

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



LESSON 321 Father, my freedom is in You alone.

Sarah's Commentary:

When Jesus says, "**Creation is the sum of all God's Thoughts, in number infinite, and everywhere without all limit,**" (W.PII.Q11.What is Creation.1.1) he is making clear that God created One Son and affirms once again that Creation is perfect Oneness. Why does he speak of infinite numbers and then say, "**We are creation; we the Sons of God. We seem to be discrete, and unaware of our eternal unity with Him**"? (W.PII.Q11.4.1-2) This is how we currently see ourselves. While the truth is that there is only One Son, our distorted view of reality is that we are separate and discrete, but this is only because we are unaware of our eternal unity.

While in truth the separation never happened, in our experience it seems it has. It seems to us that these bodies and the world of time and space are real. The Oneness Jesus speaks of may seem more like an illusion until we have an experience of it. Jesus acknowledges this when he says, "**All this takes note of time and place as if they were discrete, for while you think that part of you is separate, the concept of a oneness joined as one is meaningless.**" (T.25.I.7.1) (ACIM OE T.25.II.10) But the separation never happened. Jesus speaks of the separation as something that seems to have happened, as he meets us where we think we are. Yet, he reminds us that in reality it was "**so very long ago, for such a tiny interval of time, that not one note in Heaven's song was missed.**" (T.26.V.5.4) (ACIM OE T.26.VI.34) In essence, nothing happened.

Jesus says, "**God's Thoughts are given all the power that their own Creator has.**" (W.PII.Q11.2.1) We are the Thoughts in the mind of God. As such, we all share in that power, and we all share in God's attributes. We are eternal, unlimited, invulnerable, perfect, and powerful beings of love and light.

In the world of time and space, we do believe we are separate, but in reality, we are one Self. This world is an illusion. While we think we have changed ourselves and are limited bodies and personalities, "**What God has willed to be forever One will still be One when time is over; and will not be changed throughout the course of time, remaining as it was before the thought of time began.**" (W.PII.Q11.2.4) No matter what we think, "**Its oneness is forever guaranteed inviolate; forever held within His holy Will, beyond all possibility of harm, or separation, imperfection and of any spot upon its sinlessness.**" (W.PII.Q11.3.3)

Firmly implanted in the mind is the memory of who we are as the Christ. Yes, we seem to have blotted it out with the noise of the ego and the distractions of this world, but there is a Call within

to remember who we really are. Our readiness to hear the Voice for Truth in us depends on the extent of suffering we are willing to tolerate. Eventually, everyone comes to the place where they declare there must be a better way. The memory of our Home is always there behind all our raucous thoughts. When these thoughts are forgiven, we are no longer **"unaware of our eternal unity with Him."** (W.PII.Q11.4.2) **"Yet back of all our doubts, past all our fears, there still is certainty."** (W.PII.Q11.4.3)

Our part is to **"Let our function be only to let this memory return, only to let God's Will be done on earth, only to be restored to sanity, and to be but as God created us."** (W.PII.Q11.4.6) This is our only function. It is what time is for. We have no other function but to join in purpose with our brothers, recognizing we are all the same. We share the same purpose, which is to awaken from the insanity of this world. We can only know the truth when we give up judgments, comparisons, and attacks on our brothers. When we attack, we see them as unholy and different from ourselves. We project the guilt in the mind on them to achieve our innocence. We now must take responsibility for our projections if our desire is for awakening.

We are called to be an example to others of the choice for love we have made. Although our brothers sleep, it is nevertheless a sleep of innocence despite the behavior being exhibited. Every step in the journey is still perfect, as it leads everyone to the place where they will ultimately make the choice for truth. Thus, we need not judge anyone but trust all things exactly as they are. Everything works together for good regardless of appearances. Our job is to focus on what is going on in our own minds and take the focus off our brothers' guilt. **"Let our function be only to let this memory return, only to let God's Will be done on earth, only to be restored to sanity, and to be but as God created us."** (W.PII.Q11.4.6)

The Lesson **"Father, my freedom is in You alone,"** (W.321) challenges our view that freedom lies with the ego. To the separate self, freedom means I can do as I please. It is the belief that I can be free of responsibilities, demands, or requirements. We want the freedom to indulge our wants and desires, to come and go as we please, and to judge and attack whenever we choose. We believe freedom is about exercising our separate will. The separated, independent self is the rebel that resists healing. It is in competition with everyone, including God. This is the authority problem. We think this is freedom yet in reality we are trapped in our reactive stance where there is an appearance of choice but, in fact, there is no choice. We believe we can protect ourselves from pain, fear, sacrifice and unworthiness by exerting independence and control. We celebrate this kind of independence, yet it is the root of all our problems!

It seems to us that to surrender to the Will of God is the end freedom as we have defined it. However, what we call freedom, Jesus calls imprisonment. He says, **"When you have learned that your will is God's, you could no more will to be without Him than He could will to be without you. This is freedom and this is joy."** (T.8.II.6.4-5) (ACIM OE T.8.III.13) Identification with the ego limits us and keeps us in a state of uncertainty and unaware of what we truly want.

"Father, I have searched in vain. . ." (W.321.1.2) was certainly my experience for many years. I was always driven by the question, "Who am I really?" I looked for answers in books, workshops, and relationships. I was always searching for happiness, but it eluded me. Underneath my search was fear and anxiety. My experience was one of searching in vain **"until I heard Your**

Voice directing me." (W.321.1.2) I knew I had found the answer when the Course came into my life. It was no accident. It was all beautifully orchestrated.

As we apply the Lessons and experience more peace, joy, and spaciousness in our lives, our motivation increases. If we want happiness and true freedom, Jesus says there is only one way—by healing the mind through forgiveness. It is a simple formula laid out for us, yet we all experience how difficult the process can be. Jesus says, **"When your mood tells you that you have chosen wrongly, and this is so whenever you are not joyous, then know this need not be."** (T.4.IV.2.2) (ACIM OE T.4.V.57) The key is willingness.

Do you notice how motivated you are to apply the lesson when you are at the end of your rope? I find I turn to God more often when I am under siege than when everything is going how I want it. That is why we can be grateful for "opportunities" that challenge our sense of well-being. We may resist these "opportunities" and get angry and distressed about things going "wrong" in our lives as we perceive them, but if we recognize their contribution to our awakening, we can become happy learners, even in the midst of perceived difficulties. There is nothing to regret. Just as in the movie, *About Time*, we learn that it is not helpful to live by hypotheticals. When we do, we lament what should have happened and could have happened and don't embrace the present moment.

William Shakespeare writes in the play, *As You Like It*, "Sweet are the uses of adversity." Adversity in our lives is not sweet to the ego. When events that cause us distress come along and our lives are disrupted by sickness, abandonment, loss, and lack, we see nothing sweet in it. But when we argue with what shows up in our lives, we suffer. When everything is used for the purpose of healing and transcendence, it all serves a mighty purpose. Everything that seemed to be certain in our lives is sometimes taken away. It can be a dramatic, disorienting, and even a frightening time. Our normal impulse is to try to find our way back to feeling secure again as quickly as possible and to regain control. These times of crisis can, however, serve a mighty purpose. When we are dedicated to healing, we don't resist the opportunity there is in the seeming adversity. We recognize, and even welcome, the gift available in any seeming setback.

Everything is perfect for our awakening. When we recognize we are the dreamer and not the character in the dream, even the 'worst' things, that seem to happen can become the doorway to transcendence. Each moment is simply what it is. When we argue with what is given, we suffer. Our arguments are the ego's demands that something must be different for our happiness. Acceptance is about releasing the demands for how it should all be. We experience pain when we resist what is given. Suffering only comes with resistance.

We live under the guidance and control of the ego until we decide, ***"Now I would guide myself no more."*** (W.321.1.3) We try to be managers and controllers of our lives by judging events as good or bad, or by what we like or don't like, until we realize that this is where suffering comes from. No matter how much we try, and how many roads we travel, our goal for happiness cannot be met with the ego as guide. The first step is to recognize that no matter how hard we try to control outcomes, and no matter how hard we try to find happiness in the world, we will always fail. Yes, there will be moments of pleasure, but they will not last. That is why there is always a degree of fear with all happy, pleasurable times. We know they will end.

With this recognition comes more willingness to surrender and thus more willingness to admit we are wrong and to find a better way. The "gift" of ego weariness is that it motivates us to apply these teachings. Jesus asks us to trust him on behalf of our freedom and happiness. On my own, **"I have neither made nor understood the way to find my freedom."** (W.321.1.4) We must put ourselves in God's Hands. We must learn to make all decisions with the Holy Spirit and not on our own. Trust is the first and most important characteristic of the Teacher of God.

"Your Voice directs me, and the way to You is opening and clear to me at last." (W.321.1.7) Freedom comes with willingness and surrender and with the acknowledgment that we don't know. When we recognize that our way has imprisoned us, we become motivated to know our true will. Devotion to our practice is the way to achieve our goal.

Lesson 131 reminds us, **"Heaven remains your one alternative to this strange world you made and all its ways; its shifting patterns and uncertain goals, its painful pleasures and its tragic joys."** (W.131.7.1) (ACIM OE W.131.8) All pleasure we pursue in the world brings pain. The reason pain and pleasure are the same is that they share the same purpose. The purpose is to make the body real in our experience. Pain and pleasure both compel our attention, and both distract us from hearing the Holy Spirit's guidance. When we pursue pleasure, we make the body the center of attention, which keeps us distracted from what brings us peace and freedom.

I recently experienced an event that initially felt like a sacrifice. We had planned to be with friends at a concert, but a call came from someone asking for help. The guidance was to respond to the call, but it meant giving up the concert and responding instead to the call for help. I gave up my idea of "pleasure" and chose to be of service. Even though there was some initial resistance, the fulfillment and joy that came from responding to this call with openness and receptivity was deeply satisfying. I was being used to fulfill my purpose to help a brother. It felt liberating and joyful. That is what true freedom is—a deep level of satisfaction in listening and following guidance.

You may still find, as I do, that you are pulled between your interests as you define them and guidance. You may still find that you are reluctant to follow guidance, or even ask for it on a regular basis. Our fear is that God's way will limit our personal interests. Our fear is of Love, because our demand is always, "I want it *thus*!" When we acknowledge that we are not experiencing deep peace and joy we become willing to turn to the Holy Spirit more and more.

We pray the prayer today with acceptance that we don't understand what freedom is or even where to look to find it. We have spent our lives searching in vain until we have finally found the answer in this Course. **"Today we answer for the world, which will be freed along with us,"** (W.321.2.1) because the world is a projection of our thoughts.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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