



LESSON 182

I will be still an instant* and go home.

Sarah's Commentary:

The words are so poetic and poignant in today's Lesson, but before I get to my thoughts on this Lesson, it may be of value to remember this. We are now preparing to go beyond words and toward experience to achieve a state of stillness and quiet in an interval out of time in which we withdraw from the world. This is an experience of the holy instant, which gives us a foretaste of Heaven. It is a transformative experience of deep peace and joy. When we return to the world, we now see everything in a new way.

These Lessons are all about removing the blocks that keep the love we are away from our awareness. These blocks are ego defenses. Our defenses reflect our fear and resistance to change. We are actually afraid to know who we are, as created by God. We believe we want the experience of the eternal Self, yet the ego guards us against this since the ego knows this would be its end. To come to know our Identity is to choose love rather than the ego. We still identify with this special, unique, individual self, and we still want to maintain control over our experience. We fear love though we say we want it. Why? The reason is that, ultimately, it is the end of the familiar false self we know. When we surrender our idea of what will bring us happiness and listen to what Jesus is telling us, the firm grip we hold on the reality of this world is released. When we have the experience of the holy instant and feel the peace and joy available to us, our motivation and commitment are strengthened. It means letting go of our way and our control over our lives and trusting in the Holy Spirit as our Guide, asking Him in every moment for direction on what we are to say and do and where we are to go. We come to trust this inner Guide.

Our goal now is to strengthen our commitment and our willingness to know the truth. All of us have fear about awakening to the truth of what we are, which is reflected in how we drag our feet and resist the Lessons. We still want what the ego has to offer while also wanting the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but this creates conflict in our minds. The ego is threatened and will resist this teaching. It is, therefore, a relief to us when Jesus tells us that we are not being asked for total dedication as yet. We have too many scattered goals, but increasingly we are asked to choose humility and surrender of our position on life.

"Our next few lessons make a special point of firming up our willingness to make your weak commitment strong; your scattered goals blend into one intent." (W.PI.IN. 181-200.1.1) And Jesus assures us, we will all come to this place; although, right now it is unwise to force ourselves because we then experience guilt and fear when we fall short. Clearly, it is unproductive to beat up on ourselves for not being where we think we should be. This is how the ego enters the spiritual pursuit---by wanting something for itself. When we listen to this voice, we are actually listening to the ego chastise us for our lack of progress. The truth is that we are exactly where we need to be. To seek for what we think we want is to put the ego in charge. We have been continually assured that the final outcome is certain, so it is better to be gentle with ourselves while staying as disciplined and focused as possible. Everything in our current situation is our perfect classroom for healing. Nothing needs to be different than it is.

The Lesson today continues with the theme of the holy instant. Yesterday the theme was about forgiveness of our brothers. In today's Lesson, Jesus is talking about our awakening from this dream and returning home. Forgiveness is the means to that end. Here, Jesus reminds us that the world is not our home, yet we are doing whatever we can to be at home in this world. We have adjusted to living in the world, making it a place of comfort for ourselves and adapting to the requirements that have been imposed on us to conform to it, and adjusting to it as much as we are able. Yet somewhere inside us of all is a vague sense that this is not our home. We all feel like aliens here. (W.182.2.1) We are like the Prodigal Son, who left his father's house and squandered the treasure he was given. He thought he wanted independence, just as we do, but he ended up living in a pigsty.

To pray to God to improve the pigsty and to make it a happier place would only keep the Son stuck in the world. His happiness and fulfillment come from returning to his father, who greets him with great joy at his homecoming. To put all our attention on working to improve this illusion and trying to make this place more comfortable for ourselves, just keeps us from our true home. It is not wrong to seek comforts in this world, but no matter how comfortable we make it for ourselves, the world will never deliver the deep peace we seek. Even a relationship that seems to be made in Heaven can actually be an obstacle to our awakening because our motivation to undertake this journey is considerably decreased when we create our own seeming Heaven on earth. This is why the special relationship is called the ego's most boasted gift---it is a substitute for God.

Do you recognize the feeling of not fitting in and not feeling at home here? We think this makes us different from others, who do seem to do well in the world. We may start to think there is something wrong with us because we just can't adjust to this world. Many of us have felt this way for our entire lives, feeling like someone made a mistake in bringing us here. Now Jesus tells us that this is the case for everyone, no matter how it may look. On my son's last trip home for his twenty-year high school reunion, he commented on how most of his former classmates seemed more settled into the world than was the case for him. Most were married with children, many were living in the community in which they resided during their school years, and some were working at regular jobs. My son had never really felt as though he fit in at school and neither did he feel that he fit the mold he observed among his friends. When we feel we do not fit in, we start to wonder what is wrong with us. Jesus reminds us that there is great value in coming to the realization that we actually do not fit in here. The truth is that none of us fit in this world. Yet not everyone has come to the awareness that not fitting in the world is a gift, as it motivates us to find our way to our true home.

We have a sense there is a place where we do belong. We all have this sense that somewhere there is a place where we once did feel at home. This is what the Forgotten Song speaks to us about. **"Listen,---perhaps you catch a hint of an ancient state not quite forgotten; dim, perhaps, and yet not altogether unfamiliar, like a song whose name is long forgotten, and the circumstances in which you heard completely unremembered. Not the whole song has stayed with you, but just a little wisp of melody, attached not to a person or a place or anything particular."** (T.21.I.6.1-2) (ACIM OE T.21.II.8)

This feeling, of not fitting in this world and longing to understand what was wrong, was the beginning of my searching. While on the outside, things seemed to look fine, but I just did not feel the sense of being at home in myself that I longed for. This feeling of angst started in my early childhood. It culminated in a sincere request of God to give me a sign, when I was about ten, that He existed or I would have to look for truth elsewhere. I did not get the sign I was looking for, and so I started to look elsewhere. I went to university to study psychology and sociology, looking for answers there. I participated in many self-inquiry activities, group therapy sessions, psychic activities, spiritual books, and channeled material. While all of it was helpful, I never found the deep answers I was searching for. My life was not getting better, and I became quite disillusioned by it all. Now I see it was all helpful, as the disillusionment put me on a path to finding the real answers.

Jesus says that there are many things we do to distract ourselves from this feeling of loneliness and sadness: Some of us play games to occupy our time, (W.182.2.2) others push the sadness so far from

themselves so they don't even recognize their tears at all, (W.182.2.3) and others dismiss it all as an illusion. Some will say the idea of God and Heaven is just a dream, a fantasy, and that this world is all there is. There are those who deny the fact they do not feel at home here. When we occupy ourselves with distractions, we can forget this calling for our home in Heaven, at least for a while. Some deny the sadness, always affirming that they are happy to the point that they ". . . **do not recognize their tears at all.**" (W.182.2.3) It reminds me of those who are trained in positive thinking and affirm every day how great they feel, while covering over their sadness. Until we acknowledge our sadness, we cannot do our healing. Others claim that the world is wonderful and everything about it is beautiful. They claim it is a beautiful life and believe they can continue to manifest whatever they want to create happiness for themselves. Yet the Lesson would suggest these people are in a state of deep denial, where they do not even recognize their tears and deep sadness.

We may look around and think there are people happy in the illusion, but Jesus clearly disputes this thought. "**No one but knows whereof we speak.**" (W.182.2.1) There may be an illusion of happiness, but ultimately, we are told, everyone who walks this world "**is not at home.**" (W.182.3.1) Thus, there are no exceptions to this state. Any adjustment we make to this world, believing that it can offer us something of value, is futile. "**He goes uncertainly about in endless search, seeking in darkness what he cannot find; not recognizing what it is he seeks.**" (W.182.3.2)

We seem to be searching endlessly for happiness in this world, but the world is not where we will find it, for we are looking for it in the darkness. We are looking for this sense of home, of belonging, of happiness, of contentment, and of welcome in our relationships, workplaces, and activities, yet it is all elusive. Our happiness still seems to escape us and always will, according to this Lesson, because we are looking where it cannot be found. The deep contentment of "home" is not where we find ourselves, so we just keep hoping it will be in the next situation, the next job, the next relationship, the next car, and the next vacation. We keep seeking for it. We hang onto hopes and dreams for what will make us happy. We are endlessly searching, and the searching itself provides the evidence that it is not here.

There is a poignant movie I saw years ago that speaks beautifully about our seeking for our home. It is reflected in the line, "**Perhaps you think it is your childhood home that you would find again.**" (W.182.4.1) In this movie called, *Trip to Bountiful*, an elderly woman is desperately trying to find her way back to her childhood home, believing that this is where she will be happy. I remember, when I first saw this movie many years ago, I wept uncontrollably, obviously deeply feeling this same pull to return home. Jesus tells us this pull for our childhood home is a distorted desire to go home to our Father's house.

We have a home where we truly belong. It is a place we fit in perfectly---a place where we will eventually return because, while we think we have left it, we have only left our awareness of it. "**He [this child] desires to go home so deeply, so unceasingly, His voice cries unto you to let Him rest a while. He does not ask for more than just a few instants of respite; just an interval in which He can return to breathe again the holy air that fills His Father's house.**" (W.182.5.3-4) Our distractions and denials obscure the cries of this Child. It is in the holy instant, a blessed eternal moment out of time and space, where we breathe in the holy air and can experience the fact that we have a home we never left. We are still at home in God. The Child is the Christ, our true Self that is eternally awake. In the separation, we seemed to drag this Child down from its holy place. This Child now appeals to us for respite that becomes available when we enter the place of peace always in our minds and always accessible to us. When we feel the tiny throb of aloneness, it is this Child who calls to us. It is the part of us that knows it is deeply unhappy. Jesus makes his appeal to us to recognize this deep unhappiness and to see he has an answer for us. The Answer is within all of us. All that is required is to no longer listen to the voice of the ego. The means we use are contemplation, meditation, and forgiveness. God becomes more important than holding onto my grievance and so I make a new choice.

Today, we are again asked to let our restless minds be still and to set aside our "**valueless ideas.**" (W.182.8.1) When we hold valueless ideas, we experience distress and anxiety. We are called to see that they are meaningless and to let them go. The truth is in us. We do not have to seek for it. The presence of the Child in you is your inner strength. It is the truth about you. It is your invulnerability that demonstrates to you there is nothing to defend against. **"This Child is your defenselessness; your strength. He trusts in you. He came because He knew you would not fail. He whispers of His home unceasingly to you."** (W.182.7.1-4) You are this Christ Child, but you believe you have made yourself into something else.

When we experience our innocence and our invulnerability, we will understand that we need no defenses. We will trust that we are always safe and always supported. **"His patience has no limits. He will wait until you hear His gentle Voice within you, calling you to let Him go in peace, along with you, to where He is at home and you with Him."** (W.182.7.6-7) This is achingly beautiful and speaks to our heart that yearns to know its Self again and to be resurrected in the holy instant.

We are this Child, believing we are separate from God and needing to reconnect with what we seem to have lost. Our yearning is really for our lost innocence---our hearts desire. But Jesus assures us that we cannot lose our innocence though we do think it is lost to us. As we trust our brothers and see their innocence, we will know our own. **"And who could weep but for his innocence?"** (Psychotherapy Pamphlet.2.IV.1.7) In other words, the only tears we ever cry are for our own belief that we have lost our innocence. Think about it. All the tears we cry, no matter what we think we are crying about, are only because we believe that we are no longer innocent! We feel this need to know again our innocence with such depth and poignancy.

Perhaps this is also why we react so defensively when we feel accused of something, or we feel misunderstood. We are just defending an innocence we fear we have lost, and yet we still want someone else to be responsible. It is reassuring to be told, **"You have not lost your innocence. It is for this you yearn."** (W.182.12.1-2) **"Today He gives you His defenselessness, and you accept it in exchange for all the toys of battle you have made."** (W.182.12.7) Therefore, let us **"Be still an instant and go home with Him, and be at peace a while."** (W.182.12.9)

Our home is found in the stillness. It is when we connect with the Divine within that we recognize, **"It is this Child in you your Father knows as His Own Son."** (W.182.5.1) The Christ Self we are is the strength in us that we can rely on. It requires our willingness and readiness to take the steps necessary to surrender the self. The Child is defenseless. It is the ego that needs defenses and keeps the shield up to protect itself from an **"enemy without existence."** (W.182.11.1) Let us choose to take the time today to connect with the peace within and stay in that place of rest for a while. When toys of battle come to tempt us during the day, we bring them to the truth where they are replaced with gifts of peace. Bring all your dark thoughts to the Truth within by placing them on the inner altar where they are healed. It takes courage and honesty to look behind our defenses that we have built against love. We have been misguided in thinking our safety lies in maintaining these defenses. Our willingness to be vulnerable is where our strength is.

Love and blessings, Sarah
huemmert@shaw.ca

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