



LESSON 186
Salvation of the world depends on me.

Sarah's Commentary:

Clearly, to our minds, the idea that the "**Salvation of the world depends on me**" (W.186) sounds more than a little arrogant. Yet Jesus says that it is not a statement of arrogance at all. In fact, "**Here is the statement that will one day take all arrogance away from every mind.**" (W.186.1.1) And this is because acceptance of the statement undoes the thought of separation. We believe that we have separated from God, but it is an arrogant belief that we are holding in the mind because it is not the truth. It is the belief that we have made ourselves and our bodies and that we are living in the world and in a state of separation from God. When we humbly accept that we have been wrong about all of this, we become willing to learn our true reality. We learn what we are in truth through the undoing of specialness. We can only know our holiness by forgiving our specialness. And by being willing to look honestly at our roles and concepts of who we think we are and bringing them to the light of truth, we come to know the Self we are. Each healed mind saves the world because God's Son is One and the world is saved as the separation that gave rise to it is undone.

We all share the same function of forgiveness, but the forms will be different for each of us. The people and events in our lives are part of our script, and they play various roles in our lives so we can learn to forgive. While the forms vary for each of us, the content of forgiveness is the same for all of us. We have been mistaken about ourselves and have identified with the ego. Now the concepts associated with the ego and the roles we play can be released through forgiveness.

The ego, though it is nothing but a thought, seems powerful to us. We think it is almost impossible to set it aside. Jesus tells us, "**The means are given us by which it** [our function of forgiveness] **will be perfectly accomplished.**" (W.186.2.4) Thus, while we think the challenge is too big for us, Jesus assures us that we can learn what he is teaching us. Our arrogance prevents us from accepting this belief. Each of us who heals our mind heals the Sonship because there is just One Mind.

We resist our function, as it is an affront to the image of ourselves that we think we are. Yet Jesus suggests, "**Let us not fight our function. We did not establish it. It is not our idea.**" (W.186.2.2-3) To surrender all of this to God requires "**genuine humility,**" (W.186.2.5) and to deny that we are worthy of undertaking what has been assigned to us is arrogance. It is not up to us to be the judge of our worthiness. This Lesson reminds us that the truth is already fully present in our minds, and we are worthy because of who we are as God's Son. Thus, "**Our minds are suited perfectly to take the part assigned to us by One Who knows us well.**" (W.186.2.7)

In our arrogance, we try to deny this by thinking that we are too small to undertake what is being asked of us. We feel unworthy of the task, or alternatively, we believe that the ego is too enormous

and too difficult to set aside. This keeps us believing that the Course is too difficult to learn. We often have a lot of fear and resistance to undoing our investment in the separate self. **"All false humility we lay aside today, that we may listen to God's Voice reveal to us what He would have us do."** (W.186.4.1) When we listen to our own voice, we feel inadequate and unworthy. Through forgiveness, we learn that the light of Christ is in us, so there is nothing to seek. The world is saved because there is no world. When the mind accepts the truth through the process of forgiveness, the world disappears. The world was established through our decision to separate, so when separation is undone, the world is undone.

As long as we are still here, there is work to be done. It is to release our plans and accept the plan we did not make. Our plans all involve maintaining the ego by seeing guilt and sin in the world and seeing ourselves as innocent victims. Now we are asked to look at what we are thinking and believing and recognize how it brings us pain. Jesus asks us to look honestly at our lives and assess our experiences here. He asks us to recognize how miserable we are and reminds us that we have another choice, which is to accept the Correction (Atonement) already in our minds. We do this by bringing our thoughts and perspectives to the Holy Spirit in our minds. It requires that we look at what we have chosen without judging ourselves for the choices we have made. We are not the ones to fix ourselves, as we created the problem. Only willingness is required to give the problem over to the Holy Spirit. He is the healer in our minds. We cannot do it without the power of His Holiness.

We all struggle with feelings of unworthiness, but again and again, we are assured of what we are. Jesus is not asking too much of us. When I am relying on my own strength, I do not feel up to what I am called to do, whether in writing these Course commentaries, facilitating the Course groups, or knowing how to respond to a difficult situation in any moment. I find myself fearful of judgment, and I will sometimes look for a way not to undertake what is mine to do. Inadequacy shows up in numerous ways. I compare myself as not as brilliant, not as enlightened, and not as insightful as others. Clearly, the ego is keeping me in fear of my function. It is a function given me by God, and now Jesus tells me, **"Accept the plan you did not make."** (W.186.5.2) He wants me to do this, instead of clinging to my own plan, which is to prove that the false is true. Jesus tells us that this is the only way we will be released from our own self-imposed imprisonment. (W.186.5.1) What keeps us imprisoned is our insistence on the reality of our experience here.

Our plan miscreated a world where we project our sin and guilt onto others and make them responsible for our pain. This can all be undone when we are ready to look on what we have made and choose to take responsibility for our decisions. The choice is always in front of us in every situation--to choose Heaven or hell, the problem or the Answer. It requires that we surrender our way, recognizing that we have been wrong about everything we think and believe. It is to step into our greatness by fully undertaking our function. Yes, fear will arise when we do not feel up to our function and when we insist that we are not what Jesus assures us we are. Jesus urges us not to take these thoughts seriously. Yes, doubts and feelings of inadequacy will come up, yet we can dismiss such foolish thoughts. **"We do not doubt our adequacy for the function He will offer us. We will be certain only that He knows our strengths, our wisdom and our holiness. And if He deems us worthy, so we are. It is but arrogance that judges otherwise."** (W.186.4.2-4)

We each have a function in form based on our strengths and skills and talents, but again, the content is always the same. The content is forgiveness and the function is to follow the Teacher and Guide Who is outside of this dream that we are dreaming. What we are given to do in this world is to love: **"For Love must give, and what is given in His Name takes on the form most useful in a world of form."** (W.186.13.5) Whatever we are called to do in the world, the

function we all share is still forgiveness. **"Forgiveness is an earthly form of love, which as it is in Heaven has no form. Yet what is needed here is given here as it is needed. In this form you can fulfill your function even here, although what love will mean to you when formlessness has been restored to you is greater still."** (W.186.14.2-4)

Forgiveness is what takes us beyond words to an experience where the plan that we established is questioned. Our plan was to make others responsible for our condition and to prove that the false is true. Our plan is to be in control of our own lives. The ego tells us to hold grievances, attack others, serve our special needs, make others responsible for our pain, and see ourselves as the innocent victims of what others have done. To open to a new experience of transcendence, we must let go of the thoughts, the roles, and the self-concepts that we see as the truth about ourselves. Jesus tells us that we have the strength. We are not weak and helpless. No matter what we think about ourselves, nothing can change the truth. We are holy, and misery cannot touch this holy home where we abide. We will not know this until the work of undoing the false is complete, but we must be gentle with ourselves, as it is a process. Forgiveness does not require us to achieve healing any faster than we are prepared to go, and if we choose to delay, it is not a sin.

To accept the image of who we think we are is to accept instability. **"Our self-made roles are shifting, and they seem to change from mourner to ecstatic bliss of love and loving. We can laugh or weep, and greet the day with welcome or with tears. Our very being seems to change as we experience a thousand shifts in mood, and our emotions raise us high indeed, or dash us to the ground in hopelessness."** (W.186.8.3-5) Jesus assures us that this instability is not our reality. We are, indeed, changeless. We are consistently loved and loving. How is this possible when, much of the time, I see myself other than that? We are assured that since this world is just a dream, nothing we have done has had any real effects on anyone. **"All the images His Son appears to make have no effect on what he is. They blow across his mind like wind-swept leaves that form a patterning an instant, break apart to group again, and scamper off. Or like mirages seen above a desert, rising from the dust."** (W.186.9.4-6) When we awaken from the dream, these images will seem no more real than when we awaken from our night-time dreams that seem so real when we are dreaming them.

Letting go of the images that we have made allows the experience of truth to rush in. There is no room for this in the "I know" mind. We need to clear the slate for the Holy Spirit. The slate is now so crowded with thoughts and occupied with our plans that there is no place for silence. Only in the silence can truth enter. There is still an attraction to misery, shame, secrets, and dramas of all kinds in our lives. The reward the ego gets for its self-inflicted pain is that it reinforces the idea of victimhood, which the ego relishes. We would give it all up if there were no juice in our story and no victory for the conqueror nor the victim. Does such a thought arouse anger or defensiveness? This Lesson says, **"And as He speaks, the image trembles and seeks to attack the threat it does not know, sensing its basis crumble."** (W.186.7.2)

Yes, we are afraid that if we let it go, we will be left in shambles. The part of the mind that identifies with the ego senses the threat and is terrified. Our thousand shifting moods tell us how unstable our foundation really is. This image of ourselves that we identify with is a pile of dust. It knows nothing of the Son of God. When we say we cannot undertake the function that we have been given, we are speaking from the image because the truth is that we are perfectly suited to undertake whatever we are called to do. We are called to follow our prompts and step into our function fully. When we undertake it, our true Self breaks through the image and shows us a glimpse of our true nature.

It is appealing to think about exchanging our conflicting, uncertain, ambiguous, and changing goals for the new and fresh experience of constancy and certainty. In our ego identity, there is no constancy. We shift from one thing to another and our lives are filled with ambiguity, uncertainty, impermanence, and vagueness. There is nothing appealing about living in uncertainty and doubt. **"The functions which the world esteems are so uncertain that they change ten times an hour at their most secure."** (W.186.10.4) Can you see this in your own life, as you go from one thing to another, checking out the computer, planning dinner, watering the plants, paying bills, washing the car, and undertaking the business of the day? At ten times an hour, he considers this secure! Chances are that if we monitored our activity in an hour, we are perhaps changing our functions as much as thirty times an hour! **"What hope of gain can rest on goals like this?"** (W.186.10.5) When we recognize that we have been wrong and that our Teacher is right, we can accept His plan and function, which reflects the perfect unity of the Self we are. It does not mean that we don't do things in the world, but it does mean that we always ask first so we can be guided in what we are doing and which mindset with which we do it.

God gives us a purpose. Our lives are not to be just a list of shifting, playful, or work-focused activities that the world esteems. We are being called to a purpose-driven life. Unlike our own shifting functions, what He assigns us **". . . stands out clear and wholly unambiguous,"** (W.186.11.1). Jesus assures us, we can attain the function given us. We are literally given a command, **"Do as God's Voice directs. And if It asks a thing of you which seems impossible, remember Who it is that asks, and who would make denial."** (W.186.12.1-2) Who is likely to be right? God or me? What does this confused image of me really know? Can it ever get anything right? Can it ever know everything to ensure total success when it is indeed **"a distorted image . . . bewildered, inconsistent and unsure of everything?"** (W.186.12.4) We have tried to take the power unto ourselves and claim ourselves to be God, manifesting what we think we want, but can this image manifest anything, coming from this bewildered, uncertain state? Does it know what will bring it happiness? Would it not be better to attend to this Lesson, willingly admitting that we do not know our own best interests and allowing ourselves to trust the One Who does Know? He wants to offer us our function, and He has provided the means for us to achieve it, assuring us that we cannot fail.

Our particular, specific relationships in the world have been given us as our curriculum so we can be restored to Heaven. As we practice forgiveness, we are surrendering our way of seeing and understanding and demonstrating a willingness to be taught. As the image is being undone, we experience fear and feelings of inadequacy, but we rely not on our own adequacy. **"It comes from One Who knows no error, and His Voice is certain of Its messages. They will not change, nor be in conflict. All of them point to one goal, and one you can attain."** (W.186.11.3-5) There can be no failure with God. Thus, our single-minded purpose is what unifies our goals. We are called now to listen and to **"Do as God's Voice directs."** (W.186.12.1) We will be uncertain at times and wonder if we are up to what we are being called to do, but Jesus asks us to **"remember Who it is that asks, and who would make denial."** (W.186.12.2)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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