

Spiritual Growth through Jesus

(Refer to Luke 10:40-42)

In today's Gospel Jesus rebukes Martha for asking Jesus to command Mary to help her in her chores to feed the group that came into Martha's home with Jesus. A seemingly obscure point, yet, as in all of what Jesus taught, a beautiful transformation of a common position we all are inclined to take into a lifelong lesson. While many interpretations exist in regard to any of the Gospels, and certainly those many interpretations are testimony to the divine Spirit within us, this portion of the 10th chapter of Luke comes at the end and for no mistake – one cannot be a good Samaritan if one stops to think about what the other man is doing – asking God to take sides or compel someone to do what you think is right is at best a flawed moral sense. This is not the only time in the Gospels where Jesus rebukes someone for attempting to use Him as a divider in a situation, and clearly, this subtle point is key in building one's faith. When Jesus said don't be mindful about the speck in your brother's eye (Matthew 7:1-5) but rather the speck in your own eye, it is the same lesson with Martha .

Jesus makes the point several times throughout the Gospels because faith cannot be had through fault finding. If you think about it – is God so blind he cannot see if another is doing wrong, then why bring to the Lord your self-justification by pointing out another's flaws as if God failed to see? Jesus could find no flaw with Mary seeking the word of the kingdom of God (which is the one thing that she was seeking) but Martha had stepped away from the search by falling into the character of an accuser. Now while we do not get a mini-series on all the activities before and after this moment, we must walk away from the lesson understanding that our seeking of the kingdom of God is within us (our internal struggle to find the path and increase our faith), is individual, and not at all enhanced by straying our glance upon what others do. If we do any comparative, was not Jesus teaching us that if we perceive a lesson from the actions of others it ought to be to evaluate how we ourselves compare – slapping ourselves on the back like the Pharisee or confessing the truth of ourselves before God like the commoner is the fundamental context in which we can then grow in faith and understanding. Of course seeing the difference between the two positions is critical and the beginning of understanding, otherwise we can go off on tangents that fail to see the principle behind the scripture.

There is also a powerful peace one attains when realizing that Jesus neither was obscure or intentionally cryptic, nor was He trying to be masterful over others, though I am sure, His light is more than anyone could grasp initially then or now, Jesus intentionally used everyday life activities so all could learn and understand that faith is not a struggle but rather a spiritual evolution in which we ultimately surrender effortlessly to the will of God. We often have a first encounter with faith through others who understanding is blinded like Martha's and thus we start off confused, however, it is my hope all of you have moved closer to Mary's position even when doing Martha's chores. God Bless you and keep you!

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