

Martha & Mary

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Date: 30 November 2025

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 10. Luke chapter 10. We're going to be looking at the last four verses of this passage.

! Luke chapter 10. We turned a corner back at chapter 9 and verse 51.

Jesus had been ministering in Galilee for well over a year, traveling to various areas. He'd gone out to different places, but come back and spent most of his time there.

Spent most of his time in the city of Capernaum, if you look at what town he spent most of his time in. But then he turned his face to Jerusalem, and his goal was going there to provide for the redemption of mankind.

He starts out and heads south into what is there, Samaria, and is rejected initially, and then turns and shares the gospel in other places, sends out the 12, and then sends out 72 that were to go to all the places that he was to go to.

[1 : 20] After they had returned, shortly after that, Jesus tells this parable because a lawyer comes to him and asks him, how may I inherit eternal life?

And Jesus answers that by saying, what do you say? And, of course, we looked at this last week, and he responds with an appropriate summation of the law, and Jesus says, do this and live.

But the man wanting to justify himself then takes and says, but who is my neighbor? Jesus answers, who is my neighbor?

But he never comes back to address the, which I should say, he answers who is my neighbor, which was a qualification that the man wanted to make on the last part of what he said, love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, mind, soul, and strength, and the neighbor as thyself.

And he answers that question and addresses what this man thinks he's doing, but is failing to do as far as loving his neighbor as himself. So, as we come into this next situation, Jesus continues on the road.

[2 : 35] Some say that he is now addressing the last, or the first part of the lawyer's answer. How do I love the Lord with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength?

Now, the answer that's here is not complete. We're going to look at that and see what he has there for us. Let's look at Luke chapter 10, verses 38 to 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 alone 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.

[3 : 49] Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her. Let's pray together. Father, as we come to your word, we thank you that it is your word.

I thank you that we don't look back and wonder. Even though we know that Luke wrote it down, we have before us your word. And I thank you, Father, for the beautiful picture of Christ that's here and the instruction that he gives to us through Martha and Mary.

And I pray that you would be with us. Father, that we would see and hear what your spirit would have for us today. Pray that you would bless.

Be with me as I preach. Be with us as we listen. And draw us to yourself, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, I've given you the background of this situation, but the setting of this particular situation is verse 38.

Now, as they went on their way, Luke is meaning to be unspecific. Luke is developing themes.

[5 : 04] Luke is putting the things together. And it says that Jesus entered a village and a woman named Martha welcomed her into her house.

We know from John chapters 11 and 12 that Mary and Martha lived in a town called Bethany, which was on the eastern slope, the opposite side of the mountain, from Jerusalem, Jerusalem at one side, the Mount of Olives is here, Bethany is on the mountain side facing away from Jerusalem. And that's where Mary and Martha lived, only two miles from the temple in Jerusalem. We can also learn from this and the book of John that Jesus stayed there probably at least three times, one of them probably being a week long at least, when Jesus went into Jerusalem, the triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

It says he went out and stayed on the Mount of Olives. It probably was at Mary and Martha's house that he stayed. So he became pretty familiar with them.

But I think, I can't prove this, but I think this is the first time that Jesus visits that house. This visit is not recorded in the book of John.

[6 : 37] This account here is only here in the book of Luke. And Luke has put it in a specific spot. Now, to be honest, we don't know when Jesus visited Bethany for the first time.

Many people say, well, this is out of order because we know that Jesus visited Martha and Mary's house in Bethany just before he went into Jerusalem.

Yes, we know that that is true. But we also know that during this time that Jesus was making his way to Jerusalem, he sent these 72 disciples into all the cities he would go.

And that covered the area of Perea and Samaria. And so it was all over that area. Jesus could have made circles.

He could have bounced around like a pinball. However he went through these cities, at one point he made it to this town called Bethany where he met Mary and Martha.

[7 : 43] It doesn't mention Lazarus in this. You don't see Lazarus until we look at John chapter 11 and it's actually the account of Lazarus dying, being sick and then dying and Jesus raising him from the dead.

So we find in Luke this account and we find here two very different sisters. In verses 39 and 40, let me read that.

From the end of verse 38, and a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house and she had a sister named Mary who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to him 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.

One thing I want you to remember from the very beginning that is obvious throughout this, however long the Lord had known them at this point, Jesus is already, he already has a tender spirit towards them, a spirit of love to them.

[8 : 53] So he loved them both. And I'm going to talk about them out of order. I'm going to talk about Mary first. Mary is such an interesting person in this account.

Martha is also. But Mary is very interesting. If you read through it and pay attention, she never says a word in this account. She never, you don't hear her talking to the Lord.

You don't hear her talking to Mary. We don't know if any arguments went on. We don't know anything. She's silent through this whole thing. But Jesus comes in.

He is welcomed into the house by Martha, probably Martha's house, probably she's the older sister. We can't say for sure, but that's probably the case.

She welcomes him in. But Martha, in the course of time, sits at the feet of Jesus. Now, if we look ahead in verse 40, you can look there if you want.

[9 : 58] There's no problem. But you're going to see the words, left me. My sister left me. See that in verse 40. From that we get a sense that Mary probably was helping Martha serve.

But at some point, Mary chooses to leave that work and listen to Jesus. Now, whether it was as soon as Jesus came in, whether it was five minutes after he was there, ten minutes after he was there, it doesn't matter.

But she leaves Martha doing all the work that she's doing and sits down to listen to Jesus. Maybe she was a person that she was working and felt that at some point, well, that's enough.

We have sandwiches and chips. We're good. You know, whatever. Martha's definitely not thinking sandwiches and chips. But Mary is, at some point, thinking, that's enough.

We've done enough preparation. And so she goes and sits down. She feels that she should be free to listen. Or, possibly, she was working along with Martha, hearing phrases, and hearing things.

[11:13] And, you know, maybe you have kids or know people who work like this. They're working along. And they start out fast. And something catches their eyes.

And you can literally watch them go into slow motion. And you look over and say, hey, whatever. Finish your job.

You know, I can picture the possibility of Mary being working along and hearing things. And her interest just being piqued.

And so she then, it's like, I gotta listen. And she goes and sits down. Or does she, when Jesus comes to the door, recognize, this is that rabbi that everybody has been talking about.

I have heard such amazing things about this rabbi. I have always wanted to hear him. In fact, I already know that I want to be a follower of hers.

[12:16] Is. And so, she says, I don't want to pass up this opportunity. And the minute Jesus comes in and sits down and begins speaking, maybe she's already decided, I need to sit down and listen.

Now, all those are just ways of getting Mary sitting down. It could have been even something different. But it's interesting because what Luke puts here, let me back up.

One of the themes through the book of Luke is how he brings out Jesus' ministry towards women and his thoughts about women.

And we have here a very interesting situation. It says that Mary sat down at the feet of Jesus. Now, maybe that was literal.

Maybe he sat down, she sat down at his feet. But regardless, the expression is a term for one who wants to be a disciple, who chooses to listen and follow and obey.

[13:25] So, what Luke is getting at here, what Mary has done is she's chosen to listen to Jesus, to be a follower of Jesus.

And she's saying, yep, yep, that sounds good. Well, that's unheard of in that day and age. Women would learn in the synagogue, but no rabbi of the day would let a woman sit at his feet as a disciple. None. There was one that came close. It was a daughter of a rabbi who married a rabbi, but even she was kept from being a disciple of either of them.

So, Mary has done something bold. She's done something brazen. Her heart's desire, whether it was captivated by what she heard or by what she knew about Christ or whatever the case may be, she was a woman who said, I want to be a disciple of Christ.

And so she sits down. And an amazing thing is Jesus does not rebuke her. Now, that doesn't hit us very hard at all. We've, we've, we've know the end of the story.

[14:35] We've seen things in scripture. It does not hit us very hard at all. But I would think this would be shocking to the people in that day that Jesus would let this woman sit there and listen and be a disciple.

so Jesus does not rebuke her. He even later at the end of the account defends her decision. But let me read two verses that support, I don't want to say support Jesus' thinking, but the theme goes through scripture.

Galatians 3, 28. There is neither Jew nor Greek. There is neither slave nor free. There is no male or female. You are all, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

And in 1 Peter 3, 7, even though it's talking about the relationships to husbands and wives, it says towards the end of that verse, we are heirs together of the grace of life.

And the verse is exhorting men to be sure to treat women that way, lest their prayers be hindered. So, God, in no wise, despises women nor holds them inferior.

[15:53] He would have them to be disciples as much as any man. And, I, I, I kind of thought through this trying to be careful not to say it the wrong way.

But let me ask it this way. Ladies, do you see that Jesus would have you to be a disciple? I was raised in circles where the ladies were just there to make the man happy.

But that's not what Christ would have of the women who know him. He would have them to sit at his feet. He would have them to learn of him.

He would have them to know him in, in close ways. He would have them to, to want to understand all that he is saying. He would have them to follow his instructions.

Ladies, is that your desire? Or do you say, I'm going to leave those kind of things to other people? Or maybe even say, I'm going to leave all that study stuff to the men.

[17:07] I would encourage you not to. Because I think scripture points to how Jesus would have women to be every bit as much disciples as any man.

Mary was silent in this whole thing. I've already mentioned this. But she's used by the Lord to show Martha what she should have done and should have wanted.

Such an interesting thing. A woman who never says anything. They call it a foil. The character has something they need to learn and there's a person over here that they're aggravated at but that person has learned exactly what they should have learned and that person is meant to point the other person to what they were to do.

Well, that was Mary. What about Martha? She is busy being hospitable. Now, I want to preface this by saying it's going to be very easy to think in terms of the home and duties of the home and things like this and one, I don't look at duties of the home as to be only the woman's responsibility.

I feel that the man of the house is responsible for everything and so to say, well, that's woman's work. She's there to help.

[18:40] So, one, I don't want you to think I'm just talking to the women today but it's also a very good situation because so many of us can see how it applies as we talk about Mary and Martha.

So, guys, I don't want you turning off. We're talking about hospitality. Don't turn your brain off. Don't stop listening because the attitudes are there. Just take the examples and use them.

So, Martha, she is busy being hospitable. I can picture her doing all kinds of things. Do you need water? Yes, here's some water. Oh, yeah, no, the bathroom's around the corner.

Or, you know, a pillow, I'm sorry, I had 14 pillows but they're all gone now. You know, that kind of thing where she's just bouncing around trying to make everyone comfortable.

And then she's got meal preparations because when you welcome a guest into your home, you don't just let them sit there and then shoo them out. You feed them. And so she's busy doing meal preparations and making sure.

[19:44] And, you know, I joked that Mary thought maybe sandwiches and chips. Martha's going, I have that lamb that is just perfect with a mint sauce and, you know, and on and on she's planning and she's planning and she's planning.

She's thinking through, I am going to make this the best dinner for Jesus he has ever seen. That's not wrong. But she's busy being hospitable and the Lord never rebukes her for being hospitable.

Now you say, but there is a rebuke coming. There is a gentle rebuke coming, but it's not for being hospitable. Hospitality is a commandment commanded by God.

We are all to be hospitable. We're to love strangers. We're to help them and feed them and different things like this. Hospitality is commanded by God.

So she's doing something great. As we go along we find that Martha gives us an idea of what she's like by some of the things she says.

[20:59] Notice how bold she is. There are some of us who when the situation is not right, we would stand in the back corner and mutter and say, my sister, she doesn't do this and she does that and they're never brave enough to say anything.

But not Martha. this situation isn't right. Jesus? She goes right up to him. She's bold to get what she wants.

She's the kind of person who sees what needs to be done and feels an obligation to do it. And again, that's not a bad thing. But you can see, you can build a personality type that you can see how this is all bothering her.

Martha felt the burden of fulfilling these cultural obligations, having a meal, having a good meal, making sure my guests are comfortable. And I can picture her, because there almost sounds like a hint of jealousy, I can picture her wanting what Mary was getting.

You know, she's sitting there and she's looking at her sister thinking, I'd like to listen to what he says. I enjoy hearing him and she's sitting there thinking, but I have these things to do.

[22:23] I can't do that. I must, you know, I'm the hostess. I'm the Mary, Martha Stewart. I'm the, I can't think of the lady from back in history.

Dolly, not Dolly Madison, maybe it is Dolly Madison. She's the host that has just got to do everything right. And maybe she's getting to the point where she's getting embarrassed that things aren't getting done.

And again, these are not bad qualities, but she's obviously frustrated. Because in verse 40, she goes to Jesus and she walked right up to him, which would have been a bold move. And she stands there, I'm sorry, I fight laughing. I just, I can picture this and I'm like, whoa, wouldn't want to cross Martha. Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to serve, left me to serve alone?

And, and you're like, whoa, don't cross Martha. Martha. And then the only command that's in this scripture, in this passage, is mentioned by Martha and she gives it to the Lord.

[23 : 51] Tell her to help me. I'm just, and it's great to be organized, it's great to do your job.

I think Martha's been thinking about this situation for a while and she's just been getting more and more aggravated about it. And so, in frustration, she lashes out at Jesus.

Now, I have a hard time laughing because of this picture in my mind, but what a dangerous situation. frustration. And I don't know, we do know later, but I don't know what she thought of him at this point.

Later, she confesses him as the Lord, the Messiah, and the Son of God. But I don't know if she feels that here because of the way she's talking to him.

But in frustration, she lashes out at Jesus. Don't you care that my sister's left me to serve alone?

There's a don't you care about me in the middle of that sentence?

[25 : 06] There's a you're letting my sister get away with what's wrong in that sentence? She's not doing her work. She's sitting in a place that's not proper for women to sit.

And then, of course, tell her then to help me. And I can just picture other rabbis of the day blowing their top.

Woman, you're not going to talk to me like that. But Jesus' response, he answered her, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things.

But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen a good portion which will not be taken away from her.

Jesus is so tender with Martha. He doesn't speak to her in the tone that she speaks to him.

I am so thankful. The Lord is merciful towards us that way. I have blamed God wrongly.

[26 : 25] And thankfully, lightning didn't come down and strike me from on high. It should have.

Jesus was so very merciful and tender to her. Saying Martha twice was this term of endearment.

First, to gently catch her attention, and then to speak to her generally in the tone that he did. It's a gentle rebuke.

He says, you are anxious and troubled about many things. Anxious is the idea of worried. Troubled, it's where her worry shows itself.

You ever notice how worry shows itself? You ever blow up at someone and say, I'm sorry, I'm just scared this isn't going to work out. The reaction was because of the worry.

And that's the way Martha was. What was going on here was a result of the turmoil in her heart.

And Jesus just described it. You're anxious and therefore you're slamming the pots and pans, therefore you're throwing the pillows or whatever the case may be.

[27 : 35] It's coming out in your actions. You're anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary.

Now he never says what that one thing is. He just says, Mary's chosen it. Mary has chosen a good portion which will not be taken away from her.

What is that one thing? It's to sit at the feet of Christ, to listen, to learn, to follow, and to get to know.

There are a lot of good things that can and should be done for Christ. There's an awful lot of good things that can and should be done for Christ. There are a lot of good things that we are not doing that we should be doing for Christ.

There are any number of things that we can list off as things that we need to do for Christ. Service for the Lord is necessary and it's commanded.

[28 : 48] And Martha was not being rebuked. it was not wrong for her to be serving. But what Jesus was telling her was that at that time since Jesus was in her house, not just a normal person, but Jesus, the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has been witnessed to already, it is going around.

Who is this man? this one is in your house. This is not the time for serving. This is the time for sitting and listening.

Martha, you should have been where Mary was. You should have been enjoying time with me. You should have been wanting to hear all that I said.

You should have been wanting to know how I would instruct you. what you have done is not bad, but you picked the wrong thing at this moment.

You didn't come sit with me. Martha needed to be there. She needed to be learning what Jesus was teaching.

[30 : 02] She needed to be growing in her relationship, in her knowledge of Jesus. Christians, there are a lot of good things that we can and should be doing, but do you make time to sit at the feet of Jesus?

I'm not talking about fulfilling obligations, even in this. I'm not, there are times in your life when you will come to church because it is the right thing to do.

But you don't hope to continue to come to church because it is the right thing to do all your life. You hope to come to church because it is there that you will hear from God, you will sit at Jesus' feet, and you will hear of Him, and you will hear from Him, and you will be drawn close to Him.

and you would want to do those kind of things because those are the results you want. You want to know Him, you want to hear from Him, you want to understand what He's telling you.

Sometimes it's because it's a duty, getting through dry periods, sometimes with a lot of prayer, Lord help me to come for the right reasons. but we need to be sitting at Jesus' feet for these reasons.

[31 : 35] Do you make time to sit at the feet of Jesus? Do you want to know what He wants to teach you? Do you want to know Him? Paul had this passion.

Now, he's speaking about this from Philippians 3, speaking of it in relation to suffering. in the middle of this, I'm going to read all of it, but in the middle of this, pay attention to Paul's heart.

Philippians 3, 7-11, whatever I gained, whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord.

For His sake, I've suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through the faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith, that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and may share His suffering, becoming like Him in His death, that by any means possible, I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Paul saw it, same thing that Jesus was teaching Martha by means of what Mary was doing, I want to know Christ. And I've already alluded to this, but where does one go today?

[33 : 10] Jesus isn't walking on the earth anymore, where does one go today to sit at the feet of Jesus? Well, the thing I've already alluded to is the gathered assembly where the word is preached.

This is one of those opportunities that we get to sit at the feet of Jesus. We get to hear about Him, we get to learn of Him and what He commands, we get to grow in our relationship to Him.

And I'm not saying this because I want this many people here, or nothing like that. This is where we learn, this is where we grow.

Scripture says don't forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is. Oh, I can get just as good here, or I can get just as good there.

This is where He ordained it, the gathered assembly. And the other thing I'm going to encourage you in is sitting at the feet of Jesus daily in your personal Bible reading and prayer.

[34 : 25] Now, again, I'm not saying do this so that you're a better Christian, in the sense that you've done what you're supposed to do. Bible study, Bible reading, and prayer should be something that you do to sit at the feet of Jesus, where you're wanting to learn what He wants to teach you.

Where you're wanting to get to know Him, where you're wanting to just be close to Him. Bible study and prayer, Bible reading and prayer is part of that which goes into just sitting at the feet of Jesus. But it's something that you and I must choose to do like Mary did, and like Martha was calling, being called to do. Mary chose to sit at the feet of Jesus.

Jesus is gently rebuking Martha, saying, you need to sit at my feet. But it's something we need to choose to do.

There can be many things that we might reason to be more important than sitting under the word preached. but sitting at the feet of Jesus, learning from Him and getting to know Him is your meat and drink.

[35 : 48] It is that which you need. Sometimes, and I understand, you know, there are people who need, by means of mercy, need to work on Sunday.

And I know in this day and age, a lot of times you can't get a job, but what you have to start, working weekends. But I would really challenge you, not on a spirit of legalism, but on a spirit of what you need.

Do your best to say, that's what I need. I need to sit at the feet of Jesus. Do what it takes to be under the feet of Jesus.

And the other thing is, your life may be super busy, maybe you have a bunch of little kids, and they wait before you want to be awake, and they stay up longer than you want to stay awake, and they take your time all day long, and by the end of the day, you're just exhausted.

And I understand all of that. But do your best not to say, I've made it as a good Christian, even though I had three kids under three, I read my Bible every day.

[37 : 04] No. Don't go at it that way. Go at it. I need the word of God. Lord, help me today to be in your word. I need to sit at the feet of Jesus.

So be careful. Maybe as the kids get older, it gets a little easier in that department, but work screams, I want you there at five, and I want you working till five.

You're exhausted. And again, endeavor to meet with Jesus. And there are some creative ways you can work at that, not trying to lay a burden, but just encouraging you to choose the good portion.

Now, just as we close up, sitting at the feet of Jesus change these two ladies. John 11, that's the situation where Lazarus is sick.

That's the first we see of Lazarus. Lazarus is sick, and Mary and Martha send for Jesus to come and heal him. And once the messenger gets there, we don't know how far away it was, but Jesus waited two days till he even left.

[38 : 20] And then as he left, he said to his disciples, he's died. So, Jesus gets there. Lazarus has already died. As Jesus is approaching, someone tells Mary and Martha that Jesus is approaching.

And so Martha runs out to meet him. She's no longer anxious about her guests and trouble with many things. she was able to leave her guests in the affairs of the house in the midst of a funeral.

She was able to leave and go to Jesus because she wanted to spend time with Jesus. She wanted to talk about these things with Jesus. Jesus, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died.

Oh, I'm the resurrection and life. Do you believe this? Yes, I believe that you will raise everybody.

And he goes on to talk about how he is the resurrection and life. And then later she goes back and says to Mary, the master wants to talk to you and she comes out.

Both of them believed in the resurrection of Lazarus. Both of them believed in their statement made at that point that Jesus was the Christ, the son of God who is coming into the world.

[39 : 35] Sitting at the feet of Jesus changed them. And then you go into the next chapter, John chapter 12. we find a situation in the first few verses that are very interesting.

One of the commentators I read made this comment and I thought that was amazing and I should have written down his name. But he made the comment that Mary at this point is the only person to seem to have gotten what Jesus was about to do.

Jesus had been telling the 12, I'm going to Jerusalem, I'm going to be taken captive by the religious rulers, I'm going to suffer at their hands and I'm going to be crucified by Gentiles.

I'm going to be buried and I'm going to rise again. And everybody kept saying, no, it won't happen.

No, it won't happen. Even into the garden, they said it wouldn't happen. But Mary had sat at the feet of Jesus.

And in chapter 12 of John, we find this woman bringing a box of ointment, breaking it on his feet and rubbing it all over his feet and then taking her own hair to wipe it off.

[40 : 53] And she says, Jesus says, she has done this unto my burial. Sitting at the feet of Jesus, probably the furthest ahead disciple-wise, in relation to understanding what was going to go on, seemed to be Mary.

Because she sat at the feet of Jesus. I just want you to know, God changes us when we sit at the feet of Jesus.

Learn from his teaching. get to know him. Let us be those people who choose that good portion sitting at the feet of Jesus.

Let's pray. Father, I thank you for your word. I pray that you would be with us. Help us to be people who are hungry to know you, hungry to hear from you, wanting to be in a closer and closer relationship.

and I pray that amongst the things that you call us to do, may we be people who choose to take time to sit at the feet of Jesus and get to know you. I pray that you would be with us in Jesus' name.
[42 : 13] Amen.