

BE STILL! (Ps 46:10)

Ps 46:10; Ex 3:1-6; Lk 10:38-42

I. “STILL” DEFINED (can be either adjective, adverb, or noun)

- A. Motionless—“still photo” rather than motion picture; “still life” drawing; eye of hurricane
- B. Quiet
 - 1. Awaiting, expecting, attending—e.g. J.F.K. announcement re Cuba; F.D.R re Pearl Harbor
 - 2. Listening—music (Van Cliburn performance); winds (whether rustling in trees or portending storm); animals’ voices (indicating species, identifying bird songs)
 - 3. Looking—lightning flashes (part of Rocky Mountain majesty); sunsets (Hawaii photos); cloud formations (beguilingly beautiful; portending weather)
- C. Passive
 - 1. As with five physical senses (sight; hearing; smell; taste; touch), absorbing (like ink blotter) not manufacturing (as in abstract paintings) information
 - 2. Aristotle’s ancient, accurate distinction between passive and active mind

II. EXAMPLE #1: Moses (Ex 3:1-6)

- A. Proper Place—the “Mountain of God”—Horeb/Sinai; some places are better than others!
 - 1. Rarely does God appear in cacophonous crowds, cities, marketplaces—nor in technological sites
 - 2. Prophets (e.g. Elijah, Amos, John the Baptist) typically encounter God in desert or mountainous places—Toynbee re withdrawal & return of “creative minorities;” Whitehead re rural thinkers & “nature”
 - 3. Jesus both illustrates (by going “apart” to isolated or mountainous regions) and enjoins (secretly find private room of prayer (Mt 6:6) to avoid appearing “spiritual” while encountering Spirit
- B. Meaningful Moment—burning bush aflame but not consumed
 - 1. Miraculous Bush—fire represents transcendent God, since bush not consumed; Pillar of Fire guided Israelites through wilderness; fire fell on Elijah’s offering; Tongues of Fire distinguished Pentecost
 - 2. Supernatural Person—Angel? Jahweh? Christ?
- C. Clear Call—“Moses, Moses”
 - 1. Pointedly Personal—specific person’s name, inescapably focused; thus Samuel’s & Isaiah’s & Saul’s calls; pattern repeated throughout Church history (e.g. St Francis & Billy Graham *et al.*)
 - 2. Persuasively Real—undoubtedly Someone speaking; clear memory guides called one thereafter
 - 3. Compelling Command—remove shoes, for being barefoot connotes respect (thus in Japanese culture shoes left at the door)
- D. Right Response
 - 1. Moses Heard: “Here I am”—so too Isaiah’s testimony
 - 2. Moses was Awed: prostrate posture reveals openness to God’s Presence & Guidance
 - 3. Moses Heeded the Word: shoes removed and humility evident
- E. Final Revelation
 - 1. Jahweh—God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob soon revealed as “He Who Is” or “I Am Who I Am”—the Great I Am singularly worthy of worship
 - 2. Moses’ Mission—deliver his people; truly a “mission impossible” but in fact possible when divinely orchestrated
 - 3. Ultimate Promise—Land of Israel; ever after Holy Land central to God’s plan

III. EXAMPLE #2: Mary of Bethany (Lk 10:38-42)

- A. Sister Martha focused on **human** Jesus
 - 1. Her hospitality evident, praiseworthy, but overly-intense; non-essentials easily crowd out essentials
 - 2. Being busy about many things keeps one distracted from Permanent Things
 - 3. Martha personified the “active life” embraced by many—e.g. 20th century Jesuits; current Social Justice Protestants (including many evangelicals)
 - 4. “Corporal Works of Mercy” (feed the hungry; shelter the homeless; clothe the naked; visit the sick; visit the imprisoned; bury the dead; give alms to the poor) secondary, though always worthwhile;
 - 5. “Spiritual Works of Mercy” (admonishing sinners; instructing ignorant; counseling doubtful; bearing wrongs patiently; forgiving offenses readily; praying for the living and dead) primary
- B. Mary focused on **Divine** Christ
 - 1. Sitting at His feet, listening to His words, wondering at His Person
 - 2. Mary personifies “contemplative life” embraced by select orders/churches—Carmelites; Quakers
- C. In Sum: soul-salvation **the** ultimate issue