



LESSON 79

Let me recognize the problem so it can be solved.

Sarah's Commentary:

Jesus tells us that no matter how we experience our many and varied problems, "**Yet they are all the same, and must be recognized as one if the one solution that solves them all is to be accepted.**" (W.79.2.2) To us, problems seem very different from each other. Some seem large and others small; some seem to need one kind of approach, while others need to be solved in other ways. "**A long series of different problems seems to confront you, and as one is settled the next one and the next arise. There seems to be no end to them.**" (W.79.3.3-4) Our lives here are an endless series of problems, both physical and psychological. We are constantly attending to our bodily needs, health, safety, security, as well as addressing our interpersonal issues. These problems create a continual distraction for us. From our perspective, "**There is no time in which you feel completely free of problems and at peace.**" (W.79.3.5)

Jesus says something quite startling right off the bat in this Lesson, when we read, "**A problem cannot be solved if you don't know what it is.**" (W.79.1.1) We think we do know what our problems are. We have no difficulty listing a long series of problems confronting us at this moment, so how do we interpret what he is telling us? Clearly, we see our problems as external. They seem to be caused by people, events, and circumstances in the world, and that is where we put our attention. Regardless of the problem we have, there is always someone or something to blame. Jesus tells us, "**Even if it is really solved already you will still have the problem, because you will not recognize that it has been solved.**" (W.79.1.2) We still have the problem because it is not external to us, even though we see it that way. Every problem has a cause in the mind. The only problem we have is that we have made a decision to separate from love. With that decision, we made a body and a world to distract us from the one and only real problem we have, which is the belief in sin and guilt that come with the choice for separation. That guilt says we deserve punishment, and it is delivered via our many problems and difficulties in the world.

As soon as the problem of separation seemed to have arisen, the Answer was given in the same instant. The Answer is the Holy Spirit in our right minds. The Holy Spirit is the memory of God we took into the dream when we seemed to fall asleep to who we really are. Thus, "**The problem of separation, which is really the only problem, has already been solved.**" (W.79.1.4) We won't realize this is the case while we stay asleep in the dream and are still uncertain of what the real problem is. We still have a hard time believing there is only one real problem we need to address when we feel inundated with a variety of problems. We still resist the idea there is only one problem, and that it has already been solved. "**You have the answer, but you are still uncertain about what the problem is.**" (W.79.3.2) Our uncertainty is the resistance we have to the truth. We resist this teaching because we think we know what our problems are and we are

reluctant to admit we don't know. The mind that thinks it knows will not be open to the truth. We believe we know better than what Jesus is telling us. It is the 'yes but' thought that keeps us in a state of doubt. We reflect on the problems confronting us and conclude he just does not understand our situation.

Problems have a purpose in our lives, which is to keep us invested in the world with our attention constantly focused outside. They keep us very invested in the dream. If the answer is the miracle, what is required is to take whatever we see as a problem, whether loss, lack, jealousy, or sickness, back into the mind and put it on the inner altar for healing. This is the only place where the Answer is and thus the only place the problem can be solved. As long as we keep trying to address our problems by thinking we can solve them through our own efforts and see them as outside of ourselves, we reinforce the belief that we are the victims of circumstances beyond our control. That is what the ego is invested in having us see because it keeps the separation going.

The ego would have us see the cause of our distress as outside our own minds; so we never go back into our minds where the real problem is. Now cause and effect are separate. When we accept that the only cause of any problem we have is the guilt in our minds, we recognize where the solution is as well. The truth regarding any problem we seem to have is that nothing real has occurred. We need not take anything seriously. Yes, you will experience situations you deem to be problems, but "**You cannot understand the conflict until you fully understand the basic fact that the ego cannot know anything.**" (T.6.IV.3.1) (ACIM OE T.6.V.47) Its version of events is always wrong because it always looks to the world as cause and yourself as the effect. It is invested in seeing that we remain victims of the world we see.

The ego's existence depends on keeping us in the dark about the nature of the true source of our problems---the guilt in our minds. The belief that we have sinned and therefore should feel guilty came as a result of our belief that we could separate from God. We have bought into this myth of the ego. Now its existence depends on keeping our focus on the screen of this world, which keeps us from recognizing the truth about ourselves. When we finally accept the Atonement [healing] for ourselves, the ego game is over. With our investment in the world, we believe in the drama of our lives. We have taken various events and woven them together into a story, which we think explains who we are. We keep this story of our lives going until we recognize that we have given meaning to the meaningless.

Jesus tells us that the "problem" must be recognized exactly as it is [in the mind] and not as it seems to be [specific in form]. All spiritual practice aims at this one recognition. Linear time was made to deny this one simple recognition that the only reality is the eternal *now* where peace resides. Problems invite us to throw away the peace that is always available to us because it is already in us. Difficult situations in our lives become the excuse we give for our lack of peace. The truth is that we can have peace regardless of what is going on around us.

Even though the problem of separation has already been solved, we don't experience that this is the case. Instead, we see all our myriad problems as special and unique to us. "**Yet they are all the same, and must be recognized as one if the one solution that solves them all is to be accepted.**" (W.79.2.2) There is no order of difficulty in the illusion, meaning that there are no big problems and small problems. While we seem to be looking for specific answers to the problems that we have determined need attention, we don't hear the answer from the Holy Spirit because we ask for answers to problems we don't have.

For example, I might be having a problem with my partner because he gets very involved with his work and seems not to give me the attention I want. If I try to change the situation by manipulating

him, trying to change him, or throwing guilt at him, I may get a behavioral change, but nothing will have changed in my mind, except now the guilt, sadness, loneliness, and distress that I feel in my separated state never gets solved. Yet when I go within, the answer I get from the Holy Spirit is to recognize that the feelings are mine alone and that this is where the healing must be. When I choose to release my grievances about this problem and thus to join with my brother, I will see his innocence regardless of his behavior. The miracle has now shifted my perception.

There seems to be no end to the different kinds of problems that confront us. Yet Jesus says, "**The temptation to regard problems as many is the temptation to keep the problem of separation unsolved.**" (W.79.4.1) It seems to us that each problem is unique and requires a different answer. We spend a lot of time figuring out what to do in each situation. With this perception, no wonder our problem solving is "**inadequate, and failure is inevitable.**" (W.79.4.3) In the world, clearly, no one is up to the job of solving all the problems. In fact, it seems that the more our problems seem to get solved in the world, the more complex they become. Thus, we seem to be confronted by an impossible situation, leaving us feeling dismayed and depressed about everything we need to deal with here. Some of these problems seem very apparent and "**Others remain unsolved under a cloud of denial, and rise to haunt you from time to time, only to be hidden again but still unsolved.**" (W.79.5.5) Problems are thus a distraction to keep the game of this world going and keep us from looking at the fundamental questions of our lives---What am I? What is my purpose? Where am I going?

The world was set up so we would always experience inadequacy and failure in solving problems because they are actually unsolvable. They are insolvable because, as said earlier, we don't know what the problem is, and even if we solve some of our perceived problems, they will still be there in another form! That explains why it is so frustrating. We are told that the answer to all of our problems is given us, but we don't see how this can possibly relate to the problems that seem to confront us daily. Until we see that what we really want is to know the truth of who we are as unlimited beings of light and love, we will think that what we want is to solve the problems of our bodily existence in order to be happy. Thus, we will put all our attention there, whether it is to try to get a better job, find the right relationship, or make more money. All these activities are fine, except our peace and happiness are not found there, and ultimately, that is what we are looking for.

When we try to solve problems on our own, we may address the symptoms for the time being, but the real problem is never solved and another problem shows up in its place. Problems in the world are never ending. We generally feel worn down and depleted by the attempts at continual problem solving until we turn inward to where the Answer has always been, waiting for us. When I know that I am safe no matter what is going on in my life, when I humbly surrender my way and turn to Him, and when I look for the peace that is always there within, I can approach every problem and situation in my life from a place of trust. It is a knowing that no matter what seems to be happening, I am safe in the loving embrace in which we are all held. A problem is only a problem if I define it that way. It truly can be seen as a neutral event with no meaning except the one I give it. It is an opportunity to look to the Holy Spirit, rather than to the ego, for the answer. Thus, when we turn to the Holy Spirit, we can receive the answer when we are willing to take responsibility for the grievance that underlies every problem. When we are willing to take responsibility without blaming ourselves, we can then receive the miracle. Since every problem is the same (separation), every solution is the same (Atonement). We are always reminded of the first principle of miracles: "**There is no order of difficulty in miracles.**" (T.1.I.1.1) (ACIM OE T.1.I.1)

Jesus recognizes this is not easy for us to take in. And so, in this Lesson, we are asked to start by simply doubting the way we currently see things. "**Perhaps you will not succeed in letting all your preconceived notions go, but that is not necessary. All that is necessary is to entertain some doubt about the reality of your version of what your problems are.**" (W.79.8.2-3) Later, he says, "**Whenever any difficulty seems to rise, tell yourself quickly: Let me recognize this problem so it can be solved. Then try to suspend all judgment about what the problem is.**" (W.79.10.3) Thus, we are asked to keep an open mind, which is to recognize our judgments are always wrong.

At least, I can do that much. I find that if I just step away from how I have defined the problem, loosen my grip on the way I see it, and tell myself I really don't have the foggiest notion of what it is all about, I can let myself consider there might be another way to think about what is in front of me. I realize I have no ability to see all sides of it. My view of any problem is limited by my faulty perceptions. I can then ask the Holy Spirit to help me see differently, and help comes in amazing ways. It comes as prompts, ideas, people showing up, and synchronistic events, all of which reflect a change in my mind. I recognize these symbols of outward conditions reflect the shift in my mind from fear and doubt to trust. All we are doing is taking small steps daily to release the grip that fear has on our minds. One of these steps is to do nothing when there is uncertainty. I have personally lived in a state of not knowing for two years until the answer came. I am grateful I did not push for a decision as the ego seemed to require. Waiting in the state of not knowing and trusting the answer would be given, resulted in great certainty. With the ego, there is never any certainty.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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