

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

Excerpts from the Workshop held at the  
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**Part VI**  
**Continuation of "True Prayer" (*The Song of Prayer*, S-1.1)**

**(Paragraph 3 - Sentences 1-2) You cannot, then, ask for the echo. It is the song that is the gift.**

The echo would be all the specific things that we are asking for. It could be something we feel is holy, important, and wonderful, or something we think is trivial and worldly, like a parking space. It does not matter. There are several lines related to this idea in the section called, "The Answer to Prayer," which is an extremely helpful section on prayer. In the beginning of that section, Jesus says,

Everyone who ever tried to use prayer to ask for something has experienced what appears to be failure (T-9.II.1:1).

This was not meant just for Helen. This is meant for everyone. We all get caught in this trap. And the something we have asked for could be something tangible. It could be advice, or it could be to have a feeling. It does not matter.

This is not only true in connection with specific things that might be harmful [we all want a lot of things in the world which in the end will be hurtful to us], but also in connection with requests that are strictly in line with this Course (T-9.II.1:2).

"Requests that are strictly in line with this Course" could be: "Jesus, please help me be peaceful." Almost no one would say that that is a bad thing to ask for. I am not asking for a million dollars or a Mercedes Benz. All I am asking is that I feel better. But people will still experience the same sense of failure and ask, "Where the hell is Jesus when I need him?" Knowing what our reaction is likely to be, Jesus continues,

The latter in particular [i.e., when we ask for things that are in line with this course and don't get them] might be incorrectly interpreted as proof that the course does not mean what it says (T-9.II.1:3).

The ego is very, very slippery, and it is always trying to trap Jesus and his Course in a mistake. We do not realize that unconsciously we have set him up. This pamphlet was written in 1977, a number of years after the Course, which was finished in 1972 and published in 1976. The pamphlet came as a correction for what was already being misunderstood in the Course. Students were confusing symbol and reality, thinking that the purpose of the Holy Spirit is simply to get us parking spaces or to heal cancer, or to answer all the other specific requests and needs that we have. And Jesus is saying, "This is not what I am talking about. This kind of asking is just the bottom of the ladder. My purpose is not to take your hand and give you everything you need. My purpose is to take your hand and remind you that what I am, you are too. That is my purpose."

And so Jesus is saying to us, "You don't want the echo. You don't want the specific answer to the specific request. What you want, what my gift to you is, is the song." And the song is the Love of God that Jesus represents. That is the content that we want. And even Jesus' love is not the final answer. But within the dream, when we take his hand and accept his love, that is the closest we come to returning home. Once we really identify with Jesus and accept our love for him and his love for us, everything else will be given to us, as the next paragraph states. But remember, he is telling us here that the gift is his love. That is the song. The gift is not the form, not the particular structure that the water takes. We say to Jesus, "I want you to get me a parking space,"—that is the structure of the glass that we present to him. And so we dip that glass into the ocean, and we get just a little water in a specific form.

And then we make the form real. It is as if we take the glass or the little thimble filled with water and stick it in the freezer and freeze it. And then we say, "This is Jesus, right here. He gives me a parking space. Isn't he wonderful?" That is what we end up with. We make that real and then we worship it. This is the same mistake that every religion has fallen into, whether Jewish, or Christian, or any other—we mistake the form for the meaning. And we end up worshiping the form, the ritual, and the structure. We hear a word from Heaven and we think the word is the gift. God does not speak in words. God does not understand words. Jesus does not understand words. The word that we experience is not the gift. The gift to Helen, and therefore to the world, would not be half a million or however many words there are in this book. The gift is that the words lead us to the love that transcends the book—that is the gift. The words are steppingstones, and they are extremely helpful. But the words are not holy.

This is not a holy book. As a book it is not holy. I can write on it, I can rip it up, I can step on it—it does not matter. What is holy is the love that inspired it. And the love that inspired this book is the same love that is in Helen's mind, and in your mind, and in my mind. It's no different. That is the lesson. We do not worship the book or anything associated with the book, such as any of the stories associated with the book. There could not be a more tragic mistake in terms of the consequences. Then we end up making a god of the form. We end up taking this little thimbleful of water, freezing it, and saying, "This is God," "This is Jesus," or "This is the Course." This is not what it is. The whole purpose again of this pamphlet was to correct the mistakes that were already starting to happen within the first two years of the Course's publication.

Again, Jesus is saying we want the *song*. We do not want the form in which the song comes. As long as we believe we are a form, and we believe that we are a separated being, we will understand the message in that context, in that form. But that does not make it real, any more than our perception that the sun rises and sets makes that a reality. The sun does not rise and set—the *earth* moves. The sun is perfectly stationary. The illusion is that the sun rises and sets—that is our experience. That does not make it true, however. Similarly, if I experience Jesus as getting me a parking space—and I will elaborate on what is really happening later—that does not mean he got me the parking space. It means I *experienced* Jesus' getting me the parking space. On the other hand, though, it does not mean that the experience itself is wrong. It is my *interpretation* that is wrong. If my interpretation focuses on form, equating symbol with truth, then I am wrong. But if I can see the experience as a steppingstone that points to the truth beyond the experience, then that is something else entirely.

Once again, words (the *form*) are not holy. The love (the *content*) is holy. The words are simply the reflection of the holiness. This is an idea which we find expressed many different times in the Course. The Course makes it clear that there is no holiness in this world, only the reflection of holiness. In fact, a

section in the text is entitled "The Reflection of Holiness" (T-14.IX). Elsewhere Jesus says that love without ambivalence is impossible in this world (T-4.III.4:6). Love belongs to God. In this world we find not love but the reflection of love, which is forgiveness. So the goal of the Course is to teach us how to forgive, not how to love. Forgiveness undoes all the obstacles or barriers to love. In the section called "Heralds of Eternity" (T-20.V), the "herald of eternity" is the holy relationship. Eternity is not possible in this world. But what foreshadows Heaven, what leads us to Heaven, is the forgiveness that is expressed in a holy relationship. The Course also talks about the holy instant, referring to the instant in which we choose the Holy Spirit instead of the ego, which is the reflection of the Holiness of God.

One of the key concepts in the Course is the *real world*. But the two words, as Jesus mentions at one place in the text, are a contradiction (T-26.III.3:3). The world is illusion, how could it be real? The meaning of the term—an extremely important one in the Course—is that the real world is the reflection of the reality of Heaven. It is *not* Heaven. The *real world* is the Course's concept for the dream in which there are no thoughts of separation or sin. It is still an illusion, but it is the reflection of the reality of Heaven.

Jesus is telling us, "Don't mistake the reflection for the truth. Don't worship the reflection." That is what he means at the beginning of the text when he says that to experience awe in his presence is inappropriate, because he and we are equal. He says it is appropriate to experience awe in the presence of our Creator, because He created us—we did not create Him. But awe in response to Jesus is inappropriate, because he is our equal (T-1.I.3:1-6). He is telling us not to confuse the reflection of God's Love—which he is—for the real Love. That is the trap, and we will see all of its implications as we continue discussing this.

Let's read on, starting again at the beginning of paragraph three.

**(Paragraph 3 - Sentence 1) You cannot, then, ask for the echo.**

Now, by that Jesus does not mean that we cannot ask for the echo—we ask for the echo all the time. He really means that we should not ask for the echo in the sense of believing that the echo is the gift. We are always going to ask for something, because we still believe that we are separate.

**(Paragraph 3 - Sentences 2-3) It is the song that is the gift. Along with it come the overtones, the harmonics, the echoes, but these are secondary.**

The specific things we believe that we hear from Jesus are secondary. What is important is the experience of love when we join with him. He is not asking us to deny what we experience, but he is helping us to understand that the *form* of the experience is not what is important. It is the love underneath the form that is the gift—that is what we want.

**(Paragraph 3 - Sentences 4-5) In true prayer you hear only the song. All the rest is merely added.**

The top rung of the ladder is the song of prayer—and that is a soundless, wordless song. That is our ultimate goal. None of us is at that level, and he is not asking us to be at that level. But he is reminding us that that is the reality. "All the rest is merely added."

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

This is taken from the famous passage in the Sermon on the Mount. Basically, that is the whole point of this. When we seek his love and his song and join with that, everything else will automatically come to us—sometimes in the form that we need it, sometimes in the form that we expect it, sometimes even in the form that we want it. But when we identify with Jesus' love and experience his love, his comfort, and his presence, the form will not matter to us any more.