

Codependent Spirituality

As they continued their travel, Jesus entered a village. A woman by the name of Martha welcomed him and made him feel quite at home. She had a sister, Mary, who sat before the Master, hanging on every word he said. But Martha was pulled away by all she had to do in the kitchen. Later, she stepped in, interrupting them. "Master, don't you care that my sister has abandoned the kitchen to me? Tell her to lend me a hand." ²The Master said, "Martha, dear Martha, you're fussing far too much and getting yourself worked up over nothing. One thing only is essential, and Mary has chosen it—it's the main course, and won't be taken from her." Luke 10:38-42, The Message

As he went out into the street, a man came running up, greeted him with great reverence, and asked, "Good Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?" Jesus said, "Why are you calling me good? No one is good, only God. You know the commandments: Don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't steal, don't lie, don't cheat, honor your father and mother." He said, "Teacher, I have—from my youth—kept them all!" Jesus looked him hard in the eye—and loved him! He said, "There's one thing left: Go sell whatever you own and give it to the poor. All your wealth will then be heavenly wealth. And come follow me." The man's face clouded over. This was the last thing he expected to hear, and he walked off with a heavy heart. He was holding on tight to a lot of things, and not about to let go. Mark 10:17-22, The Message

"Believe me: I am in my Father and my Father is in me. If you can't believe that, believe what you see – these works. The person who trusts me will not only do what I'm doing but even greater things, because I, on my way to the Father, am giving you the same work to do that I've been doing...A loveless world," said Jesus, "is a sightless world. If anyone loves me, he will carefully keep my word and my Father will love him – we'll move right into the neighborhood!" The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish.

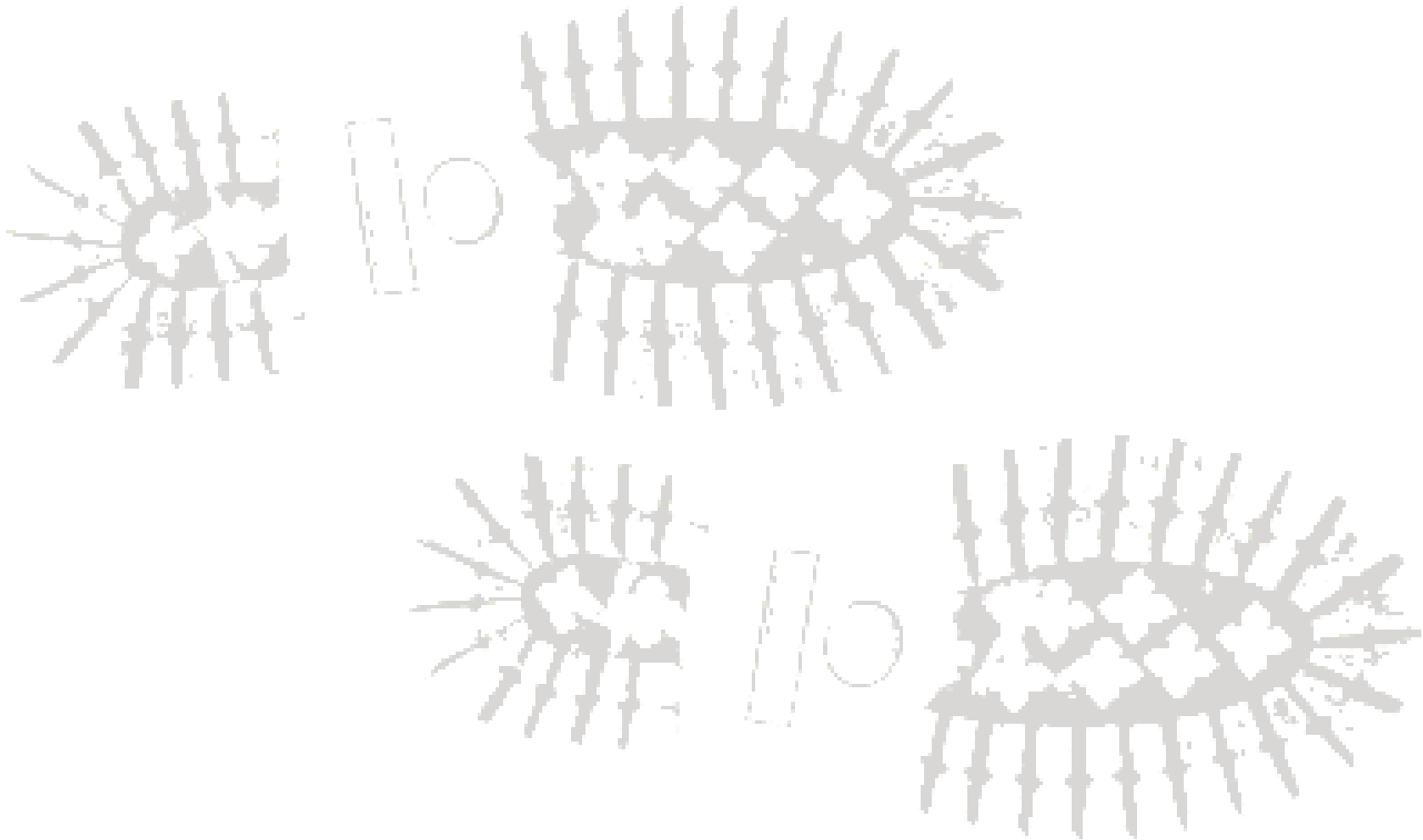
Pause to Prepare

Think about what Jesus is saying and how knowing his message might radically change our spiritual condition. Evidently, even Jesus doesn't think "good" is an adjective that should adorn his moniker. If this is true for Jesus, how much more true is it for us? Jesus looks this young man hard in the eye—AND LOVES HIM. Jesus is showing us that what he believes he also lives. He knows his theology, and it informs the way he loves others. This is huge.

Food for thought

1. Have you ever believed that good Christians are, well, good?
2. What kind of radical life altering things could happen in your life if you let go of the notion of goodness?
3. Before we go hog wild, I don't think Jesus is saying that our "badness" somehow contributes to the kingdom of God. So what does he mean by, "No one is good, only God?" What are the implications?
4. In lieu of pursuing perfection, what things might you choose to do differently this week, if you chose to trust God and left the assessment of good, bad, right, and wrong in his hands, not yours or someone else's?

John 14:11-12, John 1:14, The Message



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