

Where Love Is,
God Is...

A Cantata with
Reader's Theater

Adapted from the
Folk Tale

by
Leo Tolstoy

Music and Words

by
Dorothy G. Killpack

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Cast:

Narrator 1 a woman, no singing

Narrator 2 a man, no singing

Old Soldier - Bass

Young Woman - Soprano

Old Woman - Alto

Boy - Young boy or young man (Preferably soprano)

Martin - High Baritone

Voice of Savior - Deep Voice, no singing required

Also Needed:

Harp

Violin

Chimes

WHERE LOVE IS, GOD IS

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CHOIR: THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD THY GOD

1. Martin was a shoemaker in a certain little town. Through his one basement window, he looked out into the street; and although he could see only the feet of the passersby, Martin usually recognized them. He had lived a long time in the little town, and there were hardly any boots that had not been repaired by his handiwork. Because he worked well and was fair with his customers, Martin kept very busy.
- 2) Martin had suffered much sadness in his life. All of his children, except the last, had died in infancy; and his wife had died in a terrible epidemic soon after the last child was born.
 - 1) This one, dear little son, was a great comfort to Martin, but just when the lad became old enough to help his father and be a support as well as a joy to him, he, too, fell ill with a burning fever and died.
 - 2) After burying his son, Martin gave way to such great despair that he even murmured against God and prayed over and over that he might also die.
 - 1) Martin's friends, however, told him that he must live for God and not try to judge His ways.

MARTIN, CHOIR, AND VIOLIN: MARTIN'S SONG OF DESPAIR

- 2) "Learn His will, do His will, then your joy will be fulfilled." Thus spoke Martin's friends. They told him to get a Bible and begin reading that very day. These words sank deep into Martin's heart so he did as his friends had told him and began reading.

1) Soon he found that the reading made his heart much lighter, and he looked forward each day to the time he would spend reading by his lamp. As he went to bed each night, he was able to pray to the Lord and say, "Thy will be done, Lord."

2) From that day on, Martin's whole life changed. He had never been a bad man, but he had enjoyed drinking and shouting at the pub, or saying foolish things, but now his life was peaceful and joyful. He would work throughout the day; and when he had finished, he would take his lamp to the table and read his precious book. The more he read, the better he understood and the happier he felt.

1) (Pause) One night he was reading in Luke, chapter six, where it says: "To him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other; and from him that taketh away thy cloak, withhold not thy coat also. And as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them likewise."

2) And then he read where the Lord says: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

1) Martin asked himself if his house was built upon a rock or on the earth. He felt sure that he had not done all that he should have, but he promised the Lord that he would persevere and asked the Lord to help him.

2) Then Martin read further, how the woman who had sinned anointed the Savior's feet and washed them with her tears. The Savior said unto Simon: "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath wetted my feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Thou gavest me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she hath anointed my feet with ointment.

1) Again Martin thought to himself, "That Pharisee was probably like me, just thinking of himself . . . and yet his guest was the Lord. I wonder how I would behave."

2) Still further on in Luke, he read how Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word; and Martha, fussing about her labors, said, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

WOMEN'S VOICES AND VIOLIN: HELP ME KNOW THE GOOD PART

1) Pondering these things, Martin laid his head on his arms and soon began to fall asleep.

V) Martin.

- M) Who's there?
- V) Martin? Martin? Look out into the street tomorrow, for I shall come.
- 1) Martin roused himself. Had he really heard the voice of the Lord, or had he dreamed it? Was the Savior coming to visit him on the morrow?

MARTIN, CHOIR, AND AUTOHARP: WHEN WILL MY SAVIOR COME

- 2) The next morning Martin arose very early, said his morning prayers, and then lit the fire and prepared a wonderful pot of soup and some porridge. Putting on his apron he sat down by the window to work. He couldn't help remembering his experience of the night before. He still wasn't sure if it had been a dream or if it had really happened. And so he sat looking more out the window than working, jumping up for a better look each time a strange pair of boots went by.
- 1) It wasn't very long before an old soldier came near the window. Martin recognized him by his shabby old boots. The old man's name was Stepanich; a neighbor kept him at his house for charity, and he was supposed to help around the shops. He began clearing the snow away from Martin's window. Martin glanced at the old man and then chuckled to himself.
- M) I must be going daft with old age. . . I see Stepanich clearing away the snow, and I imagine that the Lord is coming to visit me.
- 1) Yet, he could not resist looking, once again, out the window at the old soldier who was now leaning on his shovel to rest.
- M) I will invite him for some porridge and let him warm himself by my fire. (raising voice) I'm sure you must be cold,

Stepanich, come and warm yourself.

S) God bless you? My bones ache with the cold.

l) The old soldier entered Martin's cozy room. He sat gratefully in front of Martin's fire, and Martin gave him a bowl of hot porridge.

M) Here, enjoy this, I was just about to have a bowl myself.

l) Stepanich quickly emptied his bowl and began to thank Martin, but it was obvious that he would enjoy more so Martin filled his bowl again. All of the time Stepanich was eating, however, Martin kept looking out of his window.

S) Are you expecting someone today?

M) Expecting someone? Oh---well, I'm embarrassed to tell you, but last night I heard a voice while I was reading the Gospels, and I'm not sure if I dreamed it or if it was a vision, but I heard the voice of the Lord saying He would come and visit me today. You have heard about Christ the Lord and how He came to earth and suffered for all mankind, I'm sure.

S) I have heard of it, but I have never learned to read so I do not know much about it.

l) Martin talked awhile with Stepanich about how the Savior visited the Pharisee and was not received as he should have been.

M) I wondered how we would receive Him if He visited us, and while I thought about this, I heard someone say, 'Look into the street tomorrow, for I shall come.' And to tell you the truth, I just haven't been able to think of much else today. You know, He chose His disciples from among plain people like us; 'He who would be first;' He said, 'Let him be the servant of all; because blessed are the poor, the humble, the meek and the

merciful.'

1) As the old soldier listened, tears ran down his cheeks. When he rose to leave, he clasped Martin's hands and spoke with deep feeling.

S) Thank you, Martin, you have fed me both in soul and body.

STEPANICH: THANK YOU

1) After Stepanich left, Martin returned to his work, but still he kept looking out the window and waiting.

2) (Pause) Several people went by, and then a woman came up in peasant-made shoes. She passed the window, but stopped a little further on; and Martin glanced up at her. He saw that she was very poorly dressed and had a baby in her arms. She looked as though she were trying to shield the baby from the wind because the day was very cold. Martin could hear the baby crying, and the woman trying to soothe it. Martin rose, went to his door and called out to the woman.

M) Do not stand out there with your baby in the cold. Come inside and warm yourself and the baby, too. Come, sit here by the stove and feed the little one.

YW) I'm afraid I have no milk. I haven't eaten at all myself today.

2) Martin, shaking his head, dished a generous bowl of soup, sliced some bread and took it to the woman.

M) Here, you must eat. I will hold the baby.

2) Gratefully, the woman began eating and Martin played with the baby. Soon the baby ceased its crying and began to laugh.

Martin felt very pleased. As the woman ate, she told Martin that she was a soldier's wife and that her husband had been sent somewhere far away. She had been working as a cook until

her baby came, but they would not keep her on with a child. She had been struggling to keep herself and the baby alive, selling all that she had, and, finally, a tradesman's wife had agreed to take her on the following week. Then she arose and took the child from Martin. He went and looked among some things that were hanging on the wall and brought back an old cloak.

M) Here, this will keep you warm even though it is an old worn-out thing.

YW) Bless you, my friend. Surely the Lord must have sent me to your window, or we should have frozen. And Christ must have made you look out your window.

M) You are right, it was He who made me do it. It was not by chance that I saw you. I had been studying the gospels last night, and I'm not sure if it was a dream or a vision, but I heard the voice of the Lord, and He promised to visit me today.

YW) Who knows? All things are possible.

2) As she got up to leave, throwing the cloak around herself and her baby, Martin gave her sixpence and told her to get a shawl. The woman thanked him with all her heart as she left.

YOUNG WOMAN: THANK YOU

2) After the woman had gone, Martin ate some of his soup, and then began working again. Each time he felt a shadow go over the window he looked up at once, but no one unusual passed by.

1) (Pause) After a while, Martin saw an apple-woman stop by his window. There were only a few apples left in her basket so she had evidently sold most of them. On her back she carried a sack of chips. She was obviously on her way home and had stopped to shift the heavy sack and rest a moment. While she was

doing this, she set the basket down, and a boy in a tattered cap ran up, snatched an apple from her basket and tried to slip away. The old woman saw him, however, and caught the boy by his sleeve. He was struggling to free himself, and the angry old woman knocked the cap off his head and began to pull his hair. The boy screamed, and the woman shouted. Martin dropped what he was doing and ran outside, separated the two and took the boy by the hand.

- M) Let him go, Granny. Forgive him for the Lord's sake.
- OW) I'll take him to the police, I will. They'll lock him up for a year.
- M) Please let him go, he won't do it again. You must forgive him.
- l) The woman eased her hold on the boy and he started to run away, but Martin stopped him.
- M) Ask the granny's forgiveness. And don't do it another time.
- B) (crying) I'm sorry, Granny, please let me go. I won't do it again.
- M) That's right. Now here's an apple for you. I will pay you, Granny.
- OW) You'll spoil him that way, he ought to be whipped..
- M) Dear Granny, that may be our way, but it's not the Lord's way. If he should be whipped for stealing an apple, what should be done to us for our sins?
- l) The old woman said nothing. Martin told her the parable of the lord who forgave his servant a large debt and how the servant went out and seized his debtor by the throat. The old woman and the boy listened to it all.

- M) God wants us to forgive, or else we shall not be forgiven. We must show them better ways.
- OW) That's what I say. I've had seven children of my own, and there's only one daughter left now. I live with her and my grandchildren, and I work hard for them. They are all so dear to me. (Pause) Of course, it was only his childishness, bless his heart.
- B) Let me carry your pack for you, Granny. I'm going that way.
- 1) As the two went down the street together, the old woman completely forgetting to let Martin pay her for the boy's apple, they sang a song of thanks to Martin.

OLD WOMAN AND BOY: THANK YOU

- 2) Martin watched the two until they were out of sight, then went back to his room. He worked a little longer, but soon noticed it was getting dark, so he finished his work and, lighting a lamp, he opened his Bible. As he did so, he remembered again his dream of yesterday. Just then, he thought he heard footsteps, as if someone were moving behind him. He turned around, and it seemed as though people were standing in a dark corner, but he could not quite see who they were. And then he heard the voice.
- V) Martin. . . Martin. . . don't you know me?
- M) Who is it?
- 2) (Music) From out of the dark corner stepped the old soldier, then the woman with the baby, and last of all the old woman and the boy with the apple. They all smiled at Martin.

SOLDIER, YOUNG WOMAN, OLD WOMAN, BOY: THANK YOU

- 2) (Music) They all vanished, and Martin's soul was glad. He

put on his spectacles, and the tears flowed down his cheeks as he read from Luke:

V) I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in.

Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these thy brethren, ye have done it unto me.

CHOIR: INASMUCH AS YE HAVE DONE IT --- ALLELUIA

Ye Have Done It Unto Me