

THE FRIENDSHIP OF JESUS WITH A FAMILY FROM BETHANY

GOLDEN TEXT

“Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus”. (John 11:5)

USEFUL PRACTICE

In a family, friendship with Christ evokes fellowship, counsel, mutual affection, and reciprocity in relationships.

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 10:38-42; John 11:5, 11

Luke 10

38 As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.

39 She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what he said.

40 But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”

41 “Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things,

42 but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.”

John 11

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

11 After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- I) To explain** the social life of Jesus;
- II) To list** the fruits of friendship with Jesus;
- III) To teach** lessons we can learn about Jesus' friendship with the family from Bethany.

INTRODUCTION

Friendship is one of life's most precious assets. In this lesson, we will study Jesus' friendship with the family of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. We will see that this family hosted our Lord in their home and therefore enjoyed blessing influences in everyday life. Indeed, it is a special story that teaches us precious lessons on how to enjoy a relationship of holy friendship with the Lord Jesus.

I - THE SOCIAL LIFE OF JESUS

1. Jesus was a social being. Raised in his parents' home in the city of Nazareth, Jesus developed personal relationships like anyone else. As the eldest son and obedient to his parents, he accompanied Joseph and learned the trade of carpentry. In social relationships, Jesus lived with people, both inside and outside the family, and established friendships. After leaving his mother's house, he was willing to follow the project of the Heavenly Father. During that time, he wandered throughout the land of Palestine, preaching the Gospel, performing wonders and signs as a confirmation of his ministry, and establishing great friendships. Not surprisingly, our Lord admitted to his disciples: "I no longer call you servants, [...] Instead I have called you friends" (John 15:15).

2. A hospitable house. There was a family in Bethany that enjoyed a beautiful friendship with the Lord Jesus: the family of Martha, Mary and Lazarus (John 12:1, 2). Every time he went to Jerusalem, Jesus would visit that family which became special in his interpersonal relationships. It was a sincere friendship in which the family hosted our Lord in a welcoming

way.

3. Jesus was received by this family. If among his brothers there were those who did not understand his mission, Jesus found in Martha, Mary and Lazarus a special welcome for his call. The episode that marks this friendship, after the mission of the Seventy, is when our Lord went, with his disciples, to the village of Bethany. In that case, Martha was the one who received him; and her sister, Mary, sat at his feet to listen to him (Luke 10:38, 39). Certainly, Jesus used those mission trips to visit his friends.

II – FRUITS OF FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS

1. Real presence of the Son of God. When Martha, Mary and Lazarus found in Jesus the answer to all their questions, they understood that that relationship with the Savior was more than a mere social relationship. It was the real presence of the Son of God within their house (Matt. 10:40). This means willingly submitting to his teachings and commandments, enjoying a special family relationship with the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:16).

2. Spiritual development. A family's friendship with Jesus leads to adoration, contrition, and spiritual brokenness. Three times, the authors of the Gospels mention different attitudes of Mary, sister of Martha, in relation to the Lord Jesus. First, in her own home, when Jesus visited the family, Mary sat at Jesus' feet to listen to him (Luke 10:39). Second, when grieving the death of her brother Lazarus, she fell at his feet and wept for sorrow (John 11:32). And finally, at home, Mary worshiped Jesus by pouring an ointment of pure nard on him, anointing his feet, and wiping them with her hair (John 12:3). Here, the lesson is clear: the family that welcomes Jesus into their home develops a deeply spiritual relationship with him.

3. Real service. If from Mary we learn a profound spirituality, from Martha we learn the importance of service in the family. Martha's concerns about the housework indicate her intention to please Christ, offering him special hospitality. It was Martha's way of pleasing him through works (John 12:2). There are those who condemn Martha's more active attitude towards Jesus. It is true that she was admonished by the Lord regarding excessive work and not to forget what is really needed (Luke 10:40). However, it is also true that she suited that service from the perspective taught by the Lord Jesus (John 12:2). When the family establishes a relationship of friendship based on Jesus, mutual service for the maintenance of the home must be taken into account. In Jesus, each member of the family must be active in housekeeping chores without, however, forgetting what is needed: the spiritual priority (Luke 10:40-42).

III – LESSONS WE LEARN FROM THE FRIENDSHIP OF JESUS

1. A love story. The story of Jesus' friendship with this family leads us to know a love story. Martha, Mary, and Lazarus were faithful disciples of Jesus. The siblings believed in everything the Master taught, and because of this, they revered him in an honorable and hospitable manner. They loved Jesus and were loved by him (John 11:5). Here, we learn that love is the feeling that should guide the relationship of the Christian family. In a home where friendship with Jesus has been established, the love of God must not be lacking (1 John 3:18).

2. Understanding others. We saw that Martha and Mary had different profiles. One acted more with the “heart” and the other more with the “hands”. One had more intense emotions, spoke more directly and frankly; the other was more peaceful, quiet, contemplative and silent. However, both received Jesus with joy and honor. The same goes for our family. People with different personalities live in the same house. It is necessary to be willing to know, understand and manage the personality of each family member in a wise and respectful way. Perhaps, this is the greatest challenge for keeping love in the home (cf. 1 Cor. 13:4-7).

3. Considering the cares of life. Desiring to please Christ, Martha worked to give the best of her home to Jesus. As a result, she ended up getting distracted by much work, forgetting to also prioritize the spiritual part of her life. This is what our Lord showed Martha when he said that she was distracted by much serving (Luke 10:40/NKJV). Of course, here Jesus does not teach us to neglect our duties. In fact, his Word is for people who are burdened with too many outside activities, as Martha was. Our Lord teaches that life is not all about work, for “man shall not live on bread alone” (Matt. 4:4). Life also has to do with the balance of the soul and spirit, for the human being will live on “every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matt. 4:4). Therefore, having a busy social life without a deep-rooted spiritual life is living in emptiness. Thus, in a short time we will no longer have spiritual fervor. Our family must be the environment in which our life with God is enhanced so that our social life is productive and blessed.

CONCLUSION

Our friendship with Jesus implies having communion with him all the time of our lives. He is the matchless Friend who comforts us when we need it; he comforts us when we cry. The family that cultivates friendship with Jesus lives in the dimension of love; tries to understand the other members of the family and ponders the cares of that life. The Christian family with Jesus

has the privilege of enjoying his real presence in everyday life. Therefore, we cannot live without the friendship of the Lord Jesus.