

VALUE PEACE ABOVE THE NEED FOR CONTROL:

LETTING THE PEACE OF CHRIST RULE IN YOUR HEART



Reading in *Awakened*

Pgs. 153-165

Opening Reflection

What emotions are often created by a need for control?
How do those emotions conflict with the biblical command to let
the peace of Christ rule in our hearts (Col 3:15)?

Notes

What God's Word Tells Us

The book of Luke records the story of two sisters who both loved Jesus but had opposite priorities. Martha was a person who enjoyed being in control. She felt overwhelmed with all the things she had to do when Jesus was on His way to her house. She wanted the rooms to be spotless, the food to be delicious, and for her guest to be impressed with how she managed to do it all. Her sister Mary took the opposite approach. She was so excited that food and dusty floors were the last things on her mind. Everything that needed to be done just faded away, because what could be more important than spending time with Jesus? Talk about the principle of separate realities!

When Jesus arrived, Mary just plopped herself down at His feet and tuned everything else out. "But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to Him and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me'" (Luke 10:40 ESV). You can imagine what she was thinking: *Why am I the only one who gets things done around here?! Everything would fall apart without me! How can I relax?* But Jesus said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41-42 ESV).

Martha wasn't wrong to care about organizing her house and being a gracious hostess. If she had served the Lord with a glad heart and not concerned herself with Mary's behaviors, she would have saved herself a lot of frustration. Jesus didn't correct her because she chose to work; the rebuke came after she expressed her anxious, resentful attitude over Mary's differing priorities. Martha chose to create a problem when there was none. She wasn't happy that things weren't going her way and probably stressed out the people around her frequently because they weren't doing what she thought they should be doing.

The "portion" Mary had chosen was good, but Martha's wasn't *bad*: taking action is important and clearly necessary for us to follow God's plan for our lives. "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven" (Eccl 3:1). We can't sit around and float on a glory cloud all day when there is work to be done. But the book of Luke says Martha was "*distracted* with much serving." Her good works actually prevented her from connecting with God. If we cannot stop *doing* long enough to just *be*, we won't hear God's voice speaking to us. We cannot value control over the peace that comes from spending time with God and allowing His will to prevail over ours.

Be open to the Holy Spirit's leading and let God show you which things you need to act on and which you need to let go of. Give the people around you space to be themselves and do things their own way sometimes. Rather than expecting everything to make sense and follow your personal logic, appreciate the paradox and nuance in your life. Remind yourself that it's okay not to understand everything that happens. Above all, "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful" (Col 3:15).

Application Questions

Is there a task at work that you believe has only one right way to complete? Examine that area closely—is it possible to accept other methodologies and approaches?

What is something that you choose to see as a problem instead of accepting as it is? How can you reframe your thoughts about it?

Is there some aspect of your life that is important, but you've gotten out of balance and decided it is all-important and you can't be content without it? What irrational standards do you need to let go of?

What is something that is unfair or completely illogical that gets you upset? How can you change your thinking so that you don't create an emotional problem in addition to the practical problem?

Are there any unknowns in your life that you feel like you must figure out in order to have peace? What biblical truths can help you be okay with not knowing?

Additional Scripture

Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

(Matt 6:25-34 ESV)

"To Do" Challenge

Make a t-chart. On the left side, write down a few things that frustrate you or make you lose your peace because you don't have control over them. On the right side, note the related aspects that you *do* have control over. For example, you can't control whether or not students are motivated to learn. You *can* control your reaction to their lack of motivation: whether you get mad at students if they don't participate or if you continue supporting them. And you can control whether you create engaging lessons and try to incorporate students' interests whenever possible. Shift your focus from the things that you can't control to the things that you can, and make a conscious decision to do so when you're talking with other educators about perceived problems.

Prayer: *Jesus, help me not to resist reality. Remind me that I'm complaining and getting annoyed over situations that You allowed or placed in my life. Ultimately, God, You are concerned with my heart attitude and my spiritual growth, not my comfort. Shift my priorities to align with Yours, Lord. I want to maintain my peace even when I feel totally helpless and out of control. I trust You, and I submit to You. Your word says, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa 55:8-9). Take my mind off the silly earthly problems, and the big stuff that only You can comprehend. Let Your peace be the ruler of my heart. No matter what happens today, this is the day which You have made; I will rejoice and be glad in it (Ps 118:24 NKJV).*