

Martha and Mary - Luke 10:38-42

Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. 39 She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." 41 But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; 42 but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

- I. Introduction
 - a. Jesus loves us so much that He gave His life for us
 - b. That is a love that we recognize and respond to thousands of years after He walked the earth
 - c. But while He live on earth, there were men and women that Jesus loved in a way that we can more directly relate to, with deep personal affection.
 - d. Only a few are identified in Scripture
 - i. John, the disciple whom Jesus loved (throughout John's gospel)
 - ii. He told all the apostles that he loved them (John 13:34; 15:9,12)
 - iii. He loved the rich young ruler (Mar. 10:21)
 - iv. And he loved a small household that lived in Bethany (John 12:5)
 1. Mary
 2. Martha
 3. and Lazarus
 4. Only a few verses are written in Scripture about them, but their characters and personalities are painted in vivid colors by their deeds and words.
- II. Let us examine Martha and Mary and their interaction with Jesus as it is recorded in Luke 10.
- III. Observations
 - a. They welcomed him into their home (v. 42)
 - i. This may have been the first meeting, but it wasn't the last
 - ii. Happened frequently –
 1. On at least two occasions that we know of (John 11)
 2. Many others implied
 - iii. Not without risk –
 1. Bethany where they lived was very close to Jerusalem and the center of Jewish opposition to Christ
 2. Esp. toward the end of Jesus' ministry, the hatred of the rulers spilled over onto Jesus' disciples and close friends - John 12:9-11
 3. The earlier gospels leave Mary & Martha unnamed –
 - a. "a woman" – Mark 14:3 & Matt. 26:7
 - b. yet "all will hear of her throughout the world" – Mk 14:9 & Matt. 26:13

4. But by the time John's gospel is written, the personal danger to these disciples has past, and the sisters are identified by name – John 11:1-3 – “this is the one who anointed Him with ointment”
- iv. Not without reward
 1. It resulted in a close, loving relationship - John 11:1-5
 2. It resulted in the restoration of Lazarus from the dead
 - a. John 11
 3. It resulted in further opportunities to serve
 - a. John 12:2 – Martha serving table
 - b. John 12:3 – Mary showing worship to Him
- b. Mary
 - i. She sat at Jesus' feet
 1. She was listening to him (v. 39)
 2. If soldiers sent to arrest him testified that “no man ever spoke like this man!” John 7:46, what might His close friends have to say?
 - ii. She thought Jesus was worthy of every second of her time in attention and worship
 1. This was a way of life for her (John 12:1-8)
 2. She was right
 - c. Martha
 - i. She was busy serving
 - ii. She thought Jesus was worthy of every second of her time in diligent service
 1. This was a way of life for her (John 12:2)
 2. She was right
 - iii. The two perspectives
 1. All my time in service, OR
 2. All my time in learning and worship
 3. The tension
 - a. Can't do both
 - b. Ought to be a balance
 - c. Ought to be a conscious decision to do both
 - d. Can cause trouble for a household
 - i. One spouse always wants to have the brethren over
 - ii. The other wants everything be just right for the brethren
 - iii. Who is right? They both are. There needs to be a balance
 - e. Can cause trouble for a church
 - i. Some brethren think the brethren should focus on reaching out and helping non-Christians

So may we like Mary, choose the better part.

Resting in His presence – hands and feet and heart;
Drinking in His wisdom, strengthened with His grace
Waiting for His summons, eyes upon His face.

When it comes, we're ready, spirit, will, and nerve;
Mary's heart to worship, Martha's hands to serve;
This the rightful order, as our lamps we trim, --
Occupied WITH Jesus, then occupied FOR Him!

-- Lois Reynolds Carpenter

IV. Application

- a. Is Jesus welcome in my home?
- b. What am I distracted and worried about?
- c. Am I attending to the one necessary thing?
- d. Where do I fall on the attention vs. service issue?
 - i. If I feel that Jesus deserves all my time in service, I'm right!
 - ii. If I feel that Jesus deserves all my time in worship and communion, I'm right!
 - iii. So let me make sure that occupy myself first with Jesus and then for Jesus
 - iv. And let me take care that I do not judge others harshly for striking the balance differently than I do.
 - v. And let me make sure that however much time I spend occupied for Jesus, I am first and foremost occupied with Him as the one needful thing that cannot be taken away from me.
 - vi. But if I feel that Jesus only deserves $\frac{3}{4}$, or $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ of my time, I'm SO WRONG!
- e. Are we treasuring up the things which can never be taken away from us?

V. Invitation