



LESSON 62

Forgiveness is my function as the light of the world.

Sarah's Commentary:

This Lesson speaks of the importance of forgiveness so that we may undertake our function as the light of the world. Forgiveness is about releasing the dark thoughts in our own minds. It is not about forgiving anyone else. It is about looking at our projections on others and taking responsibility for the guilt we put on them in order to try to make them responsible for how we feel.

This is the second in our giant stride Lessons. This Lesson is about recognizing that the light we are comes from the fact of what we are with God as our author. He is our Creator and the Source of this light we are. He is our beloved Father. When we give over the blocks, which keep the light from our awareness, it shines through us. Through forgiveness, we come to know the light is in us. How we know this is when we have the experience of receiving what we have given. We see the witnesses to our state of mind everywhere. When I hang onto what I perceive as a problem in this world and hold onto grievances regarding what someone has done, I keep myself in hell. When we choose peace in the place of grievances, there is a sense of a weight being lifted from the mind. It requires letting go of our perceived problems and accepting the situations that confront us. Sometimes it requires some deep inner work.

Recently, I had a situation where there was a huge misappropriation of funds, which meant a loss of a large sum from my savings. The person, whom I had considered a friend, was my seeming betrayer. The temptation to fight the situation and hold grievances against him was very compelling. But there was an equal pull to release him, knowing this was also my release. As thoughts of revenge, anger, betrayal, and hatred showed up, I saw they were my own self-attack thoughts coming from my mind not from this situation. The temptation was to blame my seeming betrayer, yet I recognized he was the mirror in which I could see what was in me. It was important for me to take responsibility for the situation, but there was also a temptation to blame myself for losing the money. This too is a mistake and one the ego wants us to keep. This way it has us coming and going. It sends us out to attack the seeming perpetrator, and then makes us feel guilty for what it had us do and thus keeps us in its grips. It took some time and great willingness to release the attacking thoughts because the ego was happy to keep reminding me how I was being victimized.

I was willing to be wrong about the whole situation and see that I had no idea why it had shown up in my life. I asked for the Holy Spirit to help me to see it from His perspective and to give me His interpretation. His interpretation is always that my brother is innocent, no matter how it looks to me through my eyes. I found it helpful to keep looking at the situation from outside the dream and see it from above the battleground. With each day, there was more peace until it all seemed

to "magically" dissolve into nothingness. As I write this, there is not even a twinge of reaction to any of it. There is only peace. That is what forgiveness does. **"It looks on devastation and reminds the mind what it sees is false."** (W.PII.Q13.1.3) It overlooks error by reminding us it is all nothing. **"You do not use anything your brother has done before to condemn him now. You freely choose to overlook his errors, looking past all barriers between yourself and him, and seeing them as one."** (T.19.I.9.4-5) (ACIM OE T.19.II.10) It is a reminder of my brother's innocence and wholeness as well as my own. The miracle is the effect of the change of mind. The day came when I looked for the anger, and it was no longer there. The situation remains, but it no longer carries any emotional baggage, and that is the miracle.

All our unhappiness comes from the guilt we hold in our minds, which is manifested as problems in our lives. Forgiveness is our function as the light of the world. That light has remained hidden because our attention and focus has been almost exclusively on our difficulties, stories, problems, sickness, judgments, and the belief we hold that we are separate from each other.

We were talking yesterday about friends who have retired from work. Some of them died soon after and others are experiencing depression. It appeared that the meaning in their lives had dissipated when they no longer had anything to occupy their time. Jesus shows us that what we do in the world is just a backdrop for healing. The world is a perfect classroom and provides many opportunities to forgive. We are the ones who set up these opportunities for ourselves for our healing. It is part of our script chosen by the dreamer of this dream, not the figure in the dream. The only purpose for being here is to use everything that shows up in our lives as a classroom to undo the guilt in our minds and undo the thought system of sin, guilt, and fear that came with the separation.

The world has been a place of distraction where we have used everything and everyone to project our guilt and see ourselves as the victim. Now we are being helped to see how we set all this up. The purpose of seeing ourselves as the victim is so we don't have to take responsibility for our lives and instead blame our situation on others. Then, we do not have to take responsibility for the separation, believing instead we had nothing to do with it and are just innocent victims. We declare, "I did not ask to be born!" The truth is, everything that seems to happen, we did indeed ask for. That is why Jesus tells us, **"Deceive yourself no longer that you are helpless in the face of what is done to you. Acknowledge but that you have been mistaken, and all effects of your mistakes will disappear."** (T.21.II.2.6-7) (ACIM OE T.21.III.16) **"It is impossible the Son of God be merely driven by events outside of him. It is impossible that happening that come to him were not his choice."** (T.21.II.3.1-2) (ACIM OE T.21.III.17)

Our purpose here is to learn where our happiness lies. In this Lesson, we learn that our happiness is in the mind that has chosen to forgive. This is what makes our lives here meaningful. To the ego, we were born to die, but to the Holy Spirit, we were born to learn who we really are, and we do that through forgiveness. Wherever we apply our talents and abilities in this world is only the backdrop for the function we all have, which is to forgive. While we all have unique capacities and talents and bring different gifts to the world, they are all to be used for one purpose---the function of forgiveness. In order to understand what this might look like in the world, we need to look more carefully at what forgiveness really is.

First, it is important to recognize that the ego feels strengthened through anger and attack. When we puff up with anger and attack, there is a sense of being strong. "I'm not taking crap from anyone," we say, and we feel momentarily powerful as a result. We have established our boundaries and will not let anyone take advantage of us ever again. Isn't that the reason we give

ourselves for why we attack? Don't we fear being a doormat? Yet, in the long run, or even the short run, we run out of steam and start to feel perturbed ourselves. The ego has told us to place our guilt "out there" and attack those we determine have done us wrong. We want to hold others responsible for our own unhappiness; but we start feeling guilty because the guilt in us is reinforced through attack. In other words, any attack we make on a brother is an attack on ourselves. This is something the ego never wants us to see. In our refusal to forgive, we hold onto our guilt, and now are held in bondage to our unhappiness.

Our choice to separate and go it alone created the problem in the first place. That is why Jesus says we denied our "**Identity by attacking creation and its Creator.**" (W.62.2.3) We chose to separate from our Creator and thus chose to forget who we are as the Christ Self, at one with our Source. Now we see ourselves as individuals with unique personalities, but in that process, the world of dreams seemed to arise. That is how we lost ourselves and made an image of ourselves unlike who we still are as the Christ Self. The truth is that we can't change who we are by accepting an image of ourselves instead. Jesus reminds us, "**The learning of the world is built upon a concept of the self adjusted to the world's reality.**" (T.31.V.1.1) (ACIM OE T.31.V.43) The truth about ourselves is revealed only when our self-concepts have been laid aside. Thus, our job is to raise every self-concept to doubt and question, so truth can enter when the slate of one's mind is made free of concepts that crowd the truth out.

If attack feels like strength to the ego, doesn't forgiveness feel like weakness? After all, if we don't stand up for our rights, compete to win, set our boundaries, assert ourselves, get what we want, affirm our position, stand our ground, and fight for what we consider fair and right, won't we just be taken advantage of? In other words, if we don't attack, who will look after our needs? Will we just be run over? This is what the ego insists will happen. Yet Jesus says that all we are doing is calling upon our own weakness when we believe these thoughts. "**Remember that in every attack you call upon your own weakness . . .**" (W.62.3.1) In every attack we make, all we are doing is reminding ourselves how weak we really are, "**while each time you forgive you call upon the strength of Christ in you.**" (W.62.3.1) We have it all wrong when we listen to the ego.

When we attack, we affirm our weakness, and when we forgive, we demonstrate the power in our right minds. That is totally opposite to how we think now. This is because only a weak self can be attacked. Lesson 26 was, "**My attack thoughts are attacking my invulnerability.**" In other words, attack assumes a self that can be attacked, which is a weak self. Forgiveness, on the other hand, assumes a self that is invulnerable and can't be hurt. This is the truth about us as God's Son. When we choose forgiveness, we are saying to a brother, "You did nothing. You did not attack me. I can't be attacked. I am invulnerable to attack. I choose to see you sinless so I can see myself that way as well. Thus, I choose strength through forgiveness." Can you see how we have it all backward? Can you see as we take up our function in the world, which is to forgive, we remind ourselves of our invulnerability, our strength, and thus reclaim our Identity? This is our motivation to forgive, and this reflects our decision to be happy.

Clearly, Jesus tells us God wants us to have a happy day, and we want this too, but we have been confused about what will make us happy. He tells us that using this idea frequently and doing this practice is how we can have a happy day, and others will share in this happiness with us. The effort we put into this practice can add immeasurably to the kind of day we have. He is not asking us to sacrifice what we think brings happiness into our lives. He is asking us to recognize that doing this practice can change the kind of day we have. Not only that, "**And it will help those around you, as well as those who seem to be far away in space and time, to share this happiness with you.**" (W.62.4.3) The acceptance of the truth in us can bring light and joy to

someone far away in distance. It can even help those far away in time--those who have gone before us and those that are yet to come. That is an amazing thought. Does this mean I can make a difference to the joy of someone who is no longer on this earth plane? It seems so because there is only One Mind. Our separateness is just an illusion, as is time and space, which do not exist. There is only one eternal Son.

What we need to do is become more and more sensitive to our reactions as to whether we judge them as negative or positive. They are the important clues to what is going on in our minds. We can then shift our attention from the events and circumstances around us and focus entirely on our own thoughts. Our feelings, reactions, and perceptions are all useful to the Holy Spirit because they constitute our classroom where He uses everything we bring to awareness for healing purposes. It is important to recognize that forgiveness is a process that occurs in the mind in the context of a relationship, because you are only forgiving your own projections. When you take responsibility for those projections, you see that "**Illusions about yourself and the world are one.**" (W.62.2.1) In other words, the world is an idea we made up as a projection we hold in our minds. Our only escape from this world of sin, guilt, and fear is to recognize that ideas do not leave their source, and if the source of it all is in the mind, we have the power available to us to change our minds.

Through the practice of forgiveness in this classroom where we find ourselves, we will come to know that the world and all our experiences in it are made up. Only then will we stop reacting to its insanity. The goal now is to become very sensitive to our reactions and not pretend they are not there. I find that this takes immense courage and honesty. Instead of defending and rationalizing, we need to look squarely at our ego responses. How do we know they are of the ego? We know because of how we feel. Any distress, anxiety, anticipation, frustration, worry, jealousy, excitement, anger, and despair are all triggers that point to the thoughts, beliefs, and concepts behind these feelings that we need to give over for healing. We can make another choice. We don't have to wait. We can do it *now*.

In this practice, close your eyes, if possible, and say to yourself, "**Forgiveness is my function as the light of the world. I would fulfill my function that I may be happy.**" (W.62.5.2-3) Do this as frequently as possible throughout the day, starting your day in the morning and ending it in the evening with this Lesson, spending more time on it, both morning and evening.

Consider the happiness and release forgiveness will bring you. "**Let related thoughts come freely, for your heart will recognize these words, and in your mind is the awareness they are true.**" (W.62.5.5-6) It is not about making up thoughts but listening deeply and letting thoughts come forth that remind you of the truth. Remember, the truth is already in your mind. The only way we can be truly happy is by bringing all our darkness to the light. We must be willing to take responsibility for our projections and bring them to the Holy Spirit. "**Forgiveness is my function as the light of the world. I would fulfill my function that I may be happy.**" (W.62.5.2-3) "**Should your attention wander, repeat the idea and add: 'I would remember this because I want to be happy.'**" (W.62.5.6-7)

Love and blessings, Sarah
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