

## Jesus Visits the Home of Martha and Mary Luke 10:38-42

It seems Martha and Mary often hosted Jesus while He was in the area of Jerusalem. We will find it recorded He was in their home three times. By their actions and words, we know these two women loved Jesus very much and recognized Him as their Messiah.

### I The Setting

“Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received (Lit. welcomed) him into her house. <sup>39</sup>And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word (Gk – continually listening, active listener). But Martha was cumbered (Lit. - dragging all around; distracted; pulled apart in different directions; pulled away; over-burdened) about much serving...” Luke 10:38-40a

“he entered into a certain village” – Martha and Mary lived in Bethany. Why Luke didn't name it, we don't know. Bethany is about 2 ½ miles from Jerusalem, and it is recorded that, during the last months of His ministry, Jesus visited them three times. 1) this incident 2) Lazarus' death and raising - John 11 3) Banquet celebration of Lazarus' raising – John 12

“received him into her house” – This phrase means that Martha warmly welcomed Jesus to her home. We will see here and in the other visits that both women's interaction was very comfortable, speaking openly and unguardedly with Him! This would indicate a closeness to Jesus that matched that of the twelve disciples. It is wonderful to realize these were female disciples – followers of Jesus!

Let's examine how each of these women reacted to Jesus' visit and what they placed importance:

Martha – Not only do we see a warmth to Martha's attitude toward Jesus when inviting Him into her home, but her desire was to give Him her very best and to Martha that was a nice meal! **This would indicate her high esteem and regard for her visitor.** Her love language was servicing, specifically serving food in her home! Something she viewed as a need, and something she had the ability to do! I have observed the same thing in me. My love language is food. I see meals as a very important part of serving my family and those I seek to honor. If asked why I fuss over meals, I just naturally say – “Because I love you!” It's not pride – it's love! Maybe you wouldn't go quite that far, but I'm sure we can all relate to when we have had a VIP or a special group in our home, and desire to put out our very best. Maybe you plan a favorite family meal, complete with a special dessert. These types of meals come with a price – both money and time! Lots of extra steps of planning and preparation. But even when that is all done... then you have to get out the china, iron the tablecloth, make sure the centerpiece is appropriate, arrange seating and serving pieces, consider silverware, oh yes something to drink, make sure there is ice, enough matching stemware, or....do you serve buffet style, but that is harder for older guests, maybe two tables is better, recheck serving pieces for that, how do you divide your guests, don't want to overload a kids table with your old aunt, important things to consider....allergies, anyone on a special diet, or just dieting, do you force political rivals in the same room, are you fairly confident that the ribs will be done the same time as your roasted broccoli, and will the strawberry punch be too sweet for Uncle George dealing his recent diagnosis of diabetes. Wow...you can see how very quickly we can become very cumbered about with much serving!! Right?! The word “cumbered” in Greek means “dragging all around” or “pulled

apart in different directions.” Other translations have - very busy, too busy, overly occupied, preoccupied, worried about, upset, burdened, frantic, anxious, but the number one translation is **distracted**, other words – nervous distraction! I really love Martha, I totally relate to her, and I know my husband and kids would confidently say I have had many Martha-moments! This girl was seeking to multitask like a champ, but she was losing the battle!

Mary – Mary was simply excited to have Jesus in her home. Her action also reveals her high esteem and regard for their visitor. Here, under their roof, was the same Teacher that thousands would sit before. That hundreds traveled to hear, willing to sit before Him for days, even without food! Here He was in her home, her living room! What an unimaginable opportunity and privilege! Jesus of Nazareth was in her house, ready and willing to teach her, even a simple woman. So, she sat down at the most logical place, at His feet, the place of a devoted disciple, learner, a place of worship, respect, and desiring instruction.

## II. Martha’s Complaint

**“But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.” Luke 10:40**

“dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?” – What a loaded question to the God of the Universe! “Lord, don’t you care?!” I find myself blushing for Martha’s outburst. Could it have been that Mary had been helping Martha, but then drawn in to Jesus’ teaching? Actually, the language does not seem to indicate that; it really seems Martha **went into service mode** for the Messiah, and Mary **into hearing** from the Messiah. Love and adoration prompted both ladies to action.

“bid her therefore that she help me” – Martha strongly believed what she was doing was the proper response to Jesus’ visit – serving Him with every bit of strength and resource – and that Mary should be doing the same! Martha seemed to be viewing Mary as her sous (sue) chef and assistant with the kitchen work and it irritated her that Mary had abandoned her post to sit and listen to Jesus! So, Martha commanded Jesus (this certainly sounds like a command to me!) “tell Mary to help me!”

**III. Jesus’ Truth** The truth is – fret and fussiness must be reproved, and Jesus does!

**“And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, (Jesus’ double name use indicated a gentle rebuke was coming!) thou art careful and troubled (other translations - #1 worried and distracted – fretting, anxious, bothered, fussing, worked up) about many things: <sup>42</sup>But one thing is needful (Lit. – necessary): and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:41-42**

Truth about Martha – Matthew Henry, the British minister of the 1700’s, said this, “She [Martha] expected Christ to have blamed Mary for not doing as she did, but He blamed her for not doing as Mary did.” p. 1603

### Martha’s Good Action:

- Warmly welcomed Jesus into her home. – Greatly honored and excited to have Him!
- Prepare an elaborate meal to **honor Jesus** – loving host  
Everything in her power---plus---to make Jesus’ visit special

Martha's Good Action Out of balance Becomes Her Enemy: (used by the enemy of her soul!)

This can happen to men and women! This can happen in churches, ministries, and all things we seek to do for God! Notice the degeneration here.....

- Over-occupation and fussing over the details of the service...led to →
- Inner anxiety when realizing she could not meet her own expectations .... led to →
- A complete loss of herself, and she burst into a jealous temper and anger at both Jesus and Mary! She could not sustain what she had planned by herself! Ultimately, Martha blamed others and pitied herself! The One she had wanted to honor became one of the objects of her fury! She actually scolds Jesus for monopolizing Mary and complains that both of them had forgotten all about her.

Truth about Mary – Mary's choice to sit at Jesus' feet was the right place, and He commended her.

### Mary's Good Action:

- Eager and alert learner - Jesus always encouraged women to study the Scripture and learn from Him!
- Undistracted learner – totally unaware of the activity elsewhere in the house

Mary's Good Action was highly commended by Jesus

- One thing was needful – Mary got it right Mary was preoccupied with Jesus, not with serving Jesus! Martha was neglecting Jesus to minister for Him!
- Her position was not going to be “taken away from her.” We can see this statement taken in two ways:
  - Jesus was **not going to make Mary stop soaking up His teachings** to help mash the potatoes or whatever Martha had in mind for her! She had made the right choice to sit and learn from Him.
  - But also, we can see this statement from an **eternal perspective**. What Mary was doing, sitting and gaining the truth of God in her life, would be permanent. The mashed potatoes, roasted lamb, the meal fit for the Messiah that Martha had planned would be forgotten, and yes, everyone would be hungry again in 5-6 hours....but those words of life from the lips of Jesus would live for eternity in the heart of dear Mary!

### Believers' Application:

This incident is an example of Jesus followers desiring to serve and work for Jesus instead of sitting and learning from Him. Jesus always emphasized a heart of love and obedience, not solely work and sacrifice. These two attitudes have been at war with each other since the beginning. One leads to peace and growth, and the other can easily move to frustration and anxiety. We must be constantly evaluating our lives. Are we serving but neglecting the “good part?” Jesus desires us to be both active learners and active servers....But he places a greater value on learning. We cannot be a truly blessed active server until we have first been an active learner. Both are aspects of worship...but they must be in balance.

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Taken from the book: **Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World** by Joanna Weaver

*The Practical Power of “One Thing” – p. 58*

*The one thing that Jesus said was needed in Martha's life was fellowship with him—and that's true for us too. But the principle of “one thing” can also have smaller, practical implications that can help when life feels*

overwhelming. Here are some ways to practice one-thing thinking when your wagon feels overloaded. Seeking God's priorities over ours! Seeking God's will over ours!

1. Invite Jesus to rule and reign. Each morning before you get out of bed, invite the Lord to come take the throne of your life, to be your "one thing." Present your day to him and ask him for wisdom and guidance. Turn your agenda and lists over to God each day! Make your day His day by serving God with your hours, not serving your agenda or list of things to do.
2. Ask God to reveal the next step. As you go through your day, keep asking the Lord, "what is the one thing I need to do next?" Don't let the big picture overwhelm you. Just take the next step as he reveals it – wash one dish, make one phone call, put on your jogging clothes. Then take the next step...and the next. Throughout your day, keep giving your activities and schedule to Him.
3. Have faith that what needs to get done will get done. Since you have dedicated your day to the Lord, trust that he'll show you the one thing or many things that must be done. Do what you can do in the time allotted. Then trust that what wasn't accomplished was either unnecessary or is being taken care of by God. God will honor this giving of your day to Him!
4. Be open to the Spirit's leading. You may find your day interrupted by divine appointments. Instead of resisting the interruptions, flow with the one thing as God brings it across your path. You'll be amazed at the joy and freedom that comes from surrendering your agenda and cooperating with his.

***"Commit thy works (activities, doings, service) unto the LORD,  
and thy thoughts (plans) shall be established (will be successful)."***

***Proverbs 16:3***

"Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans." Proverbs 16:3 NIV

Other support scripture – Proverbs 3:6; Psalm 37:5

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These verses emphasize the balance needed in the life of a follower of God:

Psalm 27:4 – David's No. 1 prayer request from God – that he could be in God's presence and behold God's greatness and seek Him – all the days of His life! Bottom line – Have a relationship with God!!

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 – Solomon's final conclusion to the book of Ecclesiastes – Reverence God (Fear Him) and obey Him! Again, Bottom line – Have a relationship with God that centers on knowing Him and His will.

1 Corinthians 10:31 – Everything we do should be for the glory of God – not ourselves! Please God, seek not to offend others but to see them saved! (v. 32-33) Bottom line – All activities are to be done for God's glory.

Colossians 3:23-24 – Everything we do should be done to the best of our ability – for God – not for men! We "serve the Lord Christ." Bottom line – Do all our works with our heart for the Lord because we serve Him!

1 Peter 4:8-10 – Hospitality is a display of Christian love to others. We are told to do it without complaint. It is interesting that this is part of the conversation about hospitality, maybe because we are prone to complaining when being hospitable. Bottom line – Love through generous hospitality!

It is wonderful to realize that Martha learned from Jesus' gentle rebuke. John 12:1-3

We find much of the same scenario:

- Martha is prepping and serving a banquet meal – check the number of people? at least 15 people
- Mary at Jesus' feet – full of worship and sacrifice!

But this time Martha reacts differently – no “cumbered about with much serving,” no demand of Jesus, no complaint, no desire to pull Mary away from Jesus – Yeah! Both these ladies were serving and worshipping as God intended. What a lesson for us!

**Matthew 6:25, 31-33**