



LESSON 50
I am sustained by the Love of God.

Sarah's Commentary:

I am reminded today of the words we had inscribed for my father's funeral from Jeremiah 17.8: "For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit when he trusts the Lord and places his hope and confidence in Him."

We selected this passage for my father's funeral, because not only was he a tree farmer and planter, but also, he had overcome an amazing amount of adversity, escaping with his family from a war-torn country and thriving in spite of great odds.

This verse is very relevant to this Lesson. We are sustained, like the tree, by the water. We are constantly renewed, constantly supplied, and constantly nourished, and in truth, we are never in need of anything. This kind of inner stability and calm is available all the time when we turn to the truth within. With practice and commitment to our healing and awakening, we come to accept the truth of who we are as we were created. Of course, this requires we turn away from the voice of the ego, which never has our best interests at heart.

There are many things we turn to in the world to sustain us other than God. What do I turn to when I am feeling needy, sad, alone, and empty? Do I turn to God's Love or to food, money, pills, status, power, prestige, special relationships, control, attention, sleep, distraction, and all those things I give priority to in my life, because I think that is where my happiness lies? They are all things the Course calls idols which are substitutes for love. Are they bad? Of course not. All we are called to realize is that they cannot give us what we are seeking and are not the answer for our unhappiness.

"Let not their form deceive you. Idols are but substitutes for your reality. In some way, you believe they will complete your little self, for safety in a world perceived as dangerous, with forces massed against your confidence and peace of mind. They have the power to supply your lacks, and add the value that you do not have. No one believes in idols who has not enslaved himself to littleness and loss. And thus must seek beyond his little self for strength to raise his head, and stand apart from all the misery the world reflects. This is the penalty for looking not within for certainty and quiet calm that liberates you from the world, and lets you stand apart, in quiet and in peace." (T.29.VIII.2.1-7) (ACIM OE T.29.IX.53)

We believe these idols are the source of nourishment and support for us. We think if we found the right partner, we would not be lonely, or if we found the right job, our problems would be solved, or if we lost weight, our happiness would be assured. We have a long list of things in this world to

which we have given power and value. Jesus tells us they are mere symbols. They are trivial forms of nothingness we endow with meaning. Clearly, we are not to feel guilty about our special relationships, acquiring material things, or any other form of bodily or psychological sustenance. Neither are we being asked to give up anything. That would be a confusion of levels, as the Course calls them, where we confuse the level of the body and behavior with the level of the mind. Whatever we choose to do or not do, we are still innocent. Jesus is not asking us to let go of our bodily concerns, only to look at the thought system on which they are based and to recognize that when we put our faith in illusions, they will fail us. **"Put not your faith in illusions. They will fail you."** (W.50.4.1-2) In other words, we will not find peace and happiness we are looking for in them. Through the healing of the mind, we come to recognize our true identity, not as a body and unique separate self but as the dreamer of this dream. We come to recognize peace is an inner condition that has nothing to do with how things go in the world.

I was listening to a program about the beliefs held by Mormons and learned they wear sacred underwear they believe protects them. Looking at this from the outside, it seemed trivial to my mind, yet we all have idols to which we have given magical powers. They may be pills, food, knowing the right people, cars, clothes, careers, various icons, crystals, and all the things we consider important to our safety, well-being, and sustenance. Yet Jesus calls them all **"an endless list of forms of nothingness that we endow with magical powers."** (W.50.1.3) They are all **"cherished to ensure a body identification,"** (W.50.2.2) and **"songs of praise to the ego."** (W.50.2.3)

They are all replacements for the Love of God, which does sustain us. Developing the habit of turning to God's Love by bringing all our dark thoughts to the light of His truth assures us of something totally reliable. The special love we know in the world is tenuous and does not make us feel safe. It is a false substitute for the Love of God and is based on guilt and tinged with fear. Our worldly love is unreliable, constantly changing, takes a lot of effort to maintain, and does not bring the kind of safety and support reflected in this Lesson. We revert to people-pleasing in order to be liked and to see ourselves as worthy. The truth is that when we reveal our true feelings with vulnerability and authenticity, we start on the path of true healing. When there is no more hiding and protecting the false self, and the ego is exposed it leads to powerful healing. It is not about indulging the ego by putting excessive attention on it but simply coming out from hiding behind roles and concepts we hold about ourselves in order to try to stay safe. We are as God created us so there is no need to make up an image in order to be liked and accepted. While we are seemingly here, we are called to appear like everyone else, follow the laws of this world, but we hold a different mindset.

We come closest to love in this world through forgiveness and while not even close to how God loves us, it does offer us a reflection of that Love. Miracles are the closest we come to experiencing His Love in our lives. **"Miracles occur naturally as expressions of love. The real miracle is the love that inspires them. In this sense everything that comes from love is a miracle."** (T.1.I.3) Miracles are the effect of letting go of the blocks to love through forgiveness. Forgiveness is all about letting go of our demands, expectations, grievances, bargains, fantasies, and all the thoughts and beliefs that take up the space where Love resides in us. Idols can never fulfill us. All they do is distract us from the pain of our lives, and the biggest distraction of all, which Jesus calls the ego's most boasted gift, is the special relationship. That is why we constantly look for love outside ourselves. Yet God's Love is infinitely greater than anything we can imagine as being even close to the most powerful human love.

This reminds me of a recent interview I heard of a woman's near death experience. She had the experience of being out of her body, going through the tunnel to the light, and into the presence

of God. She was told she must go back, but she begged to stay, basking in the love. She said she had been a good mother and wife and was currently caring for cancer patients and had given a lot in life and did not want to return. The question put to her by the Being she called God was, "Yes, but have you loved the way you feel loved here?" She acknowledged she had not and agreed she had not really understood this kind of love in the roles she had undertaken in the world. She then returned willingly to her body to learn more about how she could experience this kind of love in the world. It is a powerful lesson for all of us. I have seen in my life how I have been very responsible in trying to be a good wife, mother, friend, and so on. But roles do not allow true giving, and the role can never truly receive. So, while I might be a good person, there is no true joy or real love shared through any role I have undertaken in the world.

The only way we can give love in the world is to be a demonstration of His Love in us. It requires that the blocks we put in the way be seen and brought to the light. These blocks may include roles we take on in our effort at being loving but they are based on fear, worry, and guilt. Becoming aware of how we block the love in us is what the practice of the Lessons is all about. This is what forgiveness is about. It sees the false as false. It is all about healing our own minds by bringing our perceived ego perspectives to awareness and asking for help in letting them go.

We are confronted with many difficulties in this world. The ego's purpose for all our problems is to keep us invested in them so all our attention will go into trying to solve them in form. Jesus encourages us to see, **"Through the Love of God within you, you can resolve all seeming difficulties without effort and in sure confidence."** (W.50.4.5) When our attention is focused on solving problems in our own way, we are trusting in our own strength. When we recognize the power of God's Love in us, we bring our interpretation of what we see as a problem to the light of His healing power. This is the only answer to every problem. When we try to solve problems in the world through the ego's guidance, we keep the problems, since they just show up again in a different form. The only true answer comes when the problem, which is always the guilt in the mind, is brought to the truth within.

Jesus gently guides us not to put our faith in illusions by trying to find happiness in the idols of this world. Illusions will always fail us. Most of us get that at some point. That is why we all experience disillusionment. Yet so often we still make the choice to rely on our own resources instead of asking to hear God's Voice and receive His guidance. Whatever confronts us today, let us remember the power of the Holy Spirit is in our minds. We can be released from the tyranny of the ego based on guilt, fear, feelings of worthlessness, self-hate and self-doubt. If we keep telling ourselves our story of how we are victims of the world, we will continue to buy into wrong-minded perceptions. Jesus calls this the dirge we sing to ourselves. Today, we are asked to acknowledge the truth of our reality and declare our release from the investment in the idols we have made to take the place of His Love. All idols are a substitute for our reality. He is asking us today to withdraw the faith we have invested in the illusion. Illusions will always fail us. (W.50.4.1-4) To put our faith in illusions is to put it in nothing.

Today, we look beyond our limitations and needs and recognize our only real sustenance is the Love of God. **"For ten minutes, twice today, morning and evening, let the idea for today sink deep into your consciousness. Repeat it, think about it, let related thoughts come to help you recognize its truth, and allow peace to flow over you like a blanket of protection and surety. Let no idle and foolish thoughts enter to disturb the holy mind of the Son of God."** (W.50.5.1-3)

Try to take this idea deep into your mind today. Let it sink into your consciousness so you can experience the truth of what is being said. Know that anything we focus on today where we think

our happiness lies in the world is false. True happiness can never come from these things. Be willing to look at your idle and foolish thoughts. When seen from above the battleground, we stand aside from the ego and can smile at its unreality. When the egoic thoughts are taken seriously, they do not seem foolish, for they hurt us and keep us in pain.

Today is a much longer practice and a new kind of practice where you **". . . allow peace to flow over you like a blanket of protection and surety,"** (W.50.5.2) by releasing the **". . . idle and foolish thoughts"** (W.50.5.3) that disturb the mind, so you might know the beautiful **". . . resting place where your Father has placed you forever."** (W.50.5.5) This is the experience of the **"Kingdom of Heaven."** (W.50.5.4) It comes about as a result of our **"declaration of release from the belief in idols."** (W.50.4.7)

Finally, use this Lesson whenever you are confronted by any problem, issue, or difficult situation during the day, reminding yourself that God is with you in this situation, and His Love is the Answer to whatever confronts you. **"Through the Love of God within you, you can resolve all seeming difficulties without effort and in sure confidence."** (W.50.4.5) Our seeming difficulties are always about the forms of this world, but the content of love never leaves our minds. If we don't feel it, it is only because we are blocking it from our awareness. Any event or situation we give power to take our peace is actually neutral. The interpretations we give to such events are what bring distress. Now we ask the Holy Spirit to reinterpret these events so we can see them through His loving eyes instead of through our own.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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