

“Thursdays with Martin”
By Jack Bloomfield

Characters

George

Mary Lou

Martin

*****Synopsis*****

An old man is visited each week by his grandson. The grandson is eager to continue to discover all of the great wisdom his grandpa has to share. This particular day, he shares his deepest regrets along with a wish that he hopes his grandson will share with anyone and everyone who will listen. Its message is one he believes the whole world could benefit from hearing.

MESSAGE FOCUS: *Seeing all people in the world as our brothers and sisters and the importance of not waiting until the end of our life to realize it.*

Opening Scene:

George is coming up the walk to his Grandma and Grandpa’s house for his weekly visit to see his grandpa, who is in failing health. He knocks on the door and is met by his Grandma.

George:

(excited) “Hi Grandma!”

Marylou:

“Hi George, it’s always good to see you. You are such a special young man and you really bring grandpa a lot of joy when you come to visit.”

George:

“How’s grandpa doing today? Last week he wasn’t doing so good.”

Marylou:

(sadly) “Well, I have some bad news.”

George:

(Startled and frightened) “What happened Grandma? Is he OK?”

Marylou:

“The doctor was here this morning and he said that his time is getting shorter.”

George:

“What do you mean?”

Marylou:

“The doctor said that his heart is so weak and damaged that he thinks we should begin to prepare ourselves for the end.”

George:

(In anguish) “Oh grandma, I’m not ready to let him go. He still has so much to teach me.”

Marylou:

“He’s having a harder and harder time of it each day. It’s so hard to watch him suffer.”

George:

“What can we do for him grandma?”

Marylou:

“When it reaches a time like this, we can only hope and pray that he won’t be in too much pain.”

George:

“Can I see him?”

Marylou:

“Yes George, he knows you’re coming. You really make his day each time you come to see him.”

(George makes his way into the bedroom where his grandpa is sitting up in bed.)

George:

“Hi Grandpa, how are you doing today?”

Martin:

“Hi George. Better now that you are here. My last visitor was Dr. Norton. He’s all business, that guy. He doesn’t say much. Just pokes and pinches me a lot.”

George:

“Well grandpa, I know you say I make you feel better when I come to visit, but did you know that you make me feel better too when I see you?”

Martin:

“Really George?”

George:

“You teach me so much. Every time I visit you and we have our talks, I learn so much about life.”

Martin:

“You’re always asking me how I feel about stuff. Where do you get that from?”

George:

‘I don’t know grandpa. I just love and respect you so much and I like asking you stuff. You make me think about a lot of things.’

Martin:

“So George, what are we going to talk about today?”

George:

“Well grandpa, you’ve had such a long life and a good life, but I always wonder. If you could live your life over again, what would be the one thing you would do differently?”

Martin:

“I can answer that easily. You ask me what one thing I would do differently? Like have a different career or maybe marry someone different than your grandma. But George, the truth is, the thing I would change if I could do it over again is not a thing. It’s an attitude and a way I often looked at other people in the world. Deep down, and I didn’t talk about it much, I had bad feelings about a lot of people that were different than me.”

George:

“What kind of bad feelings?”

Martin:

“Well, I don’t know. I guess if I had to be honest, and I’m so ashamed to admit it, I had a lot of prejudice.”

George:

“What do you mean by that?”

Martin:

‘I spent a lot of my life avoiding people that were different than me. I pretty much stuck to (makes quotation gestures with his hands) “my kind.” I see now how afraid I was for no reason.’

George:

“You were afraid?”

Martin:

“I realized that my prejudice of people different than me was all based in fear.”

George:

“Fear of what?”

Martin:

“Now that I think about it, I don’t really know.”

George:

“Are you talking about people of different races?”

Martin:

“Pretty much anyone who was not like me. I always avoided people of other races, religions, and pretty much anyone else who was not like me.”

George:

“So this is the one thing you would change? Why grandpa?”

Martin:

“Cause as I look back now, I know I missed so much. When I looked at other people, I never looked at them as a fellow human being that I might have a lot in common with. I looked at other people who were different than me as people to pretty much avoid. Only in the past few years or so of my life, have I begun to see that all human beings are pretty much the same. For the first seventy years of my life I looked at others with an attitude of (quotation gestures) “Us and Them.”

George:

“What happened to change you grandpa?”

Martin:

“9-11”

George:

“9-11?”

Martin:

“The truth of the matter George is that I saw something that day that has changed my heart and my life forever.”

George:

“I would think that it made you hate certain people even more.”

Martin:

“No George, Something else happened. I saw something I had never seen before. I woke up to the fact that although people are so different in so many ways, when you see the heart of a person, you no longer see the differences that we often see.”

George:

What did you see?”

Martin:

“I saw people of all races religions, sexual orientations, political beliefs and classes become one people that day. All bias, prejudice and differences were gone. It totally changed the way I see other people now.”

George:

“I saw that too grandpa.”

Martin:

“Yes George, if we see all people in the world as human beings and our brothers and sisters and not as groups they belong to, our society would be changed forever. Here is something that I want you to have George. (reaches over to the nightstand and grabs a folded piece of paper) When I’m gone I want you to remember that this was my wish for the world and that my hope is that all people will live by its words each day and not just when tragedy strikes.”

George:

“What is it Grandpa?”

Martin:

“It’s a poem and my last wish for the world. You take it with you and share it with as many people as you can.”

George:

“Can I read it now grandpa?”

Martin:

“Sure George, but please pass it on. It’s a message the whole world needs to know.”

CONTINUED

(The lights fade from Martins bed and only a spotlight remains on George as he reads aloud the poem)

“ONE”

*As the soot and dirt and ash rained down,
We became one color.
As we carried each other down the stairs of the burning building,
We became one class.
As we lit candles of waiting and hope,
We became one generation.
As the firefighters and police officers fought their way into the inferno,
We became one gender.
As we fell to our knees in prayer for strength,
We became one faith.
As we whispered or shouted words of encouragement,
We spoke one language.
As we gave our blood in lines a mile long,
We became one body.
As we mourned together the great loss,
We became one family.
As we cried tears of grief and loss,
We became one soul.
As we retell with pride of the sacrifice of heroes,
We become one people.*

We are.....

*One color
One class
One generation
One gender
One faith
One language
One body
One family
One soul
One people
One world*

We are The Power of One.

Fade to Black...

THE END

Dialogue and Questions:

Do we often look at others in the light of “Us and Them?”

What are some examples of “Us and Them?” Races, peer groups, other schools/teams
Religions, political beliefs etc.

What are the negative effects of looking at people that are different than you with hatred
or fear?

What could be the fear behind not wanting to mix with people that are not like us?

Can we sometimes feel superior in our “group?”

What would the world look like if we all lived the words of the poem, “ONE?”