

# The Priority of His Presence

Luke 10:38-40 NLT

LUKE 10:38-42

**38** As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. **39** Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught. **40** But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me."

**41** But the Lord said to her, "My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! **42** There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her."

## 1. THE CONTRAST (VS. 38-39)

**38** As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. **39** Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what he taught.

In verses 38 and 39 we are introduced to Mary and Martha

- Martha takes the lead in welcoming Jesus and the disciples into her home.
- Martha is energetic, vivacious, full of life, and has a strong personality.
- Martha and Mary, along with their brother Lazarus, were two dear friends of Jesus who lived in Bethany. It's easy to imagine that Martha wanted everything perfect when Jesus came to visit.

- Martha did nothing wrong in working hard for Jesus – that was good. Her problem was that she became **distracted with much serving**. She was distracted from Jesus.
- Mary is much more reserved, quieter and generally has less to say.

The contrast in their personalities can be seen in their approach to faith.

- Martha is a spiritual workaholic. She believes that if you want to be close to God, you should be as busy as you can be in doing God's work. You all know I just finished a series on spiritual warfare and I won't reteach that but we all must be aware that Satan loves to keep us busy, even in church work, to distract us from real moments with Jesus.
- Mary has a different approach. She believes that if you to be close to God, you should simply sit at His feet.

Look at what the great Charles Spurgeon says, "The Martha spirit says, if the work is done, is not that all? The Mary spirit asks whether Jesus is well pleased or not? All must be done in his name and by his Spirit, or nothing is done." (Spurgeon)

- Every time Mary is mentioned in the New Testament, she is sitting at Jesus' feet.
  - \* She is at His feet after her brother, Lazarus, has died (John 11:32). When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."
  - \* She is at His feet in worship in John 12:3. Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from the essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance.
  - \* She is at His feet in this story.  
Mary: Sitting at Jesus' feet.
- Mary recognizes that Jesus is superior to her and that she needs to be in a place of listening.

- Mary recognizes that Jesus can tell her things that she cannot learn elsewhere.
- Mary recognizes that Jesus welcomes her to be near Him.
- Mary recognizes that it is not just information that she needs from Him, but a relationship.

## 2. THE COMPLAINT (VS. 40)

**40** But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing. She came to Jesus and said, “Lord, doesn’t it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me.”

Martha: Distracted from Jesus by her work for Jesus

## 3. THE CORRECTION (VS. 41-42)

**41** But the Lord said to her, “My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! **42** There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.”

Jesus responded by questioning Martha’s priorities (verse 41.)

**Martha, Martha:** We can almost sense the love in Jesus’ voice as He said this. Martha did good – she wanted to serve Jesus; but she had not added the **one thing that is needed**. The Bible speaks of **one thing**.

One thing I have desired of the LORD, that I will seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple. (Psalm 27:4)

When Jesus heard these things, he said to him, “You still lack one thing...come, follow Me.” (Luke 18:22)

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those

things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

- The principle that Mary grasped was “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).
  - Martha is busy, but Mary is busy being blessed!
  - **Being in God’s presence should always be the *first* priority. (on screen)**
- David was not called a man after God’s own heart because he lived a perfect life, but because he was always pursuing the presence of God.
    - \* “One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” (Psalm 27:4)
    - \* “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord.’” (Psalm 122:1)
    - \* “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for You, O God.” (Psalm 42:1)
  - \* Like David, we should long to be in God’s presence and seek every opportunity to spend time with Him.