

Rule Reflection Chapter 3 Paragraph 6

The Holy Spirit and Us

“Our other task is to listen....to the guidance and wisdom of the Holy Spirit in the stillness of the night, in the stillness of our prayers. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be filled with the love of Christ.”

Read: I read and reread the passage slowly, aloud; twice, three times; listen – stillness – filled.

Reflect: “...when you pray go into your closet...” Mt. 6.6.

“...One who loses his life for my sake will find it...” Mt. 10.39

“... listen ... stillness ... filled.”

“...love of Christ.”

Respond:

I’m thinking about ‘listen.’ It strikes me as an active verb; an act, a thing we engage. Yet as I read the metaphor of ‘closet’ and ‘lose,’ I hear us called to stillness, interior silence.

Do we listen, or do we simply be; in silence? Our Lord sends us to the closet for a reason. The passage is about much more than humility and the reference to the Pharisees throws a lot of folks off what is there. In the closet, we won’t hear, so we can’t listen. Our Lord intentionally mixes metaphors. The Holy Spirit isn’t going to speak to us in words or a voice. Yet he does speak to us.

So, when we listen to the Holy Spirit, it is later; and it doesn’t come from the head but from the heart. All to say; as we rest in silence, in that closet, we get just that silence. But, over time, we slowly evolve. As we detach, we become kinder, more patient, more engaged with our faith walk. We approach love; that is the “fruits” become more evident in our life. It is through the increasing evidence of these fruits that the HS speaks to us, and we listen for that.

I’m an agnostic on the HS “speaking” in any sense that is in any way related to language or telecommunication or vision or dream. Yet those appear in the scripture frequently. Post Resurrection, I believe that the HS speaks to us in our developing love, that is, in our developing fruits of the Spirit. It’s too bad we have only one word for all types of love because it has the sort of kumbaya by the fire-sense.

The love we refer to here is the one given by Our Lord as one of two laws. Love God... and love your neighbor. In the depth of those, we “listen” to and hear the Holy Spirit. The only way to get there is “in the stillness;” and the only way to be filled, even to hear, is by the love that Christ commands and repeatedly demonstrated.

Rest. This text has challenged me and the only way I can get at it is silence. It has been five days as I read the text, edited the remarks, then again and again ...listen...stillness...filled.

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