

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

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the  
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*Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D.*

**Part V  
Continuation of "True Prayer" (*The Song of Prayer*, S-1.1)**

**(Paragraph 2 - Sentence 1) You have been told to ask the Holy Spirit for the answer to any specific problem, and that you will receive a specific answer if such is your need.**

This should be understood on two levels. The pamphlet originally began as a special message from Jesus to Helen—so on one level he was speaking directly and personally to her. And many times prior to the message, he said to her, "Ask me for help." Similarly, in the text, but on another level, he has said the same thing to all of us: "The Holy Spirit will answer every specific problem as long as you believe that problems are specific" (T-11.VIII.5:5). This is the reference that he is talking about here in *The Song of Prayer*—the Holy Spirit will answer all of our specific needs and requests. In the pamphlet, he continues:

**(Paragraph 2 - Sentence 2) You have also been told that there is only one problem and one answer.**

This idea is clearly expressed in two workbook lessons, "Let me recognize my problem so it can be solved" (W-pl.79), and "Let me recognize that all my problems have been solved" (W-pl.80). In both lessons, Jesus is very clear that there is only one problem—the belief in separation—and there is only one answer—accepting the Holy Spirit. In the review lesson based on those lessons, Jesus states it a little differently—the one problem is holding onto a grievance and the one answer is forgiveness, or the miracle (W-pl.90). But it is the same idea.

Clearly, these appear then to be contradictory statements. In one place, Jesus tells us that we have many problems and therefore there will be many answers—the Holy Spirit will give us the specific answer to meet our specific problem or need. Then elsewhere he tells us there is only one problem and only one solution for it. So he explains:

**(Paragraph 2 - Sentence 3) In prayer this is not contradictory.**

By this he means he is again referring to prayer as a process. The top of the ladder of prayer is the song of prayer, the very end of the process where we recognize there is only one need—the need to undo that one mistake, when we turned away from the Holy Spirit and turned towards the ego. That was our only error. Since that is the problem, the answer is to turn away from the ego and turn back to the Holy Spirit. As we ascend the ladder, it becomes clearer and clearer to us that all of our problems are the same. This is the experience of many people who work with the Course over a period of time. As the early workbook lesson says, "I am never upset for the reason I think" (W-pl.5). I am not upset because I just found out that I have AIDS or that my loved one has AIDS, or because the United States has declared war on another country, or because there is a recession, or I have lost my job, or my loved one has

abandoned me, or I have caught a cold and do not feel well, etc. I have all kinds of reasons for being upset. But they are not *really* why I am upset. I am upset because I believe I have separated from God. And more specifically, within the dream, I am upset because I became afraid of God's Love in the person of Jesus and turned away from him. I turned my back on love once again, and *that* is why I am upset. If I had felt his closeness, if I had felt his love, if I had felt his peace and his comfort, nothing in this world would bother me. That, of course, is the lesson of the crucifixion.

As we grow and climb up the ladder, it becomes clearer and clearer to us that all our problems are the same. There is only one problem and one answer. But at the bottom of the ladder, that is not our experience. On the bottom of the ladder—where we believe we are—we experience God's help in the person of the Holy Spirit or Jesus meeting our needs as we perceive them. This is an extremely important way in which Jesus offers us correction at the level where we see ourselves. We believe that the Holy Spirit would never help us after what we have done to Him. We have told Him He is a liar. We have said, "I don't trust you. I don't want you anywhere near me." And we made up the world so we could run away from Him. We made up a body that has needs as an attack on Him. So why should He want to help us? The ego tells us there is no way that He would ever help us, no way that He would ever meet our needs.

Therefore, we need a correction on this level that tells us, "No, the Holy Spirit is not turning His back on you. It is not that He does not want to help you. He *does* help you." This is the same kind of symbolism as Jesus telling us that God weeps over us. The ego has told us that God is so happy that we are out of His house, because we have been such pains in the neck. So Jesus tells us, "No, He's *not* happy. In fact, He *weeps* for you and He feels incomplete and lonely without you." This symbolism serves exactly the same purpose as the symbolism reflected in Course statements that tell us that Jesus or the Holy Spirit will meet our specific needs. I will explain a little later how this works in our experience. So again:

**(Paragraph 2 - Sentences 3-4) In prayer this is not contradictory. There are decisions to make here, and they must be made whether they be illusions or not.**

It is not contradictory, because prayer is seen as a process, to state it once again. As long as we are here in a body, choices have to be made—for example, everyone had to make a decision to attend this workshop. Each of us had to make a decision this morning whether to wear green, or blue, or white, or black, or whatever. Everyone had to make a decision about whether to eat breakfast, what to eat, and what not to eat, etc. Decisions have to be made once we believe that we are in a body.

As the Course explains elsewhere, we must choose whether we will make the decisions of our lives with the ego or with the Holy Spirit. As long as we have the illusion of choosing, as long as we have the illusion of being here in a body in a dream, then we will have the illusion of choosing the ego or the Holy Spirit as our teacher. That is why the Course is written on the level that it is. Probably the most important message in the Course is that of "choose once again"—it is presented all the way through, and then ends the text.

The major theme of the Course is that of returning to our minds the power to choose. Not that our minds *really* have any power to choose—the Mind of Christ does not choose, because there are no choices to be made in Heaven. But we are not in Heaven—we believe that we are here. As the text tells us, we are "at home in God, dreaming of exile" (T-10.I.2:1). So within the dream, we do have a choice, which is an illusion. But as long as we have the illusion of choosing against God and against the Holy

Spirit's Love and message of the Atonement in our minds, we need a correction on that level that says, "I made a faulty choice. Now I can make a better choice." That is the purpose of Jesus and the Holy Spirit—to help us make a better choice. Hence, as long as we are in this world, there are decisions that have to be made. The important thing—which is an issue that we will come back to again and again—is not the *form* of the decision. The important thing is the *content: with whom we make the decision*.

Now, that does not mean that we can simply ignore the decision. (I will elaborate on this a little later.) Not paying attention to our decisions would be an example of "level confusion," and of trying to believe that we are farther up the ladder than we really are. As long as we believe we are in this world and we are hassling with a decision, it is important that, within the role we have chosen, we pay attention to the decision. But it is also very helpful and relieving to know that, in the end, the decision itself does not matter. What matters is *with whom we make it*. And we can tell with whom we have made the decision by whether we are peaceful or anxious.

So I do the best I can to decide, within the scope of my classroom, which includes myself and my body and the specific context in which I believe I am. I do the best I can with that, but on another level, I realize that all I ever have to do is the best I can. Jesus made a statement to Helen, which I think is always very helpful and comforting. He said to her, "If you do my will, I will uphold it; and if you do not do my will, then I will correct it." Basically, this means we do the best that we can; either way, we cannot lose. So decisions have to be made here, whether they are illusory or not. In truth, they are all illusory, because there are no choices in Heaven. The important thing is not the decision, but, once again, *the one with whom we make it*. This is what we are leading up to. This is the importance of Jesus. He remains within our split minds as the shining symbol that calls us back—not so much to him but to the Christ that is in him as well as in ourselves.

**(Paragraph 2 - Sentence 5) You cannot be asked to accept answers which are beyond the level of need that you can recognize.**

We can see from this statement just how helpful the Course is and what a powerful spiritual tool it is. It comes to us on many levels. On the highest level, it tells us that there is literally nothing here, that we are not here. At the same time, the Course translates the abstract love and truth of Heaven into a language and a group of symbols we can understand and relate to. So on the one level, Jesus tells us there are no problems. The one problem we believe we have and believe we are has already been undone for us, and, therefore, there are no needs. On another level, as long as we believe we are here and believe we have all these needs, we will experience Heaven's help with those needs. Not that Heaven is really helping us with those needs; rather, we will *experience* it that way. Again, as we read earlier, Heaven comes to us as separate, not because it is in truth, but because that is the only level that we can accept and understand (T-25.I).

**(Paragraph 2 - Sentences 6-9) Therefore, it is not the form of the question that matters, nor how it is asked. The form of the answer, if given by God [which here means the Holy Spirit], will suit your need as you see it. This is merely an echo of the reply of His Voice. The real sound is always a song of thanksgiving and of Love.**

Let me elaborate on this—Jesus is saying that as long as we believe that we have many needs, we will receive the answer on that level. But the answer is really not the form—the true answer is beyond the form. The answer that we experience, that we believe we get, is "an echo of the reply of His Voice." His

Voice is that soundless song of thanksgiving and love. The real answer is the Presence of Love that is beyond all form, that does not have or hear words. But we will experience that Love on the level of words and symbols, because we believe we are symbols.

Let me give a concrete example that might help. We can think of the water within a glass as an expression of God's Love. For the purposes of this example, we can think of water as formless, shapeless, and abstract. In fact, of course, it is not, but we will think of it that way. The glass, which has a definite shape and contour to it, represents the mind, which is a mind of fear that has identified with the ego. So it is a limited, separated mind that believes in guilt, attack, punishment, sin, etc. The love within our minds is abstract and formless. We are terrified of the true nature of love, because the ego has told us that if we return to that love, love will destroy us.

One of Helen's poems includes the line, "Love does not crucify, it . . . merely is" ("Amen," *The Gifts of God*, p. 91). Now the reason for that line is that we believe that love *does* crucify. Of course, the Christian Churches have been built on the idea that we know that God loves us because He crucified and killed His own Son. That is what love does: it crucifies and punishes. This makes perfect sense within the ego system. Remember, this is a "sinned-against" God—that is the concept of God in the ego box on the chart. And a sinned-against God translates into a God Who is vengeful, hateful, and insane, Who bargains with us and is angry. That is a God Who crucifies. So we have learned to be afraid of God's Love.

This explains why we always do the very things that keep us from being peaceful and happy. It is not the world that keeps us anxious and in conflict—we are the ones who keep ourselves anxious and in conflict. And this becomes the ego's insane defense against love. This is why we hold on to the past. This is why we hold on to our attacking thoughts towards others and towards ourselves, listening to the raucous shrieking of the ego. We are afraid of being peaceful. We are afraid of being love. A line in the text says that "the memory of God comes to the quiet mind" (T-23.I.1:1). To which my ego says, "Yes, that's absolutely true. If your mind is quiet, if you are peaceful and still, then the memory of God will return to you. But you don't want to go anywhere near this memory, because God is angry and vicious and cruel." So in order to keep the memory of God away, I keep my mind in a state of noise, a state of disquiet, rather than in a state of quiet. The raucous shrieking of the ego becomes a very comforting shield that protects me from the still, small Voice of the Holy Spirit.

The ego has taught us not to go near this Love because this Love will hurt us. We could think of the totality of God's Love as an ocean—it is immense and goes on and on with no boundaries, no limit. That is the Love of God, and that is what we are afraid of. There is no way that we could approach Love as it is, because the ego tells us if we do, we will be swallowed up and annihilated—God is so angry. Therefore, we are able to take only so much of that Love—we take it only in small doses. Basically, we go to Jesus or the Holy Spirit in our minds and say, "I'm terrified of the immensity and the infinity of your Love, because I'm afraid I'll disappear into it. I want your Love more than anything else, but all I can handle is a glassful." We go to this unending, unceasing, bottomless Source of Love in our minds with a little glass, or a little thimble, saying, "This is all that I can accept. I cannot accept your Love, but I can accept your giving me a parking space, or your telling me what to order from a menu in a restaurant." Now there is nothing wrong in any of this. However, all we end up with is a thimble instead of the ocean. Again, we are talking about the bottom of the ladder. It is certainly much better for me to ask the

Holy Spirit rather than the ego for help with the parking space. But if that is all I am doing, I will end up with very, very little.

So the lines we just read are telling us that it is not the form that we want—it is not the contour of the love—not the structure of my mind that I hold up to Jesus to fill. I want the *content*—I want the *love*. The purpose of this pamphlet is to remind us of this. In a sense, the whole purpose of this workshop is to help us to know the difference between the form that the love takes for us and its reality. It is the reality that we want. So again, that is what is meant by: "The form of the answer, if given by God, will suit your need as you see it. This is merely an echo of the reply of His Voice. The real sound is always a song of thanksgiving and of Love."