



LESSON 40 I am blessed as a Son of God.

Sarah's Commentary:

These next eleven Lessons shift to a discussion of the happy things to which we are entitled. We are entitled to happy things because of what we are, but it is not about *our* definition of happiness. Our definition of happiness is about having our needs met as we perceive them. It is about maintaining our identity as a separate self, using others to serve our needs. If they don't do that well, we blame them for our lack of happiness. How can we know what will bring us happiness when we don't know our own best interests? We don't know what anything is for and in fact, we don't even know who we are.

The happiness Jesus speaks about comes from releasing our wants, expectations, self-interest, unworthiness, and all forms of self-attack. It comes from healing our guilt and taking responsibility for our projections. It comes from letting go of our identification with this personal self with its judgments and grievances. It is about awakening from the dream where happiness constantly eludes us, and even when we think we have it, we don't believe it will last. Jesus says that we are entitled to happiness because of what we are. Happiness is in our right minds, but currently, our minds are split between the wrong mind and the right mind. In our wrong mind is our investment in guilt and self-attack. In our right mind is the memory of the Christ Self we are.

We are learning the difference between real freedom and joy. When we turn to the Holy Spirit as our Teacher, we experience freedom and joy, but when we turn to the ego, we experience imprisonment, suffering, and pain. Until we learn the difference, we continue to seek happiness as we define it. We don't yet know what it is and how and where to find it because we are searching outside of ourselves. Yet this Lesson says that the blessedness of our being is already in us, in the right mind. This Lesson is mainly concerned with reminding ourselves of who we are in truth---blessed, calm, quiet, assured, confident, serene, capable, unshakeable, joyful, radiant, full of love, and light. He urges us to add any words we like, which affirm our true nature.

The mind training is necessary to help us differentiate between freedom and imprisonment. Currently, we can't tell the difference. Jesus is blunt with us when he says, **"You no more recognize what is painful than you know what is joyful, and are, in fact, very apt to confuse the two. The Holy Spirit's main function is to teach you to tell them apart. What is joyful to you is painful to the ego, and as long as you are in doubt about what you are, you will be confused about joy and pain."** (T.7.X.3.4-6) (ACIM OE T.7.XI.101) However, it is important that we not feel guilty about seeking pleasure as we define it. While we still believe that our identity is a body and we are lacking, we will seek pleasure in the world. Yet Jesus increasingly helps us to see that there is no satisfaction in the world, and our only true happiness is found in recognizing what we are. Our joy comes from the content of love, peace, and joy in the mind, rather than anything in the world of form.

All our unhappiness is a consequence of belief that we are separate from God and every problem we have is the result. In fact, separation from God and our choice for the ego are our only problems. Separation is the cause of all our pain and misery. The Atonement principle is the assurance that we have not, and cannot, separate from God. We are still one with God. God is always with us. That is why we can know He goes with us wherever we go, meaning His presence is always with us. We are never on our own. If we truly accepted this, we could never be anxious, upset, worried, or afraid. When fears and feelings of anxiety and unworthiness come up, we know we have sided with the ego. It is an opportunity to bring our wrong-minded thoughts forward and place them on the inner altar, giving them over to the Holy Spirit.

If I am willing to look at my problems and take responsibility for them by seeing that they originate in my own mind, I can bring my mistaken thoughts to the truth, remembering it is only my own thoughts that keep me in misery. Nothing outside of me has the power to make me upset. If someone does seem to upset me, it is because I believe I am unworthy of love. I have given the power to someone outside of me to define me as a guilty self I already believe I am. I will not know myself as the divine being I am until I heal my beliefs in my own unworthiness. When I perceive someone attacking me, and those attacks find a place to land in me, I have some forgiveness work to do with my own self-attacking thoughts. In my right mind is the truth of who I am. The truth is that I have never separated from love because God goes with me wherever I go. I can only be upset if I think I am alone in the world. I must acknowledge that I am wrong about what I am thinking before my misperceptions can be healed. If I continue to justify that I am right in what I am perceiving, no healing is possible. There is no power outside of our own minds that will bring the healing. Beseeching God to take away our fears will never work. We are the ones who have to give them up because we are the ones who made them.

We spend a lot of our time trying to fix problems in the world. Clearly, we all have situations that need to be addressed, but the important thing is to look at what we are thinking about these situations. When we are willing to forgive our mistaken thoughts, the things we need to attend to in the world will be addressed with ease. The Source of all my joy and ease goes with me. Thus, nothing can destroy my peace of mind unless I allow it to do so. Under our insane thoughts is the reality that the separation is not real. We don't believe this right now, but consider the possibility that maybe Jesus is right and we are wrong. Our pain and suffering need not be. **"When you are anxious, realize that anxiety comes from the capriciousness of the ego, and know this need not be."** (T.4.IV.4.1) (ACIM OE T.4.V.60) Maybe we can remember to laugh at the idea that a Son of God, Who is still One with Him, can suffer. Can we accept that only our thoughts bring suffering? We have a teacher who reminds us that those thoughts are not the truth.

We do our Lesson practice now every ten minutes. How often we remember the Lesson will help us to look at our dedication to the increased practice requirements. We can do the practice with eyes open or closed. We need to affirm the truth often during the day because we really don't believe it yet. It is a Lesson of appreciation, of celebration, and of affirmation. And it is important to remember that Jesus does not want us to feel guilty when we forget to do the Lesson. He does not want our forgetting to be a sin. He only urges us to remember on behalf of our own happiness. As we express the truth today, we attract more of what we affirm.

Jesus says that we don't do this practice, not because it is hard, but because we don't believe we are worth the effort. When we forget today, he encourages us to try again and keep up the effort because we are worth it. He is always gentle and encouraging. There is no shame in forgetting. It is just an opportunity to look at our level of resistance and readiness to do this work. We are worth the effort!

This is a Course in mind training and does require mental discipline. Initially, it feels hard, but what is harder than living as an ego in this world? There is so much pain and suffering. We experience so much loss, competition, problems, and difficulties. We keep trying and trying to find real happiness to no avail until death claims us. While the Course does take dedication, we are worth the effort. It is no different than learning any other skill. It does take a lot of practice at first and may feel like a lot of work initially until it becomes a regular part of our thought system. Jesus recognizes that we may go through **"long interruptions"** (W.40.1.5) in our practice. He knows we lack discipline. That is why the practice is necessary.

Why do we resist? The ego is in constant opposition to our happiness. Jesus says, **". . . the ego does not love you."** (T.9.VII.3.5) (ACIM OE T.9.VI.40) Do you notice that even during the best and most pleasurable times in our lives there is an edge of sadness, uneasiness, and fear?

Jesus talks about how to use time well on behalf of our own happiness. The purpose of time is only for our healing. That is its intended purpose. It is for extending blessing and forgiveness. **". . . there is no better use for time."** (W.127.7.2) Seek salvation in every encounter by not leaving **"anyone without giving salvation to him and receiving it yourself."** (T.8.III.4.7) (ACIM OE T.8.IV.19)

Of course, the ego has an entirely different purpose for time. Its purpose is for the accumulation of guilt. Guilt proves that we are separate from God and that the ego is real. Our death is the ultimate proof that the ego and body are real, and thus, we really have accomplished the impossible in separating from God. Jesus assures us there is no death because we are eternal beings that can't die. From the perspective of the ego thought system, our function in time is destruction, where time has replaced eternity.

This is a wonderful Lesson. We can either do it with our eyes open or closed. Repeat the idea for the day and add several of the attributes you associate with being a Son of God, applying them to yourself. **"I am blessed as a Son of God. I am happy, peaceful, loving and contented."** (W.40.3.4-5) or **"I am blessed as a Son of God. I am calm, quiet, assured and confident,"** (W.40.6.7-8) or any other words you can add such as radiant, full of love, serene, capable, unshakeable and totally worthy of love. We can even do this in situations that don't seem feasible at the moment. Let's dedicate this day to affirming the truth about ourselves.

Make this a blessed day! You are totally worthy of consistent peace and joy.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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