

I. Introduction.II. Jesus is welcomed by His friends. v. 38-39

- A. Mary and Martha live in Bethany along with their brother Lazarus. v. 38a Jo. 12:1 11:5
- B. Martha welcomes Jesus with attentive hospitality. v. 38b
 - 1. Hospitality is an important mark of a true believer. 10:5ff 9:53 7:44ff 19:6 John 12:2 Rom. 12:13 1 Pet. 4:9-10 Heb. 13:2 1 Tim. 3:2 5:10 Titus 1:8 Gen. 18-19
 - 2. Martha is a godly woman who has many commendable qualities.
 - 3. Sometimes your greatest strength can also become your greatest weakness.
- C. Mary sits at Jesus' feet attentively listening. v. 39
 - 1. Mary exemplifies the attitude of a true disciple who loves the Lord with all her being. v. 27a 9:23 6:47 8:15,21,35 11:28 10:21 Acts 22:3
 - 2. It is very unusual for a woman to study under a Rabbi. 8:1-3 7:37ff 1 Tim. 2:11
 - 3. Is Mary neglecting her duty? v.42 1 Co. 7:32-35

III. Martha spoils the dinner party. v. 40

- A. Martha is consumed by her efforts to show hospitality to Jesus. v. 40a 8:14
 - 1. She is doing what she perceives to be her duty in making preparations.
 - 2. She thus neglects what matters most. 8:14 John 4:32
 - 3. Good things become idolatrous and sinful when they become more important than the best thing. v. 42 Js. 4:1ff
- B. Martha erupts. v. 40b 1 Pe. 4:9
 - 1. While she is busy serving, her frustration grows.
 - 2. She becomes fleshly in her attitude towards her sister – anger, jealousy. Gal. 5:19-21
 - 3. What is in her heart comes out through her actions and words. 6:45 Js. 1:14-15
 - 4. She confronts Jesus and accuses Him of not caring. v. 40b Mark 4:38 Ps. 103:8 1 Pe. 5:7 Jo. 11:5
 - 5. She presumes to tell Jesus what to do. v. 40d 9:33 Mark 8:32-33

IV. Jesus rebukes Martha and defends Mary. v. 41-42

- A. Jesus addresses the sins of Martha's cumbered heart. v. 41
 - 1. The Lord disciplines those whom He loves. 22:31 Heb. 12:5ff Pr. 3:11-12 John 11:5
 - 2. Martha is unnecessarily worried about lesser things. 12:22ff Phil. 4:6ff Mt. 6:25-34
 - 3. Her anxiety leads to inward self-pity and resentment. James 1:14-15
 - 4. These inward heart sins led to the outward expressions of sinful anger towards Mary and Jesus. Mark 7:21-23 Mt. 5:21ff
 - 5. Martha has allowed herself to be distracted from what matters most.
- B. Jesus commends Mary's choice. v. 42 4:4 8:15,18 11:28 Deut. 8:3
 - 1. In contrast to Martha who is concerned about many things, Mary is consumed with only one thing.
 - 2. She has chosen the best *portion*. Ps. 16:5 119:57-64 John 4:32 6:33,35,48,51
 - 3. Her portion will not be taken away from her. John 10:28 6:27 Ps. 89:28 Rom. 8:38f

V. We all can learn from Jesus, Martha and Mary.

- A. Serving is good. Mark 10:43 John 13:17-18 1 Pe. 4:9-11 Acts 6:1ff 11:29 12:25 Ro. 12:7
 - 1. Jesus is not saying that service is unimportant; but that He is most important. 14:26
 - 2. We are so depraved that we can even sin greatly while trying to serve God. Mt. 6:1ff
- B. Being served by Jesus is more important than serving Him. Mark 10:45 John 13:6ff
- C. Are you distracted (cumbered) by lesser cares?
 - 1. Are you a driven person?
 - 2. What should you do if you experience stress, anxiety, self-pity and resentment?
 - 3. You are upset because you want something too much, thus making it an idol. Js. 4:1ff
 - 4. God is in control. He doesn't need you. Acts 17:25 Eph. 1:11 Rom. 8:28
 - 5. Calm your heart by sitting at the feet of Jesus. Phil. 4:6-7 Gal. 5:16ff
- D. What priorities keep you from that which is most important, thus making you fleshly?
 - 1. The best must come before the good.
 - 2. Is your ministry keeping you from Jesus?
 - 3. Do you get angry with God?
- E. What is the one main thing for you? Mt. 6:24,33 John 6:27 Col. 3:1ff
 - 1. What lesser glories are distracting you?
 - 2. Can your main thing be taken away or lost? v. 42c John 10:27-29 6:27 Rom. 8:38f
- F. How can you sit at Jesus' feet? Heb. 10:25 Acts 2:42 Psalm 1 16:5 John 6:33,35,48-51 Mt. 4:4 28:20 Ex. 20:8-11 Rev. 1:13ff
- G. When you put first things first, lesser things can be enjoyed in their proper place.

VI. Concluding applications.

- A. Martha does finally get it. John 11:20-27
- B. Mary expresses her devotion to Jesus. John 12:1-8
- C. Jesus has served us. John 13:1ff

Discussion questions

- 1. How does the story of Mary and Martha relate to the immediate context in Luke's gospel?
- 2. What is commendable about Martha?
- 3. Why was Mary's action unusual?
- 4. What are some of the common sins of driven, type-A people?
- 5. What was going on in Martha's heart which led to her verbal sins?
- 6. Why are her words to Jesus so outrageous?
- 7. What tends to distract and worry you?
- 8. What must you tell yourself when you get agitated with others?
- 9. Can the most important thing in your life be taken away?
- 10. How can you follow Mary's example of sitting at Jesus' feet?