

Martha, Martha

Bill Spencer December 3, 2017

Opening

- It's important to teach seasonal messages – and this is one... whether we initially see that or not.
 - **Luke 10:38-42**
Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."
 - **Luke 10:38** – Now as they went on their way
 - They went on their way – explanation of festival pilgrimage in Luke 10: 1, 5-9; set the context for our story.
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The Feast of Sukkot

- **Luke 10:1, 5-9**
After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go... Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house!' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal the sick in it and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'
 - Note that Jesus is staying in the houses that his 72 scouts have already identified as “receptive.”
 - The Festival of Sukkot
 - The festival lasts eight days in total. It is “Thanksgiving” and “State Fair” wrapped into one holiday. It kicks off the “Holiday Season” between Sukkot and The Feast of Dedication (Channuka).
 - The first two days of the eight-day feast were “Yom (day) Tov (good)” or “Holy Days” which meant you had to observe Sabbath rules. You can't walk more than 1/2 mile from your domicile – even if there's a Sukka (booth)
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Martha's House

- **Luke 10:38**
Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into HER house.

- Jesus entered a **village**.
 - Bethany is only 1.5 miles from the temple in Jerusalem
 - Their brother Lazarus is probably already at the temple with many of the men of the area for the celebration
 - And a woman named **Martha** welcomed him into her house.
 - Martha means “Mistress” or “Matron” – she was the head of the house
 - Martha would have been in charge of creating a place for travelers to stay if they couldn’t make it to the Temple. By religious tradition, she’s in charge of keeping the Sabbath days for all of her guests. **THERE IS A LOT TO DO!...** and now she’s hosting a Rabbi! Good for her reputation – bad for her work load. She wants to make a big impression!
 - **Luke 10:39**
And she had a sister called Mary, who **sat at the Lord's feet and listened** to his teaching.
 - Notice the position of Mary – “at his feet” – and she can hear his voice.
 - **Luke 10:40**
But Martha was **distracted with much serving**. And **she went up** to him and said, "**Lord, do you not care** that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me."
 - **Luke 10:40** – But Martha was **distracted with much serving**.
 - Distracted – you cannot be distracted if there is not an intended focus
 - “With much **serving**” - Don’t mistake “service” to God for intimacy with God
And **she went up** to him and said,
 - Notice Martha’s position – she went UP to him, “Lord, **do you not care** that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.”
 - “DO YOU NOT CARE?” – or Do you not see that I am serving you and it’s unfair that no one else has to?
 - **Luke 10:41**
But **the Lord answered** her, “**Martha, Martha**”
 - Seven times God uses people’s name twice – and there is always an eternal, timeless lesson attached to what happens next. Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, Martha, Simon (Peter), (Saul) Paul
- you are **anxious** and **troubled** about **many things**,
- Anxious – worried and filled with anxiety about an outcome
 - Troubled – some translations say “disturbed,” and that’s the root (“turbadzo” – Greek / “turbid” – Latin). It means clouded or murky.
 - Anxiety born of distracted living (improper focus) creates clouded thinking that cannot clearly see the truth!

- **Luke 10:42**
but **one thing is necessary**. Mary has **chosen the good portion**, which **will not be taken away** from her."
- **Luke 10:42** — but **one thing is necessary**.
 - One thing – singular focus aligns all other things
 - Necessary – lots of translations here – an “appointed priority”
- Mary has **chosen** the good **portion**,
 - Chosen – it’s our choice where we put our focus
 - Portion – inheritance. Think of Luke 15, “give me the PORTION that falls to me”
- which **will not be taken away** from her."
 - Will not be taken away – it is hers to keep ETERNALLY. An eternal inheritance is the reward of anyone who will take time to recognize the intimate invitation of God to place worship ahead of work. Both are important. Both are necessary. But one INFORMS and EMPOWERS the other!

MARTHA

CHOICE

Allowed the duties of the religious holiday season to take precedence over an invitation from the Lord to sit quietly and receive a gift.

RESULT

Her need to meet social expectations filled her with clouded thinking, anxiety, accusation, and stress.

MARY

CHOICE

Saw this specific time as an invitation from the Lord to sit and listen.

RESULT

She received a gift that could never be taken away. By all indication, she was at peace and felt no compulsion to meet the social expectations of the season. She wasn’t irresponsible with her duties – she was worshipful!

Did Martha Learn Her Lesson?

John 11:20-21

So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, ***“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”***

John 11:32

Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, ***“Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”***

John 11:32

Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, *she fell at his feet*, saying to him, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.”

John 11:5

Now Jesus **LOVED** Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

Summary

- THIS STORY LEAVES US WITH TWO OPTIONS
 - Allow the stress of the holiday season expectations to cloud our vision and distract us from the only thing that truly has eternal value.
 - OR
 - Invest time that we might not think we can afford to invest, to reap a benefit that we never dreamed we could acquire.

IF WE ACCEPT THE INVITATION TO WORSHIP,
 CAN'T WE TRUST THAT GOD WILL SEND US BACK TO WORK
 WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT?
 AND WON'T THAT WORK BE PROFOUNDLY MORE EFFECTIVE IN ETERNITY,
 IF IT IS INFORMED, INSPIRED, AND EMPOWERED,
 BY OUR PRIORITY OF WORSHIP!

Discussion Questions

These are the questions that were on the back of the bulletin for us to answer...

1. What did you like about this lesson?
2. What did you find difficult about this lesson?
3. What did this lesson teach you about God — or God in Christ?
4. What did this lesson inspire you to do?