



Lesson 13 A meaningless world engenders fear.

Sarah's Commentary:

Yesterday, the focus of the Lesson was on the upset we experience when we see the world as meaningless. Today, Jesus tells us that not only are we upset by the experience of seeing a meaningless world, but that it brings up fear in us. It terrifies us because it threatens our very existence. We feel threatened because if we are our thoughts and those thoughts mean nothing, then we are meaningless, and we don't exist. That is why we put our meaning on everything. It affirms and maintains our existence as a separate self.

We are terrified of a clean slate, because "**The memory of God comes to the quiet mind.**" (T.23.I.1.1) (ACIM OE T.23.II.7) Our minds are constantly chewing on thoughts because we are not ready for the truth. We are still hanging onto beliefs about what we made. What we made is a separate self, a body, a personality, a self-concept, and a world. We value the concepts we hold. We value our individuality, our uniqueness, and our specialness. When Jesus says that meaninglessness arouses intense anxiety, it is because "**God and the ego 'challenge' each other as to whose meaning is to be written in the empty space meaninglessness provides.**" (W.13.2.3) Thus, we are in competition with God and work to establish that we are what we say we are.

Of course, God does not compete with the ego, which is why the word "challenge" is in quotes; but we compete with God as long as we identify with the ego, which we all do. Yet while we choose to challenge God, He simply is. He does not know of our challenge. It is like the sun that just keeps shining and is oblivious of the challenge.

When the Son made the decision to go off on His own, our separate existence was established. If we are to exist, then God can't exist. If in fact God were all there is, then we don't exist. It is a case of one or the other; God or me. Our existence has come at the expense of Oneness. Both God and I can't both exist. Now, I bring this mindset of competition to everything in the world. For me to gain, you must lose. I am now in competition with everyone whom I see as trying to take something from me. There can be no trust in this kind of relationship. Others are seen to hurt us, abandon us, betray us, destroy us, disappoint us, and want to gain at our expense. It is a thought system that starts in our own minds. Yet when I project what is in my own mind onto others, I now see it as if it were outside my mind. I see others doing to me what I am doing myself. Instead of loving my brother, I now fear what he will take from me or do to hurt me. Because of our sense of vulnerability, we build protection around ourselves.

In the previous Lesson, we were being convinced of the meaninglessness of everything we see. This Lesson goes further to say that meaninglessness does not actually exist. In fact, it is the same idea as in the Introduction to the Course, which says, "**Nothing unreal exists.**" (T.IN.2.3) (ACIM OE T.IN.4) What we see, which is made by the ego, is actually unreal. It is nothing. It does

not exist. It is all just a projection of our fear thoughts. We can conclude that the world of form really does not exist, which does not mean "... **you will not think you perceive something that has no meaning.**" (W.13.1.4) We don't want to accept that what we see has no meaning. Again, if it is not there and yet I see it, I would have to admit I am wrong about everything.

Behind these thoughts, God's meaning exists. God's meaning is Truth. It is love, peace, and joy. As an example, today I experienced what felt to me like an attack. I saw something that was not there. I gave meaning to the communication and determined it was an attack. If I were really open to seeing God's meaning, I would see beyond the attack and only see the call for love. However, I allowed myself to believe that my interpretation and my judgment of the situation was correct. I was seeing my own projected thoughts of attack; otherwise, I would have had no reaction to the perceived attack. As Jesus reminds us, "**You never hate your brother for his sins, but only for your own. Whatever form his sins appear to take, it but obscures the fact that you believe them to be yours, and therefore meriting a 'just' attack.**" (T.31.III.1.5-6) (ACIM OE T.31.III.26)

Rather than taking responsibility for my own attack thoughts, I chose to be right in my assessment of the situation and what I believed others were doing to me. I want to be right about how I see this person so I can see them as guilty, and I can see myself as the innocent victim of their attack. I am challenging God's assessment that there is only innocence. This comes from the original competition that we set up with God, telling Him He is wrong about us, and we are right about who our brother is and who we are.

Of course, we are not aware of this competition. We have buried this idea deep in our minds. We have used the world to cover our fear of God. We "... **endow the world with attributes that it does not possess, and crowd it with images that do not exist.**" (W.13.3.2) This is our defense against the truth. We protect our illusions and believe they keep us safe. While I say that I want to know my eternal Self, there is fear in this thought. It is the fear that if I give God total reign over my life, I will no longer be in control. I don't trust what He will do with what I value. Through our practice of the Lessons, our fear is being released. The beliefs and values we hold keep us in a state of suffering, attack, fear, and anger, with only fleeting experiences of peace. To heal is to question everything we currently believe and value.

We keep ourselves safe by undertaking many trivial things, always filling up any empty space with many busy doings and distractions. We get preoccupied with problems that can't be solved. We spend our lives on trivial pursuits. We become spiritual seekers. We make judgments about everything and everyone we see. Why? We do this because we fear that when we withdraw our meaning, God's meaning will be revealed. Of course, this is not conscious, but it is there nevertheless. We can see the dynamic of busyness and competition with everyone in our own lives, always justifying why we need to do what we are doing.

I have a friend who is in his eighties and has spent the last forty years of his life recording the daily temperature for every day of those forty years with a note of what he did that day. We all do some version of this, filling up our time reading the news, going to movies, watching sports, memorizing insignificant data, texting messages, researching our family tree, and playing games. All this activity consumes a lot of time and may interest us somewhat, but have you asked yourself, "What is it for?" Have you considered you might just be trying to beat God to the punch by inserting your own meaning into this empty space? It does not make these activities wrong, nor are you guilty because you engage in them. It is only about purpose. Either everything is for awakening from the dream or for maintaining the illusion.

Jesus tells us that we believe there is some emptiness or lack in us that we feel we need to fill "**... with your own ideas instead of the truth.**" (T.2.I.1.7) (ACIM OE T.2.I.5) Our own ideas are what keep God's truth away from us. As we rush in to put our meaning onto everything and fill every void with that meaning, we are beating God to the punch.

Our "I know" mind puts meaning on everything, rather than staying open and allowing the truth to be revealed to us. Think about what happens when you meet someone and immediately make an impression of who that person is. When we make a judgment, it is again an example of how we beat God to the punch. Thus, we don't ask what is the meaning of this brother I behold? We think we know, and we think we are right. We want to be right because it is how we maintain our personal power. We think this makes us important and special.

When you are doing these Lessons, "**You may find it difficult to avoid resistance, in one form or another.**" (W.13.5.1) What might that resistance look like? We might feel anger. We might avoid doing the Lesson. We might "forget" the Lesson. We might get a headache, feel sick, or get sleepy; or, we may start looking for something to eat. There are any number of ways that resistance shows up. These are all fear thoughts and can be traced back to our fear of God. Clearly, this is not conscious, but it is the origin of all our fears. It is because of this fear in the mind that we give meaning to the world. We insist our meaning is correct. While we hold our views, we have temporarily defeated God. In that defeat, we are now fearful, believing we will experience His wrath. We fear it is a competition for survival. Who will prevail---God or me? While we think that our fear comes from events and situations in the world, the cause is actually held within our own minds. Thus, mind is the cause of what we experience, not events in the world.

We are asked to practice this Lesson three or four times today, for one minute or so, with eyes closed, repeating the idea, then opening our eyes and looking slowly around while affirming, "**I am looking at a meaningless world.**" (W.13.4.4) Then, we close our eyes and say, "**A meaningless world engenders fear because I think I am in competition with God.**" (W.13.4.7) You will not necessarily believe what you are saying, and may, in fact, resist the idea. Just note the resistance and ask for help so you could look at the ego without fear. By looking at your thoughts without any judgment or condemnation, you are realizing these thoughts are nothing. When you look at them without judgment, you are actually looking with the Holy Spirit; that is how He looks, entirely with no judgment no matter what the thoughts are. Thus, it makes it safe for us to see our hateful and murderous thoughts. Once exposed, we can put them on the inner altar for the Holy Spirit to remind us that we are innocent, no matter what we think.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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