

**Jesus:
The Manifestation of the Holy Spirit**

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the
Foundation for A Course in Miracles
Temecula CA

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**Part IX
Continuation of "True Prayer" (*The Song of Prayer*, S-1.1.3)**

I would like now to finish what we have been reading from *The Song of Prayer*. Then we will discuss the importance of having Jesus as a symbol in our minds, to whom we turn for help. We will spend enough time on this later, so that we end up in a place where most people feel comfortable. One thing that I will emphasize is that there is nothing sinful or wrong in seeing oneself on the bottom rung of the ladder. Again, that is where Jesus in the Course basically assumes we are. And it is only the arrogance of the ego that would have us feel that we are at a level different from where we really are.

Let's continue, then, from where we left off in *The Song of Prayer*-**"True Prayer" (S-1.1.3)**. I'll reread the final line of paragraph three.

(Paragraph 3 - Sentence 6) You have sought first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all else has indeed been given you.

When Jesus says that all else will be given us he does not mean that we will get all the abundance that the material world has to offer. He means that all of our anxiety will be gone, and that, regardless of what happens in our external world, we will be at peace. This is not a promise that if we take Jesus' hand we will get hundreds of thousands of dollars, and every relationship that we want will be given to us, etc.—it has nothing to do with anything external. It means that when we take his hand and feel his love and his peace, that love and peace will not be affected by anything that occurs in the world around us.

On the other hand, if our focus is on the material things of this world—the expressions in form that we feel taking Jesus' hand gives us—then we may get what we want today, but we could always lose it tomorrow. So, for example, I may get the parking space today, but I am not sure that it will be there the next time I go. Or I may recover from a physical illness and feel better today, but that does not mean that tomorrow I may not get sick again. However, as I begin to identify more and more with Jesus' love and his peace, then no matter what happens, I will not be concerned. That gives us tremendous freedom, for we no longer feel the need to control what other people do or what happens to us. Such a need always comes from the fear that if I am not careful, the little I believe I have will be taken from me.

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(Paragraph 4 - Sentence 1) The secret of true prayer is to forget the things you think you need.

I think I need a parking space. I think I need to be healed from cancer or AIDS. I think I need ten thousand dollars. I think I need a relationship. I think I need something.

(Paragraph 4 - Sentence 2) To ask for the specific is much the same as to look on sin and then forgive it.

Let me explain briefly what this means. A major theme in the Course itself is the understanding of forgiveness. As the world has understood it, forgiveness takes the form:

I forgive you for the terrible thing that you have done. Yes, you have done something that you should not have done and it was a terrible thing. However, out of the goodness and the kindness of my heart, and as an indication of the holiness of my soul and the sacredness of my mind, I forgive you.

Later in this pamphlet, this approach is called "forgiveness-to-destroy" (S-2). *Forgiveness* according to the Course, as we know, means that we forgive each other for what we have not done. This does not mean that we overlook or deny what one body has done to another body. It simply means that what your body has done to me, or what your body has done to those with whom I identify, has had no effect on the Love and the peace of God within me. Forgiveness is for what someone has not done (T-17.III.1:5). When I feel upset or angry at you, and have accused you of anything, I am really accusing you of taking the peace of God from me. But you are not able to reach into my mind and take the hand of Jesus from mine and separate us—only I can do that.

Therefore nothing you have done has had any effect at all on my relationship with Jesus. Only what I do has an effect on my relationship with Jesus. Again that is the meaning of the principle that we forgive each other for what we have *not* done. However, when I say that you have indeed done something—that you have caused me or a loved one of mine to suffer pain, then I am giving you a power that you do not really have. That is what the Course means by "making the error real" (e.g., T-12.I.1:1)—I am saying there is a problem out there. So if I then "forgive" you, the problem has not gone away, it is still real, but I choose to overlook it.

Jesus is telling us that asking God for something specific is in principle the same thing. I am saying that I have a need for a parking space, or for a thousand dollars, a relationship, a cure for cancer, etc. If my need is not satisfied, I will not feel happy. I will not feel at peace unless I turn the corner and find a parking space. Or turn the corner and find the love of my life. Or turn the corner and find a thousand-dollar bill waiting in the street for me—just what I need to pay all my bills. That makes the error real. The reason I am anxious and feel the scarcity—that something is lacking inside me—has nothing whatsoever to do with any external lack. The scarcity or the lack I am feeling comes from my belief that I have separated myself from the Love of God—that is the problem, that is the mistake in asking for specific things.

(Paragraph 4 - Sentence 3) Also in the same way, in prayer you overlook your specific needs as you see them, and let them go into God's Hands.

In the context of what we have been discussing in this workshop, we do not actually let our needs go into God's Hands—we let them go into Jesus' hands. Within the dream, the hands of Jesus are the

symbol for the Hands of God. In fact, God obviously does not have hands. So Jesus is reminding us here that we want the song—and not all the overtones or the forms in which the song comes to us.

(Paragraph 4 - Sentences 4-5) There [in God's Hands] they become your gifts to Him, for they tell Him that you would have no gods before Him; no Love but His. What could His answer be but your remembrance of Him?

The remembrance of God, within the context of the Course, is the Holy Spirit. He is the memory of God within our minds, and Jesus is the specific form or manifestation of that memory—the answer. The answer is not "Go to the left" or "Go to the right." "Have this meal instead of that meal." "Stand on this street corner instead of that street corner." None of these is the answer. The answer is the memory of God's Love. But since we are afraid of the purity and the totality of that Love, we are the ones who place that Love in a little thimble—and out comes a street corner or an eyelash, or some other specific thing.

And then comes this extremely important line:

(Paragraph 4 - Sentence 6) Can this [the remembrance of God's Love, the experience of His peace] be traded for a bit of trifling advice about a problem of an instant's duration?

Remember, *The Song of Prayer* was a specific answer to a discussion Helen and I had about the issue of asking for specific things. So Jesus is saying, "You want an experience of my love for you and your love for me—that is what you want. Would you really be willing to trade that for a piece of trifling advice about a problem that doesn't last for longer than an instant?" We ask not for too much, but for far too little (T-26.VI.11:7). Our egos tell us that we are not worthy of having an experience of God's Love—that we are worthy only of being told where to go for breakfast, or something like that. Or it could be something that seems more important, involving, for example, a relationship, or work, or one's health. But none of these lasts for more than an instant. Each of them involves only our bodies, and none of them involves the peace of God. And yet we are so willing to settle for the specific things. Students of the Course often are willing to settle for so little, seeing the Course only as an extension of New Age paths which teach how to get things in this world. They are willing to settle for an experience of the Holy Spirit telling them specific things, rather than allowing Him to train their minds so that they can have everything. This is not a course in problem solving on the level of minutiae. It is not a course in living better in this world. It is a course in changing our minds about our relationship with God—in changing our minds from the guilt that the ego has made to be our mind's reality to the forgiveness and the love that is waiting for us there.

To learn that lesson and accept the love, we have to deal with symbols. We have to accept the love in whatever forms symbolize that love for us. But the point is not to settle only for the forms but to allow the forms to lead us farther up the ladder so that we can begin to have a deeper experience of Jesus' love. That is the goal.

(Paragraph 4 - Sentences 7-8) God answers only for eternity. But still all little answers are contained in this.

God is only eternity—His Love is eternal. We have to begin with the little answers—the bottom rung of the ladder. But we do not want to forget that the little answers are only symbols. And we want what is beyond the symbols, as the section towards the end of the text, "Beyond All Symbols" (T-27.III), reminds us.

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(Paragraph 6 - Sentences 1-2) This is not a level of prayer that everyone can attain as yet. Those who have not reached it still need your help in prayer because their asking is not yet based upon acceptance.

Jesus is speaking here of the top of the ladder. Usually when we ask for help, we are not asking for help in accepting Who we are. Rather, we are asking for help to fix something. For example, we ask for help that our terrible burden of fear, or guilt, or depression, or pain be lifted from us, which means, of course, that we are not accepting responsibility for choosing it. We saw the same idea earlier in our discussion of Helen's asking Jesus to take her fear away. Such a request denies the power of the mind that has chosen the fear. Jesus is saying here that there are people who are still afraid of the power of their minds. These lines were meant specifically for Helen, because one of her questions to Jesus asked about how to deal with people who were asking her for help, and whether or not to give them the specific help they wanted. She decided most of the time that it was not helpful, and instead she would join with them to remind them of the power of their own minds.

(Paragraph 6 - Sentence 3) Help in prayer does not mean that another mediates between you and God.

If you have a problem and I think I can help you with that problem by being an intermediary, that is not help. Jesus has often been seen this way, but that is not how he sees himself in the Course. His view of his role is reflected in the next line:

(Paragraph 6 - Sentence 4) But it does mean that another stands beside you and helps to raise you up to Him.

That is what Jesus does. And he asks us, as his manifestation in the world, to do the same thing. A wonderful passage in the teacher's manual (M-5.III.2) discusses healing in terms of what it means to be a teacher of God. And it says that the teacher of God does not do anything, he does not heal. The teacher of God simply *reminds* those who believe they are sick that they have the power to make another choice. Again, that is what Jesus does. He does not choose for us. He does not *do* anything for us. And we should be grateful he does not do anything for us because, if he did, he would be part of the same insane system we are all a part of—and that would not be helpful. He stands outside the insane system in our minds, and reminds us by his very presence that we can make another choice.

Now, we may experience him as doing something, just as Helen experienced him taking an eyelash out. But the reality is that he simply remained within her mind until she came back to him. It was her mind that interpreted that experience as Jesus doing something for her. Again, that is why it is important to

keep the distinction between the appearance and the reality, between the form and the content perfectly clear.

(Paragraph 6 - Sentences 5-6) One who has realized the goodness of God prays without fear. And one who prays without fear cannot but reach Him. He can therefore also reach His Son, wherever he may be and whatever form he may seem to take.

That, of course, is what Jesus is able to do, being a thought of perfect love within the mind of the Sonship. Since minds are joined and all thoughts within the one mind are joined, then the thought that he is is always available to all of us. We are the ones who have to choose it, but the choice is always there.

I would like to clarify the line, "And one who prays without fear cannot but reach him." Why, you might ask, would one pray if there is no fear? But this does not mean prayer in the usual sense. When I pray without fear, prayer becomes acceptance. But if I ask for things, then obviously I am in a state of fear, because I believe that I lack something. Why would I pray for something unless I feel I do not have it? And further, I must feel that if I do not have it, something terrible will happen to me. When my fear is gone, my prayer is simply an acceptance of the love that not only Jesus has and is, but that I am with him.