

MARTHA, SISTER OF LAZARUS AND MARY

Luke 10:38-42, ³⁸It came to pass that on his way he entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her home. ³⁹She had a sister named Mary, who, sitting at Jesus' feet, heard his word. ⁴⁰But Martha was busy with many chores, and drawing near, she said, Lord, don't you care that my sister lets me serve alone? So tell him to help me. ⁴¹Jesus answered and said to her, Martha, Martha, you are troubled and troubled with many things. ⁴²But only one thing is necessary; and Mary has chosen the good part, which will not be taken from her."

Jesus visits Martha and Mary

10:38 - It came to pass that on his way he entered a village; – Did he enter which village? Jn. 11:1 says, "Then one named Lazarus was sick, from Bethany, the village of Mary and from Martha his sister."

-- **and a woman named Martha received him into her home.** – No doubt he gave a sincere welcome to the Lord. She sincerely believed in Jesus (Jn. 11:27) and by preparing a good meal she honored Him. Luc. 8:3 speaks of "many others who served him of his goods." Martha wanted to serve him too – with a good meal.

10:39 This one had a sister named Mary, -- What was their brother's name? Jn. 11:1-5.

-- **who, sitting at the feet of Jesus, heard his word. Q:** Was she literally sitting at the feet of Jesus? The expression "sitting at the feet" of someone indicates being taught by him. Done. 22:3 What hymn is based on this text? Mary was among those mentioned in verses 23, 24. Having ears to hear, Mary meekly listened to Christ's teaching. *There is no other scene more beautiful than that of a person hearing and absorbing Christ's teaching to be like Him.* It is what He desires above all, that we pay attention when He speaks. He tells us, "Learn from me" (Matt. 11:29).

10:40 But Martha was preoccupied with many chores, -- Martha wanted to serve Jesus with a good meal, but Jesus did not come into the world to be served, but to serve (22:27). He was more interested in teaching than in eating (Jn. 4:31-34).

Why did Martha have "many chores" if she was only going to serve Jesus? Did Jesus enter the home of these two women alone? LBLA says, "While they were on their way, He entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha received him into her home." Luke does not say that Martha "received" them into his house, but compare Luc. 6:1, "It came to pass on a Sabbath, that Jesus passing through the fields, his disciples plucked ears and ate," and Luke 7:11, "It came to pass afterwards, that he went to the city called Nain, and many of his disciples went with him, and a great multitude." These texts indicate that Luke concentrates on Jesus, even though the disciples were with Him. John 12:2 uses similar language: "And they made him a supper there; Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those sitting at table with him." And they made him a dinner there... Lazarus was one of THOSE who were sitting at table with Him. John also refers especially to Jesus, even though others were with Him.

Martha's language ("many chores" and that Mary let her "serve alone") indicates that she prepared food for the apostles as well. V. 38 says, "While they were on their way, He entered a certain village, etc."; there is no reason to suppose that the disciples were not with Jesus when He entered the house of Martha and Mary.

-- **and drawing near, he said, Lord, don't you care that my sister should let me serve alone? So tell her to help me** (do her part). – It was convenient for Martha to praise Mary's devotion, but it seems that anxious and worried people want others to be equal to them.

Martha wanted Mary to be like her, but Jesus wanted Martha to be like Mary. It was a very important occasion. Jesus was a very important visitor. Therefore, Martha was very busy, she hurried, doing many things, so that the food was perfect. This language not only indicates impatience on Martha's part, but also a complaint against both Jesus and Mary. Mary did not help him and Jesus allowed him to. But in receiving Jesus, would it have been right to leave Him (or Him and His apostles) alone in the room while the two women worked in the kitchen?

10:41 Jesus answered and said to him, "Martha, Martha, (repeating her name, Jesus emphasizes what he was going to say, compare 22:31) Anxious and troubled (restless, FL) you are with many things. – I was distracted, anxious.

--- Titus 2:3-5, "Old women should also be reverent in their bearing; not slanderers, not slaves of wine, masters of good;

⁴teach young women to love their husbands and children,⁵

to be prudent, chaste, careful of their household, good, subject to their husbands, lest the word of God be blasphemed."

The woman must be "careful" of her home fulfilling domestic duties, but many texts prohibit eagerness.

--- James 4:8 describes this condition as "double mind." This is a common fault among many church members. They are overwhelmed by the cares of life. As a result of being anxious and restless, she lost patience with her sister Mary and even with Jesus. Preparing a good meal on this occasion was praiseworthy, but it was not *necessary* for her to be anxious and distracted even though she was for Jesus the Son of God.

■ Matthew 13:22, "He who was sown among thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the zeal of this age and the deceit of riches drown out the word, and it becomes fruitless."

--- Luke 21:34, "See also for yourselves, that your hearts may not be burdened with gluttony and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and suddenly come upon you that day."

--- Philippians 4:6, 2, "Be anxious about nothing, but let your petitions be known before God in every prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving."

■ 1 Peter 5:7 "casting all your anxiety on him, for he cares for you."

■ Caring for each other is not condemned.

- 1 Corinthians 12:25-26, "that there may be no disagreement in the body, but that the members should all care for one another.
²⁶ So if a member suffers, all the members grieve with him, and if a member receives honor, all the members rejoice with him.
- 2 Corinthians 11:28 "And besides other things, what gathers upon me every day, the concern for all the churches."

The woman—both Mary and Martha—is to be industrious in the home, Titus 2:5; Prov. 31:25. In addition, he must practice hospitality (Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 5:10; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9). Obviously Martha was very fulfilled in this. However, now it is up to Jesus to exhort him. Jn. 11:5, "And Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus," and the Lord disciplines those he loves (Heb. 12:5-11). The world is full of "Martas", busy and troubled with many things. Luc. 8:14, the world is choking with the cares of this life. Jesus gives us a solemn warning in Luc. 21:34. See also Phil. 4:6, 7.

10:42 But only one thing is necessary; -- Ps. 27:4; 42:1, 2; 84:10. This is in contrast to "busy, and troubled with many things." Isn't being a good cook necessary? Isn't it necessary to invite the brothers and serve them a good lunch or dinner? Isn't *it necessary* to be hardworking at home? Compare Jn. 6:27. Martha wanted to feed Jesus with the food that perishes, but Jesus wanted to feed Mary – and also Martha – with the food that does not perish. Jesus does not explain how Martha could have served them food and at the same time received the spiritual food He offered, but it does imply that it would have been possible. Jesus does not underestimate the importance of physical nourishment, but emphasizes that spiritual nourishment is more important because it is more durable. For Martha at that time, serving that good meal was more important than hearing the word of Christ. (Compare the people who watch the weather on Sunday morning to see if the preacher finishes his lesson at a good time. One suggestion: don't fall asleep so late that you can't eat breakfast. Eat at least one toast or other bite so you don't get so hungry during worship.)

What shall we say about the sister who invites the visiting preacher to eat and then she stays in the kitchen to prepare a good lunch or dinner *and does not even attend the meeting to hear her preaching?* This is similar to what Martha did. Not only did she miss the Bible study Jesus presented, but she also criticized Mary for taking advantage of that study and Jesus for not sending her to the kitchen to help her sister.

Here is another question also: According to Jn. 6:27 is it not necessary to work for the food that perishes? Obviously Jesus is comparing two things and pointing out what is more important. But many believe that working for perishing food is the *necessary* thing. It is necessary to eat and, therefore, *it is necessary to work, completely subjecting oneself to the boss, or to the business or to the employment that is.* For them, work is *necessary* in the sense of being first. It is *necessary* without conditions. But isn't *it necessary* to attend church services to worship God? It seems that many

think that it is *necessary* but with conditions ("buts"); that is, it is *necessary*, "but you have to eat" (first fulfill everything that the job requires).

It is *necessary to* remember 1 Tim. 6:8, "Having sustenance and shelter, let us be content with this." It is *necessary to* reduce *desires* (the "I want"). We say *necessary* when in reality we talk about what is convenient, what we want.

No doubt many church members are in danger of losing their souls because of their eagerness to provide for their families. According to 1 Tim. 5:8 it is indispensable that man provide for his own, but at the same time if he does not first seek the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33) he will lose his soul.

-- **and Mary has chosen the good part**, -- The *good part*, the *one thing necessary* is the communion with Jesus that we have by hearing his word with all reverence. The *good part*, then, is the word of Christ (RCHL).

The conduct of these two sisters on this occasion is similar to their conduct on another occasion, Jn. 12:2, 3, Martha served and Mary expressed personal devotion to Christ by anointing Him for burial. On this occasion, Mary also recognizes the importance of taking advantage of Jesus' presence to hear his words. What about us? We must take every opportunity to hear Him.

-- **which will not be taken away from you.** – Rom. 8:35-39. Jesus compares physical and spiritual nourishment (Jn. 6:27). Martha wanted Mary to do like her, but Jesus wanted Martha to do like Mary. The most accomplished woman – the most industrious in the home – must find time to lay herself at the feet of Jesus Christ, studying the Bible and teaching it to her children. So many women think they don't have time to study the Bible because they have two jobs, two jobs, and each of them is "full-time" work; That is, women who work outside the home in offices or plants work about eight hours a day in that job, and then when they get home they have another full-time job. What kind of food do they prepare? How industrious are they at home? Then in their "free" moments they do not sit at the feet of Jesus, but at the foot of the television.

In this text Martha was "troubled and troubled with many things," but let us not forget other texts that indicate the faith of this godly woman: Jn. 11:21, 22, 27.

--- Luke 8:3 speaks of "many others who served him of his goods." Martha wanted to serve him too – with a good meal.

--- What Martha did was right and good, in complete harmony with what the Bible teaches about the role of women.

--- The contrast is not between what they did. The contrast is between "the necessary" and "the busy." There is nothing in this text that despises being a good housewife and being hospitable.

--- How much of Martha is there in each sister in this class and how much of Mary? John 12:2, after the death and resurrection of Lazarus Jesus visited them and "made her a meal, Martha served..." Obviously Martha was very helpful, very hospitable, and in

this case she is not accused of being "busy and troubled". The text says simply, "Martha served."

John 11:1-5, ¹**Then** one named Lazarus was sick, of Bethany, the village of Mary and of Martha his sister... ³So the sisters sent to say to Jesus, Lord, behold, he whom you love (**phileo, affection, Romans 12:10, affectionate**) is sick." They just warned, they didn't ask for anything. That's love, it just needs to warn of the need. Christ loved Lazarus, so He did not go immediately to heal Him because for the glory of God He waited until the moment to raise Him from the dead.

The two sisters, Martha and Mary, showed great faith and trust in Christ.

"Hearing it, Jesus said, This sickness is not for death (**death is a farewell to this world**), but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it. ⁵And Jesus loved Martha, her sister, and Lazarus."

--- God was glorified when Jesus healed the sick but even more so when He raised the dead.

John 11:11-13, "Having said this, he said to them afterwards, 'Our friend Lazarus sleeps; But I'm going to wake him up. ¹²Then his disciples said, Lord, if you sleep, you will be healed. ¹³But Jesus said this of the death of Lazarus; and they thought he was talking about the rest of sleep."

--- **Acts 7:60,** When the Jews killed Stephen he "slept."

John 11:20-27, ²⁰Then Martha, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went out to meet him; but Mary stayed home.

--- Martha was impulsive. Mary also went out to see Jesus but that's when He called her.

--- ²¹And Martha said to Jesus, Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." (Didn't Martha know that Jesus could heal from afar, Luke 7:7?)

²²But I also know now that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." (Two words for "ask", **Aitaeus, asking one as superior or Erotaus, asking one as an equal**).

--- had a lot of faith in Christ but didn't he believe that Christ is God, but had to ask God the Father?

--- ²³Jesus said to him, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection, at the last day. (But when he raised the dead, "his fame spread" everywhere. For example, Luke 7:11-17, the son of the widow of Nain; likewise when he raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. Didn't Martha know about these cases? Christ could raise the dead during His personal ministry because He was God, He didn't have to wait until the last day.

²⁵Jesus said to him, I am the resurrection and the life (**for Christ is God**); whoever believes in me, though he is dead, will live. ²⁶And whoever lives and believes in me will not die eternally. Do you believe this? ²⁷He said to him, 'Yes, Lord; I have believed that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who has come into the world.'--- Martha's confession of faith. But did you understand well that "Son of God" equals God (John 5:18)?

John 11:28 Martha says to Mary, "The Master is here and calls you." In Luke 11:28-32 Martha wanted Mary to leave Jesus to help her. Now he is asking Mary to go to Jesus.

John 11:38-40, ³⁸Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and it had a stone on it. ³⁹Jesus said, Remove the stone. Martha, the sister of the one who had died, said to him, "Lord, stink now, for it is four days old." **(Here Martha indicates that she did not expect the resurrection of Lazarus.)**

⁴⁰Jesus said to her, 'Have I not told you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?' – Martha did believe in Jesus but at that moment she does not know what Jesus intends to do, she only knows that the body was already being corrupted. Jesus had said that they would see the glory of God but had not promised to raise Him up on that very occasion.

Conclusions:

- Martha was an admirable woman.
- She was very helpful, very hospitable.
- But I had to learn the difference between "important" and "necessary."
- She had to learn the difference in being "careful of her house" and being "busy and troubled,"
- Many sisters need to learn these lessons.
- Let each sister ask herself, "How much of Martha is there in me and how much of Mary?"

[Wayne Partain, March 4, 2023, translated from Spanish with Microsoft Word]