling! Yet you can readily see how true that is. We actively refuse peace when something happens in our lives that we find unpalatable, whether it is something we judge as a serious situation or just a small irritation. We give up our peace for all kinds of reasons. Yet nothing really exists that can take away the peace of God. Our insistence that there are indeed things that can take away our peace is how we actively refuse God's gifts. We project our own refusal to accept God's peace by making someone or some situation responsible for our lack of peace. We insist that we are not at peace because of something "out there"--- something someone has seemingly done to us. We want to be able to put the blame for our lack of peace somewhere outside of our own minds. The justification for our anger is what Jesus says we need to look at. Can we accept that no one is responsible for our unhappiness except ourselves? This requires that we rest our story about why we don't have peace and take responsibility for our decision not to accept the peace that is already ours.

"Why would you want peace homeless? What do you think that it must dispossess to dwell with you? What seems to be the cost you are so unwilling to pay?" (T.19.IV.A.2) (ACIM OE T.19.V.a.41) There is something we think we will lose if we accept peace. What is it? Isn't it that we want to be right about the way we have set things up? Isn't it that we want to see others guilty, so we can buy our own false innocence at their expense? Isn't it that we simply don't trust that if we choose peace, our vigilance on behalf of our own well-being, as we define it, will be jeopardized?

Father, help me today to accept the gift of peace, and not to judge it. I willingly take responsibility for my reactions to appearances that show up in my life. I know they are there so I can investigate the beliefs I am holding onto that are not true. I am willing to take responsibility for my judgments, for my desire to attack something or someone outside myself, and for placing the blame there. The Correction is already in my mind. Sanity and peace are already within me. Help me today to choose forgiveness in every situation that I encounter so I may know the peace that is always present behind the dark clouds of my misperceptions. I am willing to look at the insanity of holding onto grievances against anyone or anything. Speak to me of my wholeness. Let me understand that what I see that appears to contradict peace is not real and does not matter. I am willing to have my mind healed, my Father, by recognizing that I have been wrong about who I am. I am willing to surrender my way and be shown the truth. Peace to my mind. Let all my thoughts be still. I am home. I am loved. I am safe. I am free. I am happy. Nothing that I have thought about myself is the truth. Anger is never justified and sickness is not what it appears to be. I am willing to withdraw my judgments on myself that I project onto others and see that I have been wrong. Thus, I can be born again today.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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