

Martha labours for what Mary was given

Read Luke 11:38-42

Message based on Luke 10:42, "Mary has chosen the good portion".

Martha and Mary have heard about Jesus. His reputation had preceded him. They loved what they heard and they were among those who wondered if perhaps Jesus wasn't the one whom the prophets all spoke of. Maybe this is the hope of Israel!

The sisters showed their love and admiration for Jesus in distinct ways. Martha sought Jesus out and offered her home to him and his disciples. Luke writes, "Martha welcomed him into her house". When Mary learned that Jesus had come, she came to him and sat near his feet "and listened to his teaching" - Luke writes. Martha wins praise for her hospitality; Mary wins praise for wanting only one thing: to listen to him.

It is an amazing thing about Jesus. People everywhere were drawn to Jesus and like a ship travelling through a storm looking for safe harbour, so people came through all kinds of troubles to Jesus and when they came, they trusted him, they found peace in their soul. Whenever they could, they would sit at his feet, as Mary now does.

Several times we read that people came to Jesus by the 1000's. The only thing that mattered to them was Jesus. They would sit and listen to him as long as they could. It did not matter that they had been there all day, it did not matter that they had a long way to travel home and they had no food, it did not matter that they had families at home that needed them. When they were near to Jesus, the weight of responsibility and duty fell away. Jesus is everything.

Jesus once said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy burdened, and I will give you rest." But there you see is the point: you need to come to Jesus. Trust me. Surrender yourself to me. Quit your pointless efforts to satisfy God yourself and come to me and let me do it for you. Just rest in me and I'll do the work for you.

This surrender to Jesus, which so many had experienced, is now what Mary experiences. She knows the duty of hospitality but Jesus is here. As so many others have done, so Mary feels all the worries disappear. My God and my Saviour is here. My master and my Lord whom I love more than my very own life – I will sit and hear him speak.

Martha recognized that Jesus was an important person too – after all, she had sought him out and invited him into their home. But duty and responsibility weighted heavy on her – and it now weighted even heavier because she wanted to honour her distinguished guest with the best her home could muster. And now this weight felt heavier because Mary was doing what she wanted so badly to do, to sit and listen to Jesus too. Martha was sacrificing time listening to Jesus, yielding and surrendering to him in order to do her duty. *My duty is was more important than to listen to the gospel and sit at Jesus' feet. The world will fall apart if I don't do this. I'd like to listen to Jesus, but this is more important.*

December 20, 2016

luke10martha.voc

When she realized that Mary was sitting listening to Jesus, she became upset: *Why isn't Mary helping me?! The weight of duty was so heavy for Martha that she even chose to rebuke Jesus: Don't you care that Mary is sitting here while I slave in the kitchen? Don't you realize what trouble you are causing? It might seem a little harsh, but I'm going to give you an order: Tell this girl here to help me!*

One thing is clear. Martha feels strongly about this and the burden of duty is almost too heavy for her. Indeed it is. For who can do something worthy of the Lord?

Jesus replies to Martha. He isn't angry. His voice fills with tenderness and love for Martha because he knows that she only wants to please him – she'll even rebuke Jesus to accomplish it. Jesus doesn't forget that Martha loves him.

“Martha, Martha”, he says. Already Martha is Jesus little child, a lamb whom he scoops up and holds in his arms. “You are worried and upset about many things”. Jesus acknowledges her feelings. Take note: If someone offends you, don't get into a huff. Begin by acknowledging that person's feelings and then interact with it.

You are worried and upset about many things, but one thing is needed. Mary has done that one thing, and I'll not take that away from her, even if you want me to. She has surrendered herself to me. Her loyalty is to me, even before it is to you, because she knows that in the end, I'll take care of her and all my sheep. Mary has chosen me over you. That is always better.

Think about it, dear listener. Jesus is the Saviour. He has done all the work already. You don't need to impress God with your hard work, your zeal for him, your accomplishments for the Kingdom of God. You cannot outshine Jesus. You will never get close. So just surrender to him. Trust him. Listen to him. Go to church and listen as he speaks to you through the church. You will find what you've been looking for all your life – rest and peace like Mary found. And it will never be taken from you.