

Divine Attraction

Reference : Luke 10: 38 - 42

Martha put down the heavy waterpot to rest a moment and turning was surprised to see John watching her. *Haven't you gone with them John?*

Not yet! John drew closer. Sorry to alarm you, Martha. They'll be away all night I expect. I'm sure Jesus will be.

They had assumed Jesus would have gone to the Mount of Olives and some of his disciples with him. He would be there to be quiet and talk to the Father. He used the olive grove as a retreat whenever he was in or close to Jerusalem.

I wanted to stay to talk with you and Mary. You ARE talking to each other I hope!

Of course. We are sisters! Like you and your brother James, we don't stay 'off' with each other for long. Our father soon notices with Mary and me. He quickly gets us reconciled. He hates discord. I've seen how easily James can get rattled about things when they are not going his way. John did not answer that. He could have confided what Martha surely knew, that he was not far behind his brother when it came to fiery tempers and sulks, especially when it concerned a call for justice. But John also knew he had changed and mellowed since he had spent time with Jesus. It was his sense of fairness which had made him stay now.

Mary's sweeping up out front, Martha told him. She's finished here. John could see that by the neat broom patterns in the sand. That was how Martha liked it to be!

Let me help you. John took the big water jar which Martha had put down. She did not object to his offer. It goes over by the back wall with the others, she instructed him. That's the biggest. It goes at the far end closest to the wall.

John could barely hold back his amusement at the sight of the regimented assembly of water pots in a line of descending sizes. *All in order he laughed. Like a row of Roman legionaries. Shall I fill it?*

No. We'll do that fresh in the morning.

John left the pot and returned to where Martha was now sitting in the shade of their eucalyptus tree. It's fragrance was strengthening in the early evening

dew. I stayed, he said, because I wanted to say I hope you were not upset by the way the Master spoke to you. You looked hurt. John sat on the ground in the shade.

Not really, John. I know what he meant, and he was right. You may not have noticed his grin when he spoke. He has a way of knowing people so well, even at a first meeting. You've probably gathered that I get fussed and bothered when there's a lot to do and I'm under pressure. It was just that time was going on. I didn't want the Master, or the rest of you to go without a meal, especially if he was going to spend the night in the Garden. Then I do get particularly fussed when strangers call.

We're not strangers! John protested.

Not to me and Mary, no, but you are to the neighbours. I got so bothered when I got up to start sorting a meal and Mary didn't come with me. I asked her to ... She just sat there, her eyes glued on Jesus and stayed and stayed. I naturally thought 'What would neighbours say? Her there with you men and staring wide-eyed at Jesus I was a bit hurt I suppose, My first reaction was, 'Surely he doesn't think I don't want to stay and listen.'

He was inviting you to do both I suppose. John already had wisdom beyond his youth. I know it sounded as though he thought your work entertaining us was less important than learning about the Kingdom.

It is! Mary interjected and John went on.

He was really inviting you to slow down - not to be so busy that you had no time to listen - no time to enjoy the moment because you were preparing for things that may not be necessary.

I know he was right. Martha sighed in agreement. Mary really wanted to help but she says she just couldn't drag herself away. She's been making up for it since. She's out there now gossiping with those neighbours I was worried about! Look at how she's cleaned up the yard! BUT I have to say, if I hadn't made a move and got on with things, you'd have all gone hungry and the neighbours would still be talking this time next year! We are a good team really. I've had to learn we must work together. Life in a family can't be a competition. There's never any winners when you work together. I have to confess though that sometimes I wish I had Mary's uncluttered faith and

devotion. She's in love with him, that's for sure! Me too I suppose but not in the same way I show it in 'doing practical things to help him'.

We're all devoted to him. John turned to look at Martha. That's why we are here!. I could be back home, fishing tonight, but he's called me to go with him and I'm stuck. I can't do anything else. There's lots of people at home think we've gone mad! I watched Mary as she was listening to Jesus. She was so intense. I think she could probably tell you word for word what he said. I know exactly how she was feeling. Every word mattered. It was as though he had thrown a net over us and was drawing us to him. When he first called us he said he wanted us to fish for people. That's exactly what happens! He catches you!

I know, Martha agreed She laughed. But there was one fish in the net struggling to stay in the water, trying to tidy up and mend the net!

John laughed... But there comes a moment Martha when you know you're in his net and you're sure it's the best place to be. Even so some of us who are with him have our disagreeable times. We can't all be with him all the time. We still have to make a living. We are all different personalities, with our own abilities and we argue about who's most useful to him but he reminds it's not a competition. What matters most is being available for him, being ourselves, doing what we can, when we can and doing it together. His mother said his work was like one of her wonderful tapestries, all the different threads and colours sown together to make one big picture! Martha,

he doesn't expect you to just do the chores, or Mary to be listening to him all the time and neglecting her part. You can spend some time listening and being there just as in the same way Mary can help you - as she is doing now. However, I agree with Jesus, the best part is being with him. Like Mary I can feel the peace of God there all muddled up with the excitement of a great love revolution which will change everything.

John paused for a moment wondering if he should go on, then said ... I spoke with Mary. She feels like I do. Jesus is so amazing, so wonderful. Not just the miracles, the healings, his stories, but his whole being; the way he goes back to basics about loving God and loving and forgiving one another He talks about God personally, as his Father and there IS something divine about him. You wouldn't

want to miss that. It's so big, When you are with him you can feel as though you're in touch with the deepest part of the sea and the world above the clouds all at the same time. His words, his stories..... they make sense in a way we could never get excited about listening to other Rabbis teaching. He puts God into our language; into everyday stories which make you want to stay and hear more. He cares about people.

He's not afraid to speak out when things are wrong though, Martha observed. Perhaps, deep down, she was still smarting a little over Jesus' words to her. You say the Rabbis and Pharisees don't teach as he does, but they don't like him for it. They're envious of the way he attracts the crowds. There's going to be trouble there.

He knows that, said John. He tells us about it. He says the time will come when they will want to kill him

No, never that, Martha almost sobbed. Surely it won't come to that!

I don't know. He talks about it being all part of God's plan - what he's here for. We argue about it we don't want to believe it. We don't want him to leave us any more than Mary does.

You argue? Mary had come in. Surely you grown men don't argue! Her voice was gentle, tired, a sadness underlying the humour. I heard what you were saying and I hate the thought of losing him. Do you think God would let that happen? At the moment I can't bear the thought of being without him.