

LESSON 166 • JUNE 15

“I am entrusted with the gifts of God.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To give the gifts of God to those who still walk the lonely road you are escaping. To demonstrate through your happiness what it means to receive the gifts of God.

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

My suggestion: Spend time feeling the touch of Christ. You have made a false self that is akin to a mentally ill homeless person (see 4:4). As a result, you wander about feeling alone and impoverished. In your meditation, let Christ tap you on the shoulder and give you the awareness that you are not alone and you are not impoverished. Experience the joy that comes from feeling His touch.

This will prepare you for a day in which “your hand becomes the giver of Christ’s touch” (14:5), in which you become the reminder to the “homeless” people around you that *they* are not alone and are not impoverished. You do this primarily by demonstrating the joy you have received from Christ. “Be witness in your happiness to how transformed the mind becomes which chooses to accept His gifts and feel the touch of Christ” (15:4).

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

Repeat the idea and try to feel the touch of Christ. Then thank God for the gifts He placed in your hands in the past hour. And ask Him how He would have you give these gifts in the coming hour.

Response to temptation: Whenever you are tempted to be sorrowful, fearful, tearful, or sick.

My suggestion: Repeat the idea in order to dispel these feelings, for they betray your trust, your mission. Whenever you are afraid, hear Christ reply with, “It is not so” (11:3). When you feel poor, let Him point out His gifts to you. When you feel lonely, let Him speak of His companionship.

Commentary

This lesson carries on the general tone of the previous one, attempting to persuade us to keep moving forward, past the illusion of ourselves we have been content to live with. It opens with the idea that God trusts us so much He has given everything to us. Everything. He knows His Son, and just because He knows us, He gives us everything without exception. His trust in us is limitless. We doubt our own certainty, but God’s we can depend on.

I trust God’s trust in me.

What we fear is that trust in God is “treachery” to ourselves (3:2). We are attached to this world we made.

To admit it is not real is to betray myself. If I have progressed beyond the point of believing that I can create like God, that I can make a world that is perfect somehow, at least I want to cling to the notion that I can unmake what God made, that I can destroy the world and shatter its perfection. To be told my actions, my sins, my denials, my doubts, and all their like are without effect is demeaning to my ego self. So I contradict the truth of Heaven to preserve what I have made.

There is a part of each of us that wants to be “a tragic figure,” like some hero or heroine in an opera (6:1 and following). We want to be able to say, “Behold how nobly I withstand the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.” We think, all unconsciously, that without the “outrageous fortune” our nobility would be lost.

When I listen to my ego, this is how I want to see myself. Such a tragic figure! Poor thing, so weary and worn. Look at his threadbare clothing! How he must have been deprived! And his feet—Oh! Poor thing! They are bleeding.

We can all identify with this figure. “Everyone who comes here [to this world] has pursued the path he follows, and has felt defeat and hopelessness as he is feeling them” (6:2). You know what this is talking about. You’ve been there, maybe you are there now. You know what “defeat and hopelessness” means, you’ve felt it too.

*Yet is he really tragic, when you see that he is following the way he chose, and need
but realize Who walks with him and open up his treasures to be free? (6:3)*

Is “he,” the tragic hero [who is you and me], really tragic? Or is he just foolish? Is he just making a silly mistake? When you see that he is *choosing* his path and could choose otherwise, can you consider his suffering tragic?

“This is your chosen self, the one you made as a replacement for reality” (7:1). This, folks, is the ego self we have chosen to be. It’s how we’ve seen ourselves. This is the self we are defending. This is the person we have become, and we resist all the evidence and witnesses that prove that this is not us.

Jesus calls on us to drop the victim act and recognize that “I am not the victim of the world I see” (W-pI.31.Heading), that

*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)*

You see yourself as this tragic figure, but Jesus’ response is: “[Christ] would make you laugh at this perception of yourself” (8:3).

I’d like to meditate on that a while. Jesus wants to make me laugh! Jesus is a frustrated comedian. Well, maybe not frustrated; look at what he accomplishes through Marianne Williamson. He wants us to laugh at our egos! He wants me to see the humor of my position, pleading tragedy when I’ve deliberately chosen to be what I am.

*Where is self-pity then? And what becomes of all the tragedy you sought to make for
him whom God intended only joy? (8:4–5)*

The self-pity and the tragedy just disappear, that’s what happens. When you laugh at the “sorry figure” of the ego, the tragedy vanishes.

The next paragraph describes very well where some of us are right now, just starting to realize that we are not the ego. This lesson is written on many levels, addressing first, as we’ve seen, the person hiding in the ego illusion of tragedy; then, in these next sentences, the person who has begun to realize that the miserable ego is not his true Identity; and finally, in paragraph 11 on, the person who has clearly seen and accepted that “you are not what you pretend to be” (11:2).

In paragraph 9 we see the person in the middle—feeling torn, afraid, almost under attack by God, Whom he has habitually avoided all his life. Let’s listen in to our responses as Jesus tries to make us laugh, and see alongside it the humorous truth.

First, we sense the presence of God, Whom we have been hiding from: “Your ancient fear has come upon you now, and justice has caught up with you at last” (9:1).

Our reaction: *Oh, rats! It’s God! Now I’m going to get it.*

Jesus: It's silly to be afraid of God, silly to think He is your Enemy and wants to hurt you. What a laughable idea, to be afraid of God!

The lesson: "Christ's hand has touched your shoulder..." (9:2).

Our reaction: *What was that really weird feeling? Oh, Christ—was it Christ? Is that His Voice in my mind? I must be losing it.*

Jesus: It is your brother, and he wants to bring you home. How foolish to fear him!

The lesson: "...and you feel that you are not alone" (9:2).

Our reaction: *And I'm not sure I like the idea of someone always with me, looking over my shoulder.*

Jesus: What a funny reaction! I am your Comforter and Teacher, not your judge. It's silly to think you prefer being alone.

The lesson: "You even think the miserable self you thought was you may not be your Identity. Perhaps God's Word is truer than your own" (9:3-4).

Our reaction: *I can't believe I've started to doubt these things I've believed all my life! I must be insane!*

Jesus: On the other hand, who has more chance of being right: you, or God? Be real!

The lesson: "Perhaps His gifts to you are real" (9:5).

Our reaction: *Yeah, and maybe it's just my imagination.*

Jesus: But what if they really are real, these gifts? Isn't it foolish not to find out?

The lesson: "Perhaps He has not wholly been outwitted by your plan to keep His Son in deep oblivion, and go the way you chose without your Self" (9:6).

Our reaction: *Yeah, and maybe He has. Maybe I've screwed it up so bad that even God can't fix it.*

Jesus: Now that's truly funny! You, outwitting God? Right, sure, that's really brilliant thinking. God decides He wants something and you are going to keep it from happening?

Our reaction: *But if I didn't outwit Him, then I must still be what He made me to be. I'm not sure I want to give up believing in what I've always thought I am. I feel threatened.*

Jesus: So, okay. Hold on to the picture of yourself you've always had; I'm sure you've really enjoyed being you, that way. Right? God isn't fighting it.

The lesson: "God's Will does not oppose. It merely is" (10:1-2).

You're not fighting with God, and He is not fighting with you. He doesn't fight, He doesn't oppose. He merely is. What you are fighting (and this is fall-down, bust-a-gut funny) is reality itself. Thinking you are separate from God is about as smart as a drop of water deciding it's not in the ocean any more. It's like a lion deciding it wants to be a mouse. You're trying to be what you are not; that's what causes all the strain, when it should cause nothing but laughter. The fight is all on your side against an imagined enemy. You are the Answer to all your own questions. There is nothing to be afraid of here. The truth about yourself is wonderful, not frightening.

In the remainder of the lesson, Jesus talks of three things we need to know. First, all the gifts that God has given us, that is, the real Self that we are, whole, healed, and abundant. Second, His Presence with us, our Companion on the journey. And third, that the gifts we have are made for giving away; we have a purpose here, to give these gifts to "all who chose the lonely road you have escaped" (13:1).

In a sense those are the three main thrusts of *A Course In Miracles*. First, learning the true nature of Self, the holiness and joy of our own being. Second, and equally important until we leave this world, is the sure knowledge of His Companionship on the way, the help we need to make it through. And finally, that the nature we have realized is that of Giver and Lover; to know we have the gift, we must give it. We must teach the world by showing it "the happiness that comes to those who feel the touch of Christ" (13:5).

Our mission is just that: to be happy. "Your change of mind becomes the proof that who accepts God's gifts can never suffer anything" (14:5). We are here to

become the living proof of what Christ's touch can offer everyone...Be witness in your happiness to how transformed the mind becomes which chooses to accept His gifts, and feel the touch of Christ. Such is your mission now. (15:2, 4-5)

Recognize His gifts. Feel His touch. And share His gifts with the world through our happiness (not through beating people over the head with them). Those are the three stages of moving forward.

Another way to put it: Drop the victim act and take responsibility as the source of your life. Choose Heaven instead of hell, ask your Companion for His help. And be the proof of Heaven's reality by your radiant joy and refusal to suffer anything.