

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 360

**Peace be to me, the holy Son of God.
Peace to my brother, who is one with me.
Let all the world be blessed with peace through us.**

Sarah's Commentary:

It was 5 a.m. several years ago when the radio came on, and I vaguely heard the news of a tsunami hitting Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, and Malaysia. Initially, this news was in the background of my mind and did not register that I should be concerned. Later, the CNN report showed the magnitude of the devastation, and panic arose at the thought that my son and his girlfriend planned to be on Phi Phi Island, which was reported to have been most likely washed away. Not hearing anything from him and not having a clue where he was, my distress increased. Then, I turned my attention to the Lesson for this day, looking to find some solace in Jesus' words. Turning to the Course is generally my first line of defense against the voice of the ego. This Lesson was my anchor on that day. While the ego was manufacturing all kinds of scenarios of devastation in my mind, I recognized how easily I was tempted to keep invested in my fearful thoughts. My practice throughout that day was to rest my mind, to trust, and to keep going to the silence.

Fear and doubt thoughts arose and fell, like the waves of the ocean, to be released over and over again to the Holy Spirit. We all have situations where our trust in the Holy Spirit gets put to the test when we are confronted by perceived threats, which linger in the mind. Fears arise in the mind that we project onto these events. The fear seems to be related to the situation at hand, yet it is already in the mind, waiting to be triggered. This event, as others like it, gave me an opportunity to keep my mind disciplined and focused on the truth rather than listening to the ego's fear-based thoughts. I had absolutely no evidence on which to base the fear except the news reports which triggered my imagination. I reminded myself that the script is written and that fear is a decision. My mind was manufacturing thoughts that triggered the fear. It produced all kinds of scenarios but with no specific information on which to base my concern. Constant discipline was the order of the day to keep my mind away from the obsessive nature of the fear-based thoughts and in prayer to focus on stillness and peace.

During the day, I did find moments of complete silence and surrender as I reflected on this Lesson, which assured me, **"the Great Rays remain forever still and undisturbed within me."** (W.360.1.2) The challenge now was to reach deeply, past the fear thoughts, into the quiet stillness of the Great Rays. Brief moments of peace were experienced until the next image of devastation would come to disturb the mind. More work was to be done. Holy Spirit, help me. Then friends showed up and the supportive presence of my mighty companions bolstered my wavering resolve to focus on the message of this Lesson and the Course, constantly reminding myself that the script is written and everything in this movie has already happened and none of it is true. The only truth is that we are safe at home in God, dreaming this existence.

Later that morning, there was a message that my son's father had received, which was recorded on his answering machine. It was terse and short but enough to be reassured that my son and his girlfriend had survived the devastation. Now my attention focused on the part of the Lesson that says, **"Peace to my brother, who is one with me. Let all the world be blessed with peace through us."** (W.360) I felt deep compassion for the suffering of those who were struggling with the after-effects of this situation. I experienced the opening of my heart to extend in prayer to others in this situation. I now experienced a deeper level of compassion and sincerity, having just gone through this experience.

This Lesson reminds us that peace is not dependent on external circumstances. It is there within us all the time. Certainty cannot be found in anything but the part of the mind that is forever still and undisturbed. It is there within us. Only by looking at the blocks to peace can it be revealed to us. The blocks are the fears. The obsessive thoughts, the imagination, and the concepts and beliefs that we hold in the mind conjure up pictures of death and disaster. To know God's peace is to be truly willing to want it above all else. To know God's peace is to let the interfering thoughts be acknowledged and recognized as false.

We have all been in these kinds of situations in which the mind seems to draw our attention. Increasingly, we accept that the illusion is never the truth; there is no death; the script is written; everything here is for the purpose of waking up; we are only reviewing the past; and the story is already over. With each thought comes a loosening of the beliefs we tenaciously hold about ourselves, others, and this world. Yes, we have many opportunities like this in this classroom we call life. The magnitude of each situation or event may seem different in the illusion, yet in truth, there are no differences. They are all the same in that they are all illusory. There is also no difference in the power of the miracle to shift our mind from any perceived problem. There is no order of difficulty in miracles.

Once again, we are reminded that to extend peace to our brother and see his sinlessness is to know our own. It is a reminder that we can only bring blessings to the world through acceptance of our own peace. I truly want to be the instrument of that blessing. I know this is the intention we all share. As we embrace the peace and use opportunities such as this to heal the mind, we become a demonstration of the peace we want to see in the world. When we blame anything or anyone for our lack of peace, we are seeing ourselves as the effect of events in the world. It is impossible to blame and yet accept the Atonement for ourselves at the same time. Our mind is cause and the world is effect. When we see it the other way around, we see ourselves as the victim of "outside" events. Only when we accept the peace within can it be extended to the world. Problems in the world will never be solved by trying to deal with effects. We must look at the cause in the mind. Only in this way is there any real solution. It is the only way to **"Let all the world be blessed with peace through us."** (W.360)

We have learned that spirituality is not just adding something some spiritual thoughts to our everyday lives, but it is a wholesale retraining of the mind, which is what makes it so very challenging. Every step we take in forgiveness on this path opens us up to more experiences of peace. Sometimes it seems that we take two steps forward and one back, but we know that with each step we take, we make progress up this ladder we have descended. Yet trust is called for until the ladder is no longer needed even though we can't be the judge of that because as Jesus says we can't tell the difference between our advances and retreats.

"This Christmas, give the Holy Spirit everything that would hurt you. Let yourself be healed completely, that you may join with Him in healing, and let us celebrate our release together by releasing everyone with us. Leave nothing behind, for

release is total, and when you have accepted it with me you will give it with me. All pain and sacrifice and littleness will disappear in our relationship, which is as innocent as our relationship with our Father, and as powerful. Pain will be brought to us and disappear in our presence, and without pain there can be no sacrifice. And without sacrifice there love *must* be." (T.15.XI.3.1-6) (ACIM OE T.15.XI.103)

Now, as we celebrate Christmas, we are reminded that **"The birth of Christ is now, without a past or future. He has come to give His present blessing to the world, restoring it to timelessness and love. And love is ever-present, here and now."** (W.308.1.6-8) May we all experience that miracle.

"The sign of Christmas is a star, a light in darkness. See it not outside yourself, but shining in the Heaven within, and accept it as the sign the time of Christ has come." (T.15.XI.2.1-2) (ACIM OE T.15.XI.102)

Today, I received a lovely reminder of the joy of Christmas from a friend who said she had awakened with such a peace, such a joy, and such a gratitude having put her burdens in a sack and laid them at the feet of Jesus. She described her "new birthing" experiences as all she ever really needed or wanted for Christmas; and that is all any of us could need or want. She went on to say:

"I've never been so happy. Perhaps because this Christmas I haven't bought into as much of the illusion and haven't given as much of this hopeless rubbish away because I'm not kidding myself anymore about what's true and isn't true...about so many meaningless attachments, desires, false fantasies. About Santa Claus. I really do feel like a child, who woke up Christmas morning, found out the real truth of who I am, and what is what...feeling so glad my intuitive hunches are confirmed, feeling undeceived, forgiving the ones who told me the lie, forgiving myself for believing it and finally setting us all free from the foolishness of it all! What more could a person ever want and ever get?"

If this is not how you are feeling, know that Christmas is every day and we can all wake to this kind of peace and joy as we keep laying our false ideas, our expectations, and our burdens on the altar of truth. We can all experience the miracle when we release that which is blocking it. All it takes is a willingness to step back from the ego and take the time to ask the Holy Spirit to give us His interpretation of every situation. We want to remember today that if we are to achieve peace, everyone must be included in it. Peace does not come with a cost to anyone. To exclude anyone is to reflect belief in differences and specialness. We ask for help in letting go of that which separates us today and recognize we are all the same.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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