



LESSON 70 My salvation comes from me.

Sarah's Commentary:

We look outside ourselves to be saved. We look to relationships, jobs, money, medicines, gurus, and all kinds of idols for our salvation. We look to special people, circumstances, or activities to make us happy. It is all about trying to find happiness outside of ourselves. Yet Jesus tells us that the cause of any distress is within, and it all comes from the guilt in the mind. **"Salvation seems to come from anywhere except from you. So, too, does the source of guilt. You see neither guilt nor salvation as in your own mind and nowhere else."** (W.70.1.2-4) We tend to point to something or someone outside of ourselves as responsible for every problem we have. In our warped perception, our guilt is projected onto people and situations that we blame for our condition. In the same misguided way, we look for happiness in the world. Yet there is nothing outside of ourselves. It is all in our own mind.

What is salvation? We have some interesting connotations with regard to this word. Most of them are religious connotations, meaning we ultimately see ourselves saved from the wrath of hell or some other disastrous event or terrible punishment for our sins. However, the Course is clear that **"You are not saved from anything, but you are saved for glory."** (T.11.IV.1.4) (ACIM OE T.10.V.31) In this sense, our salvation is recognition of our true inheritance and accepting healing which is available when we are willing to release the thoughts that impede our recognition of the glorious Self we are.

The definition of salvation from the glossary of terms provided by the Circle of Atonement is:

"Being saved from the experience of separation from God, from guilt, and from all the human ills that come from separation and guilt. Comes through the Holy Spirit's healing of our minds. Our spirit was never lost and so need not be saved. Forgiveness affirms this; it makes way for salvation by recognizing that who we are was never lost and that all that impedes salvation is unreal. Salvation is thus an illusion, but one that brings the end of illusions. The ego's plan for salvation is attack, which it promises will make us safe and obtain for us idols and special relationships. Yet this really brings guilt and self-punishment. The ego ascribes this punishment to God, saying that this is how He saves and that His salvation should thus be feared. In this way the ego seeks to save itself from God."

In other words, salvation and forgiveness are synonymous in the Course; both are illusions, as there is nothing to forgive and nothing to be saved from. Thus, they are illusory concepts but very valuable in that they end all illusion.

Jesus says, **"Salvation is a promise, made by God, that you would find your way to Him at last. It cannot but be kept. It guarantees that time will have an end, and all the thoughts that have been born in time will end as well. God's Word is given every**

mind which thinks that it has separate thoughts, and will replace these thoughts of conflict with the Thought of peace." (W.PII.Q2.1-4) Thus, salvation is a certainty because it is already given and already in our minds, awaiting our acceptance.

Jesus says we are all tempted to believe there is something "out there," outside our own minds, that will save us. This is the same as the belief that something outside of us is the cause of our guilt. Jesus tells us both guilt and salvation are only in our own minds. We are saved when we understand we have the power in our minds to choose to condemn and judge, or to forgive. In other words, we choose murder or the miracle, guilt or salvation. We are not the victims of the world we see, nor are we at the mercy of the world or of anyone or anything for our salvation. It is all up to us. No one is coming to save us. The Answer is within us. **"You are free from all external interference. You are in charge of your salvation."** (W.70.10.2-3) This is good news! It makes us totally responsible for our condition and allows us to recognize the power within us.

Why are we afraid to hear this? We are afraid because at some deep level of the unconscious, we believe we misused this power when we chose to separate from our Source. It was our first experience of seeming change, and it was an experience of terror. We don't want to be responsible for what we believe we have done. We project the burden of guilt in the mind onto others over the choice we made to separate. Now we have reversed cause and effect. No longer wanting to see ourselves responsible for the separation, we made the world the cause of how we feel. Now we see ourselves as the effect of circumstances seemingly beyond our control. We see ourselves as powerless victims of the world; but Jesus tells us, **"Today's idea places you in charge of the universe, where you belong because of what you are. This is not a role that can be partially accepted. And you must surely begin to see that accepting it is salvation."** (W.70.2.3-5)

What is it that Jesus wants us to see? He is asking us to take responsibility for the decisions we make in every instant. When we choose to judge and condemn, we are again choosing separation. This same choice we make over and over was initially made when we seemed to separate from totality. Since we are the ones who made that choice in the first place, we are the ones who can commit to healing the mind through the choices we make in each situation confronting us. Separation was a choice made by the decision-maker in the mind but now we can choose to correct the original error. We must be vigilant in watching our minds for the temptation to blame and attack. In every situation, where we are tempted to believe that others are responsible for our condition, we can choose to accept responsibility and ask for help to see it differently. As we accept that it all comes from our own minds we can make another choice.

"The seeming cost of accepting today's idea is this: It means that nothing outside yourself can save you; nothing outside yourself can give you peace." (W.70.2.1) The idea that there is no one to save us can be daunting. If the power is within, it is up to us to save ourselves. It does not mean we don't have help. Jesus says, **"If it helps you, think of me holding your hand and leading you. And I assure you this will be no idle fantasy."** (W.70.9.3-4) I love that, and find great solace in this thought. I also find strength in the idea that we can't do this alone, and we need to join with others including Jesus. He is a symbol of the strength within us and a very helpful one to rely on as he understands our experience. We not only have Jesus but mighty companions to hold our hands and remind us of the truth about ourselves when we forget.

While help is available through Jesus and others, we have to make the decision to receive that help. He makes this very clear when he says, **"You may still complain about fear, but you**

nevertheless persist in making yourself fearful." (T.2.VII.1.1) (ACIM OE T.2.V.93) He says that we can't ask him to release us from our fear because we are the ones who made it. While he is there to help us, it is up to us to identify our fearful thoughts and bring them to the truth. He goes on to say, **"I know it [fear] does not exist, but you do not. If I intervened between your thoughts and their results, I would be tampering with a basic law of cause and effect; the most fundamental law there is. I would hardly help you if I depreciated the power of your own thinking. This would be in direct opposition to the purpose of this course."** (T.2.VII.1.3-6) (ACIM OE T.2.V.93) *Wow!* That should get our attention. We now see how fundamental this law of cause and effect is and why it comes so early in our reading of the Text!

What he is saying is that our minds are as powerful as his and it is in our power to save ourselves. The Lesson goes on to say, **"Today's idea places you in charge of the universe, where you belong because of what you are."** (W.70.2.3) This can seem daunting but we are invited to accept this function wholly. It can be a demanding role as there is a lot of resistance in us. The final Lesson of the Holy Spirit urges us to, **"Be vigilant only for God and the Kingdom."** (T.6.V.C.2.8) (ACIM OE T.6.V.c.85) Until we practice vigilance, our minds will be in conflict, with part of the mind looking for happiness in the things of the world and projecting guilt while another part of the mind professing a desire for peace.

Salvation is the process of translating the nightmare of this world into the happy dream as we release our thoughts of distress and allow the Holy Spirit to undo the guilt in our minds. The world is our classroom for this. Every morning we ready our minds for this purpose so we can use every circumstance in the day as an opportunity to take responsibility for the way we interpret every situation. We have all kinds of opportunities to watch our thoughts and release our judgments. Be content with this learning. There is no need for impatience and self-flagellation. It is all a perfect karmic learning environment. We are going at the pace our fear will allow in undoing our misperceptions about everything. It is a process where we are shifting responsibility for how we feel from anything outside of ourselves to seeing everything as a product of our own minds.

In Chapter 16, we are reminded to **"Fear not that you will be abruptly lifted and hurled into reality"** (T.16.VI.8.1) (ACIM OE T.16.VII.65) because that would be terrifying to us. We are exactly in the right place and in the right situation for our learning going no faster than our fear will allow. It is all perfectly orchestrated by our own minds from outside this dream. We get exactly what we need for our awakening. We may feel we should be further along in our spiritual journey after many years of study. We get impatient and critical of ourselves. We blame others or our circumstances for our condition. We think that if things were different, if we had a different partner, a better group, a spiritual center, a retreat to go to, a better guru/teacher, more time, less work, or fewer responsibilities, we would be further along in our journey and have more peace. When we complain, it just affirms what this Lesson says. We think that if things were different, we could have more peace. Remind yourself when you are tempted to think this way, **"My salvation cannot come from any of these things. My salvation comes from me and only from me."** (W.70.7.7-8)

The ego tells us to look for our salvation where it can't be found, and we have paid attention and tried to find it **"...in other people, in possessions, in various situations and events, and in self-concepts that you sought to make real."** (W.70.7.5) Isn't that what our lives have been about? Our sources for salvation have been in special relationships, status, money, safety, and material things, all because we thought that if we could just rearrange all the externals (clouds) exactly right, we would be happy, but it has never worked. Has it? Oh yes, there have been some temporary pleasures and even some periods of happiness, but they don't last and come

with their share of pain and fear. Now we learn that all this external seeking for happiness has been designed by the ego to keep our sickness intact.

It is all about the script given us by the to seek but never find. When we realize this, it loses some of its appeal. It has all been about ". . . **making every attempt, however distorted and fantastic it might be, to separate healing from the sickness for which it was intended, and thus keep the sickness.**" (W.70.4.1) In other words it must always be to bring the problem to the only Answer which is not what the ego does. External seeking can never be the answer to any problem. Yes, there may be temporary fixes, but the problem will just return in another form. We will continue to seek and yet continue to suffer, which is the purpose of the ego—to keep us distracted. We keep looking for the answers in the world, where they can never be found.

Jesus assures us, God's Will and ours are the same. He wants our healing, and we don't want to be sick. We want the same thing. He is trying to overturn our bias, which is that God is not part of our happiness, and we will have to sacrifice our "pleasures" if we choose salvation. His plan seems to be a threat to our happiness because we believe it involves sacrifice. As long as we believe we can be helped and made happy by something other than God, we won't be convinced that we share God's Will. When we start to get that nothing outside of our own minds can bring us happiness, then our motivation is enhanced to end the misery and pain and commit more fully to the study and practice of this Course.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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