

Jesus Understands our Anxiety

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Jesus understands our anxiety. He teaches us His profound understanding of this human condition. He shows us how we can experience His healing when living with the anxiety with which so many struggle, and which has such a negative effect on daily life.

Luke 10:38-42 tells us that Jesus, on His journey to Jerusalem, stops to visit his friends Martha and Mary. He is traveling with His disciples, but the account does not tell us whether those accompanying Him are known by the sisters or if some may be strangers. In either case, welcoming weary travelers and strangers was a highly esteemed virtue in Jewish tradition. Jesus has finally arrived and we find Martha filled with worry, stress and anxiety. She is burdened with all the preparations that were needed. Perhaps she was fearing that her guests' expectations in terms of 'rules' of hospitality had not yet been met, and that Jesus would somehow judge her for this.

Martha's anxiety escalates to the point that she confronts Jesus, stating that He does not care about her situation—intimating that He is not concerned that she is overburdened. She is fulfilling her obligation, while her sister, Mary, is sitting at His feet. Has Martha overstepped her boundaries? No, she knows exactly Who can fix things. She goes to the highest authority in the room and even demands that He tell her sister to help her!

Jesus listens as she conveys her mental distress. In addressing her, He repeats her name twice—a Hebrew expression of intimacy. This intimate act tells her (and us) that indeed He cares about her. He reaffirms that He is well aware that she is worried and troubled about many things. He knows that she is serving Him. He also knows that focusing on service has caused her anxiety and resentment. Notice that Jesus doesn't judge her, but tenderly accepts Martha as she is—



with all her burdens, stress and anxiety. He goes on to tell her, however, "that one thing is needed."

What Jesus desires from Martha is what He desires from all the faithful, those suffering with anxiety or not. When we sit at His feet and receive His Word, we grow in spiritual maturity, a grace that helps us deal with whatever health issues we confront. We are continuously spiritually healed by Christ when, like Martha, we seek Him and ask Him to help us because He has the power, will, and deep love for us to do so.

For those of us who suffer with anxiety, make the choice to 'sit at His feet,' even if it is a few minutes a day. 'Come as you are' and talk with Him as Martha did. Jesus is always patiently awaiting us.

Note to self...

"You are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—indeed only one"...sit at the feet of Jesus and spend time with Him.

Luke 10:41-42