

Video #3 Transcript

I was 13 years old when the boy that I had the most amazing crush on came up to me one day and he asked “Do you read the dictionary for fun?” Oh my goodness. I was so thrilled. And I said “Well, of course!” and I even thought to myself “Maybe he doesn’t just read the dictionary. Maybe he reads encyclopedias, too!”

Well, he gave me a funny look that I couldn’t quite interpret and he walked away and so I thought to myself “Oh, he’s just kind of a shy type.” Well, it took me a whole week to realize that each time he elbowed the kid next to him and they would whisper and point at me, that they were not exactly admiring my advanced vocabulary. In fact, they were actually mocking me. And I felt shame when I finally realized that I was being the butt of their jokes.

The lesson I took away from this adolescent boy was that I can be capable *or* I can be likable. I can be myself, *or* I can be loved.

Now, I didn’t know it at the time, but I was listening to a liar. And here’s the thing: when you’re listening to a liar, nothing *seems* louder than lies.

Now, women get hit by shame from all sides. My own mother, she used to shake her head at the story of Mary and Martha. “If everyone sits and listens,” she would say, “who will get the work done?” I think she felt like this story condemned what she did best: hospitality. That it shamed her for what was really a gift. You see my mother didn’t know that she was listening to a liar, and that when you’re listening to a liar, nothing seems louder than lies.

Now, one day as I was rereading the story of Mary and Martha, I suddenly wondered *What if this story isn’t actually about Mary or Martha?* You see, I’ve been raised to always read the story and ask “What I should learn from Mary to apply to my life?” and “What should I learn from Martha to apply to my life?” and it was always, you know, “What do you learn from Mary *to do* and what do you learn from Martha *not to do?*”

But on this particular day it hit me: *What if this story isn’t really about either one of them?*

What if this story is actually about Jesus?

And what would happen if I actually ask myself *What can I learn about Jesus from how He responds to Mary? And what can I learn about Jesus from how He responds to Martha?* And that got me so excited that I decided I was gonna go through every single gospel and look to see exactly how Jesus responded to each woman that He encountered.

And I developed these two research questions. I wanted to first of all see

- (1) How does Jesus respond to each woman? and then
- (2) How does Jesus make each woman feel?

But as I got into my study of the gospels, I realized that my real questions were far more personal. What I was really asking was *How does Jesus respond to me?* and *How does Jesus make me feel?*

Now before I share with you just a little bit of what I learned, go ahead and grab a scrap of paper and if you don't have anything to write with or write on, go ahead and use your fingers, I'm gonna ask you to keep track, keep count of something. I'm gonna ask you to keep track of each statement (I'm about to read you a bunch of statements) that has ever *felt* true for you. Now, not that you believed it to be true, because everything I'm going to read to you is a lie, but I want you to keep track of how many have ever felt true.

Because here's the thing: we may not always know at the time that we're listening to a liar and when we're listening to a liar nothing *seems* louder than lies.

So either make a mark or keep track of each of these statements that has ever felt true to you. Even if you knew it to be a lie.

- I don't get enough done.
- I have to prove myself to everyone.
- I'm just a woman, so my needs don't count.
- I suffer in silence.
- I'm invisible.
- I'm too emotional.
- I can help others but I cannot ask for help.
- I'm not worth hearing.
- My talents are threatening to others.
- Nobody will defend me.
- I have nothing to contribute.
- I don't belong.
- I am alone.
- I'm too forgetful.
- I am a failure.
- I'm not good enough.
- I'm unworthy.
- Something must be wrong with me.
- I'm unattractive.
- I talked too much or too loud.
- I'm not needed by anybody.

- I'm too bossy or too demanding.
- I'm too disorganized.
- I am a disappointment to God.

You know, sometimes we hear these messages *spoken* inside of our own hearts.

Sometimes they are literally *shouted* to us by people that we care about and we're trying to serve.

And sometimes they are just *whispered* in the darkness late at night.

In the book *the Lord of the Rings*, and in the movie version as well, there's this chilling scene where the evil villain Wormtongue talks to the brave heroine Eowyn. Now, this is her most desperate hour. She has just lost her beloved cousin and is in deep mourning and Wormtongue comes threateningly closer and says "You are *alone*. Completely *alone*."

Now, what Eowyn doesn't know is that the king at that very moment is on his way to rescue her. She doesn't know that she's listening to a liar and that when you listen to a liar, nothing seems louder than lies. And this liar knows the deepest, most gripping fear in a woman's heart. First of all, that she is alone; and then worse still, that she deserves to be left alone.

Dr. Brenee Brown defines shame as *the belief that we are unloved, and that we do not belong*.

Her extensive research shows that

- shame destroys authenticity and intimacy.
- It silences us when we most need to speak.
- It isolates us when what we really need is community, and
- it offers us destructive habits to numb our neediness.

I believe shame is the enemy's number one weapon against women.

And I know I'm not the only woman who has felt the power of shame. Maybe you didn't learn the power of shame from a 13-year-old boy Maybe you learned it through a struggle with food and weight. Maybe you learned about shame from someone who forced you into submission. Maybe you learned the power of shame because of belittling words that you heard and took to heart. Maybe you learned the power of shame through a child's poor choices.

You may not have known it at the time that you were listening to a liar, but when you're listening to a liar, nothing *seems* louder than lies.

We all know the power of shame.

And let's just be clear: shame is *not* the same thing as *guilt*, which is the knowledge that I have made a mistake. And shame is also not the same thing as *conviction*, which is the Holy Spirit prompting specific repentance.

Shame is that feeling that I am a mistake that I am defective and when shame hits full force it is so easy to come to the conclusion that I came to when I was 13: *I can be myself or I can be loved.*

We forget that we're listening to a liar because when you're listening to a liar, nothing *seems* louder than lies.

Now, back to my study of Jesus' encounters with women in the gospel - and remember I was asking myself these head questions, these research-y questions: "How does Jesus respond to women?" and "How does Jesus make women feel?" But as I went on I realized no, these were heart questions. These are very personal, intimate questions. *How does Jesus respond to me? and How does Jesus make me fee?*

Now we're gonna have to limit ourselves just to the stories of Jesus with Mary and Martha. I wish I could take you through all the stories I studied, but time won't allow us.

Now I know for many of us, this is a very familiar story. We might feel like we know all there is to know about it. So what I would invite you to do is just put on blinders. Don't think about Martha. Don't think about Mary.

Focus on Jesus.

We're gonna start in Luke 10, versus 38 through 42.

"As Jesus and His disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She has a sister called Mary who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what He said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked the Lord 'Don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me.' 'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered, 'you are worried and upset about many things. But few things are needed or indeed, only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.'"

So the first thing I noticed here is that Jesus calls her by name. "Martha. Martha." Now, how we hear this is vital. I grew up with *The Brady Bunch*, so it's really tempting to hear this as "Martha, Martha, Martha!" but I don't think Jesus was disappointed or angry or even that this was a "Here we go again..." eye-rolling kind of thing. I think He said her name twice to emphasize his love for her, and His connection to her.

The next thing I recognize is that Jesus accurately reads her emotions. My goodness, what some of us would give for a man who accurately read a woman's emotion and then doesn't say "Well, if that's the way you choose to feel..." afterwards.

The next thing I see is that Jesus expresses concern for her. He doesn't say she's doing anything wrong, and He doesn't blame her or shame her.

And then Jesus offers her an alternative, because what she's doing is having harmful consequences and there's something better available to her.

The next thing I see is that Jesus helps her focus. She's missing out on what's most important because of what feels so urgent to her, and then Jesus reveals something better.

Now, I used to think to myself "Jesus, why, why are you pitting one sister against the other? Don't you know better than to compare siblings, especially when they're both girls?" But this time through I realized "Oh, my goodness, Jesus isn't the one who drags Mary into the conversation. Martha's the one who brings up Mary." Jesus is just continuing the conversation that Martha herself began, so this isn't a "Why can't you be more like Mary?" kind of thing. It's "I have something so much better for you, Martha." That's what Jesus is communicating.

And then Jesus contrasts the temporary with His eternal. He says "it will not be taken from her" referring to Mary, which implies that whatever Martha currently has will be taken from her. Her "worried and upset" over many things is causing her to miss out.

Moving on to John 11. Martha and Mary have sent word to Jesus that their brother Lazarus is sick, and they even refer to him as the one you love. Starting at verse 4:

"Now when he heard this, Jesus said this sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory, so that God's son may be glorified through it. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, so when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days."

What I see happening here is that Jesus shifts perspective. The sickness is not about them, it's about God and what He is going to do.

The next thing I noticed is that Jesus loves. *Obviously*. It's so obvious that the writer of this gospel points out that Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus.

And Jesus waits, and I gotta confess, this is a hard one for me because in my mind, this is so contradictory. I feel like "Well, if you really loved me, you would do what I want when I want it." But it's not contradictory for Jesus to love someone and wait.

In fact, in this particular version of the scriptures, it's actually connected. It says "so He waits."

Back to John 11, this time verses 21 through 27.

"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now, God will give You whatever You ask. Jesus said to her 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha answered 'I know he will rise again in the Resurrection at the last day.' Jesus said to her 'I am the resurrection and the life, the one who believes in Me will live even though they die, and whoever lives by believing in Me will never die. Do you believe this?' 'Yes, Lord,' she replied. 'I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God who is to come into the world.'"

What I noticed here is that Jesus assures Martha. He takes initiative to meet her need, and then Jesus teaches and He reveals Himself to her. He is utterly transparent. And next, Jesus offers hope and then He asks her a challenging question.

John 11:32-35.

"When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw Him, she fell at his feet and said 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and Troubled. 'Where have you laid him?' He asked. Jesus wept."

And what we see happening here is that Jesus empathizes with her. The circumstances are still not all about her, but he's basically communicating "I am with you in these circumstances."

And then Jesus joins her in her suffering. He knows what He's about to do, and He knows how the story is about to end, but He doesn't try to stop her from weeping. He weeps with her. Even though He knows what's gonna happen next.

John 11:38-40.

"Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 'Take away the stone,' He said. 'But Lord,' said Martha, the sister of the dead man, 'By this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there for days.' Then Jesus said 'Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?'"

What happens here - Jesus commands action, and Jesus reminds her of His words.

And then John 11:41-44.

“So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said ‘Father, I thank You that You have heard me. I knew that You always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here that they may believe that You sent Me. When He had said this, Jesus called out in a loud voice ‘Lazarus, come out!’ The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them ‘Take off the grave clothes, and let him go.’”

And what I see here is Jesus prays on her behalf, and Jesus heals and restores.

Now, back to my questions. *How does Jesus respond to me?* and *How does Jesus make me feel?*

Here’s what I found. I found 20 responses from Jesus.

- Jesus calls me by name.
- Jesus accurately reads my emotions.
- Jesus expresses concern for me.
- Jesus offers me an alternative.
- Jesus helps me focus.
- Jesus reveals something better for me.
- Jesus contrasts my temporary with His eternal.
- Jesus shifts my perspective.
- Jesus obviously loves me.
- Jesus waits.
- Jesus assures me.
- Jesus teaches me.
- Jesus offers me hope.
- Jesus asks me questions.
- Jesus empathizes with me.
- Jesus joins me in my suffering.
- Jesus commands me to take action.
- Jesus reminds me of His words.
- Jesus prays on my behalf.
- Jesus heals and restores me.

And just a short list of emotions in answer to the questions “How does Jesus make me feel?” Jesus makes me feel

- known,
- understood,
- valued,
- respected,

- challenged,
- loved,
- curious,
- protected,
- connected,
- safe, and
- cherished.

You see so often when we're listening to a liar, nothing seems louder than lies. But Jesus has a truth that is far, far greater that I'd like to illustrate with this video.

<https://vimeo.com/207226266/fa57839089>

How did it feel to see those lies crossed out?

To see them replaced by words of life?

And then to see the lies completely disappear?

You see, when you're listening to Jesus you won't hear a liar because His love speaks louder than any lie.

When you're listening to Jesus, you will know the truth and the truth will set you free:

You can be yourself and be loved *because* you are beloved by God.