

ACIM Edmonton - Sarah's Reflections



Lesson 352

**Judgment and love are opposites. From one
Come all the sorrows of the world. But from
The other comes the peace of God Himself.**

Sarah's Commentary:

The way we find God's peace and return home is always through forgiveness. Forgiveness is as close as we will ever get to love in this world. It reflects God's love in this world. Through forgiveness, the blocks to love are released. **"Forgiveness looks on sinlessness alone, and judges not."** (W.352.1.1) It sees only innocence and is the way home to the Self, as we were created. It requires the surrender of the "I know" mind; and it requires letting go of opinions, judgments, and expectations of how things should be.

Why is this so difficult for us? Why are we so defended against the peace that comes only through forgiving our way of seeing? We seem to have difficulty allowing God's Love in. We fear our true Identity and defend against the love we are. Instead, we listen to the voice of the ego. When we experience the quiet place within and connect with the deep peace where the memory of God is, in our right minds, we find it difficult to sustain it for very long. In no time, the mind gets filled with beliefs, fears, agendas, and opinions. When this happens, it is because we are threatened by the peace in us; and so, we run to our thoughts and beliefs, thinking we are now safe from the love that threatens our establishments. (W.136.7.4) Yet, with continual mind watching and practice in the application of the lessons, fear diminishes.

The opposite of forgiveness is judgment. When we choose to see our brother as guilty, it is another way we defend against love. From judgment comes all our pain and sorrow. If we truly believed this was the case, we would not be so invested in seeing our brother as guilty. We would see it is only our judgments that bring about all of our distress. As long as we see sin in the world, we are projecting our own thoughts of guilt that are in the wrong mind. We need to be willing to bring this guilt to light so it can be released. It is our own fear that keeps us bound to the guilt, and thus it is very helpful to our healing to see the fear and guilt in our minds reflected back at us. It is wonderful because it is the only way we come to know what needs healing in the mind.

I watched a movie about Tolstoy's life called, *The Last Station*, and I watched my judgments about the relationship that Tolstoy had with his wife. Both seemed to be caught in the trap of the special relationship, which I recognized so well in my own relationships. From the perspective of the two characters, there was no way out of the dilemma. Both were caught in their limited perception of the situation where there seemed no way to come to peace. In desperation, Tolstoy saw no way to resolve the conflict except to leave the woman he loved. It seemed very sad to me because I saw how forgiveness and acceptance could so easily have resolved the problem. Since they could not find a solution, separation seemed to be the only answer.

In the Course, we read, **"Whoever is saner at the time the threat is perceived should remember how deep is his indebtedness to the other and how much gratitude is due him, and be glad that he can pay his debt by bringing happiness to both."** (T.18.V.7.1) (ACIM OE T.18.VI.47) From the perspective of the ego, it means that one must lose. Yet there is no loss in salvation. There can only be loss in the world. Only when Tolstoy was dying was his wife able to surrender everything in order to join with him. Only then did she truly see what was valuable and come to the realization of what had always been available to her. Sometimes, we find in our own lives that we only choose surrender when we are pushed against the wall. Jesus urges us not to wait, as our happiness is available now. **"Why wait to find it in the future, or believe it has been lost already, or was never there?"** (W.188.2.2)

We are so invested in the image we have made of ourselves, which keeps us tied to our individual separate identity. We don't want to lose what we still regard as valuable, which is our body and our concept of ourselves and the world. We still cherish this separate self. We hold onto concepts and beliefs very tightly until we see that they no longer serve us. We are then ready to call out to the Holy Spirit to help us find another way. While there is still fear of losing ourselves, there is also the pain of holding onto what can never serve to make us happy. When the pain is sufficient, we become more willing to let go. When we see that our way only brings unhappiness, we elect to follow more and more in His way. The memory of God's Love is in our mind, and it is calling to us as loudly as we choose to hear. ***"Father, I would hear Your Voice and find Your peace today. For I would love my own Identity, and find in It the memory of You."*** (W.352.1.8-9)

To know the love that we are is a goal we say we want, yet it can only be achieved through surrender. It is not achievable when we hold onto judgments, ideas of how things should be, or the concepts and beliefs about ourselves, or any brother, as being unworthy of love. When we do not approve of someone, judge and condemn them, or see ourselves as superior, it is a judgment we have first made about ourselves and now project that judgment onto our brother. It keeps us from experiencing the love we are.

We need to be as honest as we can in bringing awareness to our judgments, which we do by being vigilant in watching our thoughts, taking our projections back to the mind, and giving them over for healing. Now, love is given an opening in which to shine forth. It is already there, hidden by the clouds of judgments, but it shines forth when we release the judgments. This does not mean that we have to be in the same space as those with whom we have a significant conflict. It only means that we are willing to give up the judgments we hold about them and see them as our own. Our brother is our Self. There is truly no one "out there". Everything we perceive is just our own mind reflected back to us. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you means that you must see that there is no other. Whatever you do, you do to yourself.

Don and I had a beautiful lesson in this recently when we were having a disagreement. We parted in anger, choosing to keep our judgments rather than release them. We both resolved to take some time apart and ask for help to release the judgments. We recognized that to try to resolve the problem in form was an ego device to stay in control. As Don said, in a moment of sanity, our relationship was more important to him than any problem. I reminded myself that nothing outside my mind was the cause of my loss of peace. If I did not have peace in this situation, it was only because I threw it away and blamed him for taking it. Only the ego mind needs to figure things out, blame my brother for my lack of peace, or try to resolve the conflict in its own way. Instead, we can simply allow our mistaken perceptions to be given over to the Holy Spirit and let peace be restored for us. Without the Course, disagreements like this build and build and love seems to turn to hate until there is a desire to part. Yet with this teaching, we can see that problems which seem to arise are there as opportunities to see what is unhealed

in our own mind. Thus, we can be grateful for this classroom where whatever needs to be healed shows up perfectly in our relationships and the events in our lives.

It is not about how others impact us that is important, but how we impact others. Jesus speaks to this in Chapter 7.VII. where he says that when a brother behaves insanely, our normal response is anger, outrage, retaliation, or strategizing what we can do to try to change or fix them. Jesus says that we could, instead, see them as offering us something positive, namely an opportunity to bless them. The blessing we give becomes a gift to ourselves. This message is given us again and again. Jesus tells us a brother's insane behavior is really a call for help. **"When a brother behaves insanely, you can heal him only by perceiving the sanity in him."** (T.9.III.5.1) (ACIM OE T.9.II.5) **"A shadow figure who attacks [someone who is perceived as attacking us who reflects someone from the past who failed to meet our needs] becomes a brother giving you a chance to help, if this becomes the function of the dream."** (T.29.IV.5.6) (ACIM OE T.29.V.29) **"His need is yours."** (T.7.VII.2.2) (ACIM OE T.7.VIII.72) What is his need? It is to be seen as innocent and blessed. We need the same thing too, and the only way we can have it is by giving it to him. This is the **"Law of God,"** later called the **"Law of Love."** **"Today I learn the law of love; that what I give my brother is my gift to me."** (W.344) In truth, we already have God's blessing. He gave it in our creation; but by refusing to give our blessing to a brother, we won't know we have been eternally blessed.

Jesus tells us that we are responsible for everything that seems to happen to us and choose the feelings we experience. **"I am responsible for what I see. I choose the feelings I experience, and I decide upon the goal I would achieve. And everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked."** (T.21.II.2.3-5) (ACIM OE T.21.III.15) It is our script and all the characters in the script are perfect for our awakening. Each one shows us something of what is in our own mind. We are not victims of the world we see. It is all our dream that we are dreaming while safe at home in Heaven.

"Our use for words is almost over now." (W.PII.Q14.2.1) We are increasingly following the Guidance within. We are reminded that **"I am the holy home of God Himself. I am the Heaven where His Love resides."** (W.PII.What Am I?Q14.1.4-5) God is not outside my own mind. God is not, as Bette Midler says in her song, at a distance, watching me. He is in my mind. We can only know this by giving up our judgments and our fears. We can't hold onto judgments and know we are love. The only way to get in touch with our own divinity, innocence, and holiness is through forgiveness. This is how we remember God. This is how we connect with our true Identity.

"The truth of what we are is not for words to speak of nor describe. Yet we can realize our function here, and words can speak of this and teach it, too, if we exemplify the words in us." (W.P.II.Q14.2.4-5) It is time to put the metaphysical discussions aside. The metaphysical teaching has only been there to motivate us to forgive and to live the Word by demonstrating and exemplifying the teaching. Ceaseless discussions and arguments about the truth will not accomplish the unfolding of the truth of our Being. God will be revealed through us as we simply continue to allow Him to be. Our goal is to become happy children, carried in the flow of love and inspiration. Every moment, more love is revealed, as blocks to love are laid at the feet of truth. "My burden is Light and my yoke is easy." Let your busy doings today be guided, be light, and unfold easily and happily.

Love and blessings, Sarah

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