

LESSON 70 • MARCH 11

“My salvation comes from me.”

Practice instructions

Purpose: To realize that your salvation is not outside you, that both the sickness and the remedy are within, and that you are joined with God in wanting the remedy for yourself.

Longer: Two times, for ten to fifteen minutes.

- Repeat, “*My salvation comes from me,*” and add a statement to the effect that it does not come from outside you, such as “*It cannot come from anywhere else.*”
- Close your eyes and for several minutes review external places in which you have sought salvation—people, possessions, situations, events, self-concepts. Say, “*My salvation cannot come from any of these things* [try to really see this]. *My salvation comes from me and only from me.*”
- Then enter again into meditation, trying once more to travel through the clouds to the light in you. Use the same technique as you did yesterday (you may want to review those instructions). The difference today is that the clouds, rather than being your grievances, are the external things in which you’ve sought salvation. Since these cloud patterns are where your mind has been fixated, it may be challenging to not get stuck there. The particular method you use for getting past the clouds is not important; what is important is your *desire* and *determination* to get past them. One method you might find helpful is to imagine Jesus leading you by the hand through the clouds and into the light. He says that if you do this, it will be more than just your imagination.

Remarks: Now that we are going up to two longer practice periods a day, he wants you to do the same thing as before—decide in advance when you’ll do the longer practice periods and then do your best to adhere to that decision. To refresh your mind about why this is important, read the “remarks” section in Lesson 65.

Frequent reminders: Frequent.

Say, “*My salvation comes from me. Nothing outside of me can hold me back. Within me is the world’s salvation and my own.*” While saying this, remember that only your own thoughts can hold you back. This leaves you in charge.

Commentary

The message of this lesson is really one of the central teachings of the Course. Guilt and salvation are in my own mind and nowhere else. “All guilt is solely an invention of your mind” (1:5).

It is severely tempting to lay the blame for my problems somewhere outside of me. I instinctively shun taking responsibility for any of my problems, and the idea that all of them are in my mind and nowhere else seems devastating. However, consider the consequences of the alternative view: that the source of my problems and of my guilt lies outside of me. If that is the case, I am the helpless victim of these outside forces. I cannot do anything about them except to rant and rave at them, hurling invectives of blame and begging for mercy from uncaring powers.

If, however, my problems lie solely in my own mind, then I am capable of doing something about them. In fact, *only* I can do anything about them, and nothing outside of me can prevent me from doing it. “Nothing outside of me can hold me back” (10:7). I am in complete control; my salvation comes from me and me alone. I am not dependent on anything outside myself, and therefore I am already free.

The “cost” of recognizing that my salvation comes from me and nowhere else is that I have to give up any idea that the “cavalry” is going to show up to rescue me. “Nothing outside yourself can save you; nothing outside yourself can give you peace” (2:1). Nothing and nobody can do it for me. It’s up to me. My partner in romantic love isn’t going to do it for me. My wealth and position aren’t going to do it for me. My analyst isn’t going to do it for me, nor my guru. Not even Jesus will do it for me. The Course won’t do it for me. Any or all of these may support me, help me, encourage me; in the end, however, my salvation will come from myself, from the choices of my own mind. “Today’s idea places you in charge of the universe, where you belong because of what you are” (2:3). Awesome, and a bit frightening. I don’t want to believe I have that much power, but not believing it is what got me into this mess in the first place. Therein lies my sickness.

Good news! God wants us to be healed and happy; so do we. Therefore our will is one with God’s. We have been choosing sickness but we don’t *really* want it, because it makes us unhappy. So we can agree with God and choose again, choose to be well rather than sick.

In today’s exercise we picture ourselves pushing past the clouds again towards the light. Yesterday the clouds represented our grievances; today, they represent the things we have looked to for salvation. “You cannot find [salvation] in the clouds that surround the light, and it is in them you have been looking for it” (8:2). Oddly, objects of salvation and grievances are not all that different; a grievance against a brother is also an assertion that something in that brother is making me unhappy, which is also making him a potential source of salvation: I would be happy if he would change. To see salvation outside myself, or to see a grievance, are both means by which I give away my power and deny my sole responsibility for the universe of my mind.

In the exercise of pushing past the clouds, we are told, “If it helps you, think of me holding your hand and leading you. And I assure you it will be no idle fantasy” (9:3–4). For some of us, it will be helpful to picture ourselves taking the hand of Jesus and being led through the clouds. For others, the picture would be more disconcerting than helpful; there is, perhaps, healing needed in our relationship with him before we could find that image appealing. I, for one, find it immensely helpful to envision one who has already been there and back, and who is willing to lead me through. He can’t do it for me, but he sure can help.

Sometimes I think of Jesus as simply the part of my mind that has already wakened. And he *is* part of me, just as you are, and as everyone is. He is not some awesome divine being I cannot ever hope to be like. He is me, remembering. He is me, awake. To take his hand is to identify with the Christ in myself.

Go for the light today!