

LESSON 134

Let me perceive forgiveness as it is.

Let us review the meaning of "forgive," for it is apt to be distorted and to be perceived as something that entails an unfair sacrifice of righteous wrath, a gift unjustified and undeserved, and a complete denial of the truth. In such a view, forgiveness must be seen as mere eccentric folly, and this course appear to rest salvation on a whim.

This twisted view of what forgiveness means is easily corrected, when you can accept the fact that pardon is not asked for what is true. It must be limited to what is false. It is irrelevant to everything except illusions. Truth is God's creation, and to pardon that is meaningless. All truth belongs to Him, reflects His laws and radiates His Love. Does this need pardon? How can you forgive the sinless and eternally benign?

The major difficulty that you find in genuine forgiveness on your part is that you still believe you must forgive the truth, and not illusions. You conceive of pardon as a vain attempt to look past what is there; to overlook the truth, in an unfounded effort to deceive yourself by making an illusion true. This twisted viewpoint but reflects the hold that the idea of sin retains as yet upon your mind, as you regard yourself.

Because you think your sins are real, you look on pardon as deception. For it is impossible to think of sin as true and not believe forgiveness is a lie. Thus is forgiveness really but a sin, like all the rest. It says the truth is false, and smiles on the corrupt as if they were as blameless as the grass; as white as snow. It is delusional in what it thinks it can accomplish. It would see as right the plainly wrong; the loathsome as the good.

Pardon is no escape in such a view. It merely is a further sign that sin is unforgivable, at best to be concealed, denied or called another name, for pardon is a treachery to truth. Guilt cannot be forgiven. If you sin, your guilt is everlasting. Those who are forgiven from the view their sins are real are pitifully mocked and twice condemned; first, by themselves for what they think they did, and once again by those who pardon them.

It is sin's unreality that makes forgiveness natural and wholly sane, a deep relief to those who offer it; a quiet blessing where it is received. It does not countenance illusions, but collects them lightly, with a little laugh, and gently lays them at the feet of truth. And there they disappear entirely.

Forgiveness is the only thing that stands for truth in the illusions of the world. It sees their nothingness, and looks straight through the thousand forms in which they may appear. It looks on lies, but it is not deceived. It does not heed the self-accusing shrieks of sinners mad with guilt. It looks on them with quiet eyes, and merely says to them, "My brother, what you think is not the truth."

The strength of pardon is its honesty, which is so uncorrupted that it sees illusions as illusions, not as truth. It is because of this that it becomes the undeceiver in the face of lies; the great restorer of the simple truth. By its ability to overlook what is not there, it opens up the way to truth, which has been blocked by dreams of guilt. Now are you free to follow in the way your true forgiveness opens up to you. For if one brother has received this gift of you, the door is open to yourself.

There is a very simple way to find the door to true forgiveness, and perceive it open wide in welcome. When you feel that you are tempted to accuse someone of sin in any form, do not allow your mind to dwell on what you think he did, for that is self-deception. Ask instead, *"Would I accuse myself of doing this?"*

Thus will you see alternatives for choice in terms that render choosing meaningful, and keep your mind as free of guilt and pain as God Himself intended it to be, and as it is in truth. It is but lies that would condemn. In truth is innocence the only thing there is. Forgiveness stands between illusions and the truth; between the world you see and that which lies beyond; between the hell of guilt and Heaven's gate.

Across this bridge, as powerful as Love which laid its blessing on it, are all dreams of evil and of hatred and attack brought silently to truth. They are not kept to swell and bluster, and to terrify the foolish dreamer who believes in them. He has been gently awakened from his dream by understanding what he thought he saw was never there. And now he cannot feel that all escape has been denied to him.

He does not have to fight to save himself. He does not have to kill the dragons which he thought pursued him. Nor need he erect the heavy walls of stone and iron doors he thought would make him safe. He can remove the ponderous and useless armor made to chain his mind to fear and misery. His step is light, and as he lifts his foot to stride ahead a star is left behind, to point the way to those who follow him.

Forgiveness must be practiced, for the world cannot perceive its meaning, nor provide a guide to teach you its beneficence. There is no thought in all the world that leads to any understanding of the laws it follows, nor the Thought that it

reflects. It is as alien to the world as is your own reality. And yet it joins your mind with the reality in you.

Today we practice true forgiveness, that the time of joining be no more delayed. For we would meet with our reality in freedom and in peace. Our practicing becomes the footsteps lighting up the way for all our brothers, who will follow us to the reality we share with them. That this may be accomplished, let us give a quarter of an hour twice today, and spend it with the Guide Who understands the meaning of forgiveness, and was sent to us to teach it. Let us ask of Him:

Let me perceive forgiveness as it is.

Then choose one brother as He will direct, and catalogue his "sins," as one by one they cross your mind. Be certain not to dwell on any one of them, but realize that you are using his "offenses" but to save the world from all ideas of sin. Briefly consider all the evil things you thought of him, and each time ask yourself, "Would I condemn myself for doing this?"

Let him be freed from all the thoughts you had of sin in him. And now you are prepared for freedom. If you have been practicing thus far in willingness and honesty, you will begin to sense a lifting up, a lightening of weight across your chest, a deep and certain feeling of relief. The time remaining should be given to experiencing the escape from all the heavy chains you sought to lay upon your brother, but were laid upon yourself.

Forgiveness should be practiced through the day, for there will still be many times when you forget its meaning and attack yourself. When this occurs, allow your mind to see through this illusion as you tell yourself:

Let me perceive forgiveness as it is.

Would I accuse myself of doing this?

I will not lay this chain upon myself.

In everything you do remember this:

*No one is crucified alone, and yet no one can
enter Heaven by himself.*