

LESSON 188 • JULY 7

“The peace of God is shining in me now.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To go past thoughts of the outer world and so experience the peace of God shining in you now. This brief taste of your goal will strengthen your resolve to reach it completely.

Morning/evening quiet time: At least five minutes; ideally, thirty or more.

This is a meditation in which you seek to contact the peace of God shining in you now. To make sense of the discussion of thoughts in paragraphs 6-9, you might imagine that your thought is a stream or current that stretches all the way from the world outside, which is where your thoughts are focused now, to its source at the center of your being. At the outside of the stream, your thoughts are tainted “by the dream of worldly things outside yourself” (6:6), full of “strange desires and disordered wishes” (9:6). As the stream moves inward, however, your thoughts become “honest thoughts” (6:6) that actually “lead you back to peace” (7:5). They seek the light in you, the peace of God in you. Finally, at the inmost part of the stream, they become “the thoughts we share with God” (9:2), thoughts that are at one with His peace.

Your task in this meditation is to follow this stream inward, to move your thought—your attention—from the stream’s outermost place to its innermost place. Begin by withdrawing your thoughts from their focus outside. As you withdraw them, they become washed clean, and they will start to draw you inward, for they feel the call of God. Now “let your thoughts fly to the peace within” (6:4). Trust that “they know the way” (6:5). Let them draw you along that stream until you reach its source, and rest in God.

As your thought reaches the peace of God within, know that that peace will extend from your heart around the world, blessing each living thing and returning to you with all the gifts you gave. “From you salvation radiates with gifts beyond all measure, given and returned” (4:2).

Hourly remembrance: One or two minutes as the hour strikes (reduce if circumstances do not permit).

Repeat, “*The peace of God is shining in me now. Let all things shine upon me in that peace. And let me bless them with the light in me.*” Then draw your attention inward and seek the peace of God in you. Finish by thanking God for His gifts in the hour gone by and asking for His guidance in the hour to come.

Response to temptation: When tempted to blame the world for what you thought it did to you.

Realize that the world hasn’t done anything to you; what you see is what you chose. So choose that the world be pure and innocent, and lay your “saving blessing on it” (10:5) by repeating, “*The peace of God is shining in me now. Let all things shine upon me in that peace. And let me bless them with the light in me.*”

Commentary

I always seem to hear the emphasis in this sentence on the last word, “now.” It speaks to me of the holy instant. It tells me that whatever storms seem to be raging in my mind, whatever chaotic circumstances I find myself in, there is within me a constant beacon of peace, forever shining, uninterrupted and uninterruptible. It calls me to stop for a moment, withdraw my attention from all the turmoil that makes up my “life” in this world, and reconnect to that peace. Somewhere within me, there is a place that is always at perfect peace, like the eye of a hurricane. And I can find that place any time I choose to do so, truly desiring to find it.

The Course is consistent in its vision. Nothing separates us from the Love of God. Complete salvation, perfect peace, pure joy, and full forgiveness are always available right now. “Enlightenment is but a recognition, not a change at all” (1:4). What we call enlightenment is simply recognizing the presence of the light, which has never left us. It is realizing that the only reason we cannot see the light is that we have our hands over our eyes. That is why we “need do nothing.” We don’t have to *do*, we simply *undo*. We stop blocking the light, which is always there.

The particular block being addressed in this lesson (you’ll recall that this series of lessons was billed as directly addressing certain specific blocks) is simply the tendency to see enlightenment as a future thing. The opening words sound the keynote: “Why wait for Heaven?” (1:1). “Why wait to find it in the future, or believe it has been lost already, or was never there?” (2:2). All that we need do to discover its reality is to look for it within ourselves, where it has always been.

But the peace of God is not only *within* me, it is *shining in* me. “The peace of God is shining in you now, and from your heart extends around the world” (3:1). I may feel as bottled up as Custer at the Last Stand; I may feel as fertile as the Sahara. But from within my being, nevertheless, the peace of God is being broadcast like a universal beacon to the entire world. My right mind is extending itself in global beneficence to all creation, pausing “to caress each living thing” (3:2) (what a beautiful image that brings to my mind!), and leaving an everlasting blessing with whatever it touches. That is part of what I am bringing to my awareness; that is part of the picture of my Self that I am learning to recognize each time I stop, become quiet, and look within. When the Course tells me that I am among the saviors of the world, it isn’t telling me about something I have to *achieve*, it is telling me what I already am.

Within me there is, even now, and even in my darkest moments, a living flow of thoughts of light. There is a heavenly current constantly surging through me to extend love and blessing to the world, and to myself. That flow of thoughts is something I can, in the holy instant, become aware of and tune in to.

“Accept His Word for what you are” (8:2); that is what this lesson is calling on us to do. We read of the Christ, we read of the Buddha and his heart of compassion. The Buddha is you. And that is Jesus’ message to us, that we are as he is. “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 Jn 2:6). We are the Christ; that is what we are; that is what we need to accept. It seems too high, too far beyond our concept of ourselves. But in the holy instant, in the quiet, when we withdraw from the world and “let [our] thoughts fly to the peace within” (6:4), we can know ourselves in this way. We can sense the depth of love that wants to express itself through us.

Oh, we may not do such a great job, just yet, at letting that love out. We may get in the way more often than not. But the love that would embrace the world, heal its wounds, and dry its tears is in us, and *is* us. We all know that is so, if we are willing to look at it. We can look upon the whole world today and everyone within it, and we can say:

We will forgive them all, absolving all the world from what we thought it did to us....Now we choose that it be innocent, devoid of sin and open to salvation. And we lay our saving blessing on it, as we say:

The peace of God is shining in me now. Let all things shine upon me in that peace, And let me bless them with the light in me. (10:2, 4–7)