



Scripture Reading: Luke 10: 38-42

Luke 10: 38Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. 39She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. 40But 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." 41But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; 42but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

This is one of the most emotionally charged passage, and many people get hurt by the time a preacher diligently comes to an honest conclusion. So I request that you control your emotions of anger and just look at it intellectually. This story is all about our priorities, and it is not about division of labor. Let us pay close attention to it and examine our priorities. Before we go any further, we must understand one important fact:

John 11: 5 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus!

The whole tone of this passage must be understood based upon this verse; They were so comfortable with each other they could almost say anything to each other.

Luke 10:38, 39 Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. 39She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word.

From other Gospels, we know that the village Jesus entered was called Bethany. It is only about 2 miles from Jerusalem. So whenever Jesus came to observe some feast in Jerusalem, He was using Martha's house as His staying place! The very beginning of this story tells us that Martha loved Jesus so much, she decided to invite Him to her house! Only when we like a person or love a person, we welcome a person or allow him or her to stay in our house for few days. So you can see two sisters in this house, and both loved Jesus. They had a brother also, Lazarus. I'll preach about him also if God willing! This was a very special family. Jesus even wept because of this family. He loved each one of them very much!

Martha also loved Jesus very much, and she was focusing on welcoming Jesus Christ and making Him comfortable in her house. She was focused on hospitality totally. But Mary was just dazzled by Jesus Himself. She was just drawn into being in His presence, and becoming engrossed in hearing Jesus answering everyone's questions, and His explanation of the Word of God! According to Jewish custom, no woman was allowed to sit at the feet of Rabbi. It was taboo. She went against the tradition and sat at His feet as His close disciple!



But Martha started worrying about preparing food for all the people. Just imagine, she had to cook for minimum 16 people (3 of her household and Jesus and His twelve disciples. Also, her friends and neighbors who may have occupied the whole house. That is a lot of work! But her right hand, Mary was in a different world. She must have eaten every Word Jesus spoke with an open mouth. I am sure, Martha must have called her many times. Mary might have behaved just like our children, "I'll be there in a while. Just five minutes, but with Jesus one hour of preaching would go like one minute! Time indeed flies when we are at His feet!

Luke 10: 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."

Martha's mind was not focused on fellowshiping with Jesus, but serving her guests! You can see clearly from this passage that she was burning out. Martha is like us. She did not want to have simple lentils and bread. Instead, she might have planned for a grand scale meal. There's nothing wrong with it. But time is always a factor. We must scale down our operation and make it simple if it becomes too late. We become side tracked also. Instead of staying at the feet of Jesus, we start engaging in our world of responsibilities. There is nothing wrong with it. But when Jesus is talking to us, we better pay attention! We must be still and listen.

Martha created a scene in front of everybody and put Mary down publicly. She even went so far to rebuke Jesus; "Lord do you not care?" But Jesus did not get angry. This is where you must plug in John 11:25. They all loved each other so much; they can comfortably speak their mind as they thought. People who hide their real opinions will not be honest in their conversation, and they will be detached, disconnected. The more we love, the more comfortable we are in talking about any controversial subject, and yet there will be that mutual respect and love. Martha's anger was justified! He saved Mary's face by saying it this way:

Luke 10:41,42 41But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; 42but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

There is only one thing that is needed in life, and that is the living, quickening Word of God. Man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God!

We do this in our prayer meeting also. We become so agitated that the house is not clean enough for our standards. A lot of arguments erupts. The very prayer meeting that is supposed to be a joyful get-together, become a painful gathering for the hosts. Can we compromise the standard if we cannot make it perfect? True, hospitality is critical. We cannot survive without eating. But we will not die because there is a delay in serving the food. Martha is all about



servanthood. She prided in that kind of ministry. But she missed out on the Word! She could have had both, the Word first and then the hospitality. But Martha gave importance for hospitality first. Mary was a laid back lady. She wanted to drink the living Word first and then work on hospitality!

There is no need for any of us to miss the Word in this church. We don't have to eat exactly at 12 noon. We could take our time to heat up after 12pm. Some of the best fellowship we've had is when we were all hungry to have lunch! There is no reason someone has to miss the Word to keep all the food ready to go at 12 pm. We can all go to the fellowship hall, help one another in preparation.

Some preachers may say that both are important. That is wrong. The Word takes preeminence over hospitality. The Word comes first, and then the food. The Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

When the Lord speaks, put everything down, and sit by His feet.

"Set aside a couple of key extended times in the week to be alone with Jesus. Consider them as 'little treats in your life.'"

Of course, Martha's role is very crucial. One saint explains it vividly:

"Every church needs a Martha. Change that. Every church needs a hundred Marthas. Sleeves rolled up and ready. They keep the pace for the church. Because of Marthas, the church budget gets balanced, the church babies get bounced, and the church building gets built. You don't appreciate Marthas until a Martha is missing, and then all the Mary's and Lazaruses are scrambling around looking for the keys and the thermostats and the overhead projectors."

What Martha did was awesome, but the timing of it was the problem!

We must learn to prioritize our life properly. That is what the Good Samaritan story taught us last week. The priest and Levite should have taken that man to the temple and asked somebody to take care of him. But they did not. We must always ask ourselves, what is more important?

Mary was all about worshipping. Two more stories will bring her real personality.



We saw today in

Luke 10 - Mary is listening to Jesus teach

John 11 - Mary falls at Jesus' feet proclaiming, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

John 12 - Mary is anointing Jesus' feet with a fortune's worth of perfume and wiping His feet with her hair.

Mary loved the feet of Jesus indeed!

A saint accurately drew a conclusion in this manner:

.... Worshiping without serving is powerless

.... Serving without worshiping is directionless

.... Serving after worshiping produces power and balance

Pastor Daniel Israel