

Miraculous 4
“Time With Jesus”

Luke 10:38-42

January 22, 2017

INTRO: **VIDEO - “Disciples Path Intro”**

- Welcome to week #4: ***“Time With Jesus”***
 - #1 = What Just Happened?
 - #2 = Centrality of Christ...
 - #3 = Spiritual & Water Baptism
- I KNOW this message is eternally special...

T/S: **Let’s jump in with Jesus!**

TIMELESS TRUTH

**You were created to know God
in a deep & personal way.**

T/S: Today’s truth, I pray, will be both taught & caught well

PREVIEW: ***Devoted... Distracted... Discipled***

A. **Devoted** - see John 17!

The **Word in Person, Proclamation & Practice**

B. **Distracted** - Serving without enjoying...

...DO-ing duty w/out delight

Distraction leads to **disgruntled-ness**

Disgruntled-ness leads to **disobedience**

Disobedience leads to **division**

Division leads to **dysfunction**

Dysfunction leads to **darkness**

Darkness leads to the **Devil & the demonic**

The Devil & the demonic lead to **death....**

DON'T delve into distractions!

Don't doubt the dangers of distractions! - JDP

CONTEXT: Luke 10

1. **Preach God's Word** (harvest/laborers/70 go)
2. **Practice God's Word** - (Parable of the Good Sam.)
3. **Prioritize God's Word** - (Mary & Martha)

I. DEVOTED

³⁸ Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.

Note: the setting & its kinship to our LIFE Groups...

“Martha welcomed Him into her home”

- Can you imagine ANY greater combination of privilege & responsibility?
 - REALLY make this personal....

- These are the things we pray for...
 - The Bible tells us to do our best...
 - Loving thru serving is foundational...

- What would YOU do in this situation?
 - Most of us would do what Martha did...
 - That’s not good... AND... that’s the point of the passage...

³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word.

Here's our portrait of devotion... its simple really...

“seated at the Lord's feet” (BE-ing a Disciple!)

- This is her consistent posture...
- COUNTER-Cultural: Misnah/burn

- *“listening to His word”*
 - How do you hear God's Word?
 - What are you listening for?

*“Mary turned Jesus' seat into a pulpit,
His feet into a pew, & the room
into a chapel...”*

II. DISTRACTED

⁴⁰ *But Martha was distracted with all her preparations/”much serving”; 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 was distracted” = NOT *sitting* or *listening*

- **What’s the big deal???**
 - Can’t we call it “good” just not “best?”
- **What’s doing the distracting?**
 - Sometimes **SIN** (bad)
 - Sometimes **SLIPPERY SLOPES** (neutral)
 - Sometimes **SERVICE** (“good”)

Martha WAS balancing!

Martha went from distracted to disgruntled!

***** STOP!** This preps the point of the passage...

Martha **NEEDS** intimacy with Jesus...
& so do we!

***** Martha’s Problem:**

- **Distracted** she’s busy balancing...
- **Disruptive** walked up & said to Him
- **Dismissive** *“do You not care...”*
- **Disgruntled** “my sister.....”
- **Disrespectful** *“tell her* to help me!”

Martha needed intimacy with Jesus...
& so do we... every minute of every day!

VIDEO: ***"The Cure"***

Worship is at the heart of all that we are and all that we do in the Christian life. It is important that we be busy ambassadors, taking the message of the Gospel to lost souls. It is also essential to be merciful Samaritans, seeking to help exploited and hurting people who need God's mercy. But before we can represent Christ as we should, or imitate Him in our caring ministry, we must spend time with Him and learn from Him. We must "take time to be holy." - **Bible Exposition Commentary**

"Good becomes bad when it hurts best." - JDP

"Faithful obedience is always best." - JDP

"Balance is always the enemy of best." - JDP

III. DISCIPLINED

⁴¹ *But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried/anxious and troubled/bothered/upset about so many things;*

"the Lord answered"

➤ Note whose talking here... no free pass!

"you are worried, anxious, troubled, bothered, & upset... by so many (distracting) things"

***** See parallel... Martha & prodigal's brother**

- Attitude

If serving Christ makes us difficult to live with, then something is terribly wrong with our service! - Weirsbe

- Aim

She was trying to serve two masters!

○ **Actions**

*The cares of this life are dangerous, even when they seem to be most lawful and commendable. Nothing of a worldly nature could have been **more proper** than to provide for the Lord Jesus and supply his wants. Yet even for this, because it too consumed her mind, the Lord Jesus gently reproved Martha. - Barnes*

**The work was not too much for Martha...
Martha made too much of the work.**

*What we do with Christ is far more important than what we do for Christ.
- Warren Wiersbe*

VIDEO: **“Come As You Are”**

⁴² ***but only ONE thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."***

"only one thing is necessary"

- This phrase ought to arrest our attention!
- *"the good part"* = **BEST!**
- No counter-balance to ONE thing...
 - The "one thing" is like the first of 10,000 dominos...
 - **Matthew 6:33!** (no balance here)
 - **Matthew 22...** (no balance here)

It's easier to "balance" than to truly hear and obey the Word of God. - JDP

*At his feet are peace, purity, joy.
Everywhere else an alluring and wicked
world steals our affections and renders us...
wicked, proud, and unwilling to die. - Barnes*

VIDEO: *“Fill Me Up”*

HERE's the GOSPEL in this text...

When we PRIORITIZE the one RIGHT THING,
the LORD takes care of EVERY-THING else.
(see Rom 8:28)

CLOSE:

PRIORITY...Prior... that which comes 1st

*Beware the temptation to balance biblical hindrances, encumbrances, & distractions... which, by definition, are **anything** & **everything** that gets in between you & your loving, Spirit lead, faithful obedience.” -JDP*

Let's Pray

VIDEO: *Come To The Alter*
 Have It All
 Fill Me Up

Miraculous 4
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Luke 10:38-42

January 22, 2017

Luke 10:38-42 (NASB)

³⁸ Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.

“Now” = Stop and take notice... “NOW”

“as they were traveling along” = CONTEXT

- Chapter 9 – 19 “turned His face to Jerusalem”
- Biblical focus = teaching & equipping!

“village” = Bethany

- 2 miles east of Jerusalem
- 1 hour’s walk
- On the slope of the Mount of Olives

“Martha welcomed Him into her home”

- Stop and think for a minute...

- What an honor
- What a privilege
- What a responsibility...
- Just think of the possibilities...
- You want to make the most of this time
- There are likely dozens+ attending...
- **Can you imagine ANY greater combination of responsibility & privilege???**
 - **Make this personal.....**
 - **REALLY think about this dynamic**
 - **Miss this and you miss the point**
- It's time for "biblical hospitality"
 - These are the things we pray for...
 - The Bible tells us to do our best...
 - Loving thru serving is foundational...
 - I did not come to be served but to...
 - The Good Samaritan just finished...
- So..... what are YOU about to do?
 - Most of us would be a Martha...
 - Most of us would begin to "balance"
 - Most of us would be disobedient!
- Do not miss the point of this passage...

³⁹ *She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word.*

Mary: she is seen 3X in the Gospels... always worshipping at His feet

“seated at the Lord’s feet, listening to His word”

- *“seated at the Lord’s feet”*
 - This is her consistent posture...
 - Vernacular = “BE-ing a DISCIPLE”
 - Devoted to the Teacher/teaching
 - Both humble & zealous
 - Totally COUNTER-Cultural:
 - Woman weren’t discipled...
 - She should be busy balancing...
 - Teachers should know better...

- *“listening to His word”*
 - How do you hear God’s Word?
 - The Bible! 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - Prayer! Pray & obey.
 - Believers! Iron sharpens iron.
 - God-winks! Divine affirmations

As the tender flowers love to open to the rays of the sun and silently absorb its light.

- What are you listening for?
 - God's instruction & directives?
 - God's Word...
 - God's way...
 - God's worship!
 - Human applause & affirmation?
 - Cultural norms & values...
 - Cultural expectations...
 - Cultural acceptance & approval
 - Personal satisfaction?
 - Self-guided...
 - Self-evaluated...
 - Self-affirmed.
- NOTE: Mary was devoted to Truth
- NOTE: Mary was devoted to Christ
- NOTE: Mary is singular in her focus

***** Remember the scenario... Martha & Mary are in the midst of the most incredible privilege, albeit with an overwhelming litany of corresponding responsibilities...**

***** In this context, Mary does 2 things... she:**

- Sits at Jesus' feet...

➤ Listens to His Word

***** Hold that thought... don't forget this point!**

⁴⁰ *But Martha was distracted with all her preparations/"much serving"; 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."*

"But" = Here comes the **critical contrast...**

"Martha was distracted" = **NOT sitting or listening**

- What IS "distracted?"
- What's the big deal???
 - Can't we call it "good" just not "best?"
 - Isn't it "okay" to be/get/live distracted?
 - Who or what is behind distractions?
 - How serious an issue is distraction(s)?
- What DOES the distracting?
 - Sometimes SIN (**bad**)
 - Sometimes SLIPPERY SLOPES (**neutral**)
 - Sometimes SERVICE ("**good**")

***** STOP! Do not read further until you realize that the point of the passage has just been prepared for you to see...**

VIDEO: *“The Cure”*

- When Jesus comes into your life, He brings with Him tremendous privileges & responsibilities...
- Having said that, the continuing teaching of Jesus is about to get very poignant... with 2 people being juxtaposed and contrasted so as to bring clarity to Christ’s equipping...
- Mary is sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to His Word, while Martha is distracted, being busy with her attempts to figure out and balance all of her service acts
- As you will see... this passage teaches:
 - One sister is right and one is wrong.
 - Good is bad when it hinders best! -JDP
 - There is ONE THING that is to be sought
 - There is ONE THING that defines “best.”
 - “Faithful obedience is always best.” - JDP
 - “Balance is always the enemy of best.” -JDP

*** See Martha’s Problem:

- **Distracted** she’s busy balancing...
- **Disruptive** walked up & said to Him
- **Dismissive** “do You not care...”

- **Disgruntled** “my sister.....”
- **Disrespectful** “tell her to help me!”

Worship is at the heart of all that we are and all that we do in the Christian life. It is important that we be busy ambassadors, taking the message of the Gospel to lost souls. It is also essential to be merciful Samaritans, seeking to help exploited and hurting people who need God's mercy. But before we can represent Christ as we should, or imitate Him in our caring ministry, we must spend time with Him and learn from Him. We must "take time to be holy." - Bible Exposition Commentary

***** NOTE:** Mary is ALL about Jesus (she's all-in) while Martha is all about Martha & her distractions...

⁴¹ *But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried/anxious and troubled/bothered/upset about so many things;*

"But" = see again the critical contrast...

- Last time the contrast was between Mary's "sitting & listening" and Martha's "distracting & serving"
- This time the "but" or contrast is focusing on Martha's assumed "good choices" and Christ's loving correction

"the Lord answered"

- Note whose talking here...
- Note that Jesus does not let this go...
- Note that Jesus is loving but corrective...
- Hear God's Word & apply it personally...

"Martha, Martha"

- Repetition means emphasis...
- Here we see the set up of a loving rebuke
- The Lord wants her undivided attention...

“you are worried, anxious, troubled, bothered, & upset... by so many (distracting) things”

➤ Here Jesus describes what is **WRONG**

○ *Attitude*

- Self-centered
- Self-absorbed
- Self-debilitating

She was trying to serve two masters!

If serving Christ makes us difficult to live with, then something is terribly wrong with our service! - Weirsbe

○ *Aim*

- You are missing the big picture...
- You are aiming at wrong bulls-eye

The cares of this life are dangerous, even when they seem to be most lawful and commendable. Nothing of a worldly nature could have been more proper than to provide for the Lord Jesus and supply his wants. Yet even for this, because it too consumed her mind, the Lord Jesus gently reproved Martha. - Barnes

○ **Actions**

- Living distracted is wrong.
 - Hebrews 12:1-2 **encumbrances**
 - Acts 28:30-31... **hindrances**

*For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. **31**He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!*

“many things”

- See this as a **Quality & Quantity** problem
 - Her faith is off
 - Her focus is off

Faith & focus, focus & faith... the two support one another and tend to travel together – be it up to the mountain top or down through the valley. - JDP

VIDEO: *“Come As You Are”*

What we do with Christ is far more important than what we do for Christ.
- Warren Wiersbe

⁴² but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

“but” = here comes the last critical contrast...

- Jesus now emphasizes His teaching point
- Jesus now equips & edifies His followers...

“only one thing is necessary”

- This phrase ought to arrest our attention!
- If you can relate to Martha:
 - You are a Christ-follower
 - You want to honor and glorify God
 - You love/want to do your best for Jesus
 - You acknowledge your blessings
 - You want to be God honoring in ALL...
 - You are challenged by responsibilities
 - All you’re asking for is a little help.....
- Stop and think about the implications of what Jesus is saying here...
 - ONLY one thing...
 - There is no counter-balance to ONE thing...
 - The “one thing” is like the first of 10,000 dominos that will fall in precise order

- We are to focus on the “one thing”
- The Lord takes care of the 9,999 other dominos of life...
 - Matthew 6:33!
 - It really is that simple!
 - It’s just not easy...
 - It’s easier to “balance” than to truly hear and obey.
 - Beware autopilot
 - Beware “checkpoints”
 - “Love the Lord your God will ALL... then go and do whatever you want.” -

*At his feet are peace, purity, joy.
Everywhere else an alluring and wicked
world steals the affections and renders us...
wicked, proud, and unwilling to die. - Barnes*

VIDEO: ***“Fill Me Up”***

CLOSE:

The lesson:

Do indeed be radical in doing good, just like the Good Samaritan (v. 37). But don't take this to mean that you should be scrambling around frantically, over-committing yourself and becoming overly busy. We ought to sacrifice and endure hardship. But don't let your service to others distract you from the ultimate reason for your service, which is Jesus himself.

The focus of this passage is... that the proper attitude toward Jesus is to listen to Him and obey His words.

- The Bible Knowledge Commentary

The story of Martha and Mary underscores the importance and priority of learning at the feet of Jesus, that is, being His disciple. It was not the frantic activity of Martha that won Jesus' commendation, but the quiet activity of Mary, who sat at the feet of her Savior...

VIDEO: *Come To The Alter*

Have It All

Fill Me Up

Time With Jesus

a. **Timeless Truth:** You were created to know God in a deep and personal way.

b. **Bible Story:** Luke 10:38-42

c. Memory Verse: John 10:14

"I AM the Good Shepherd. I know My own and My own know Me."

STUDY NOTES:

Context of Luke 10:

4. Preach God's Word

- a. Harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few
- b. Send out the 70 proclaiming laborers...

5. Practice God's Word – (Parable of the Good Sam.)

6. Prioritize God's Word – (Mary & Martha)

- A. **Devotion** (see the epitome of John 17!)
 - Word in Person (John 17 koinonia)
 - Word in Proclamation & Purification (John 17:17)
 - Word in Practice (John 14:15)

B. **Distraction**

- Serving without enjoying is duty w/out delight...

Distraction leads to disgruntled-ness

Disgruntled-ness leads to disobedience

Disobedience leads to division

Division leads to dysfunction

Dysfunction leads to darkness

Darkness leads to the Devil & the demonic

The Devil & the demonic lead to death....

DON'T delve into distractions!

Don't doubt the dangers of distractions! - JDP

******* See parallel between Martha & prodigal's older brother... dutiful, self-righteous anger in the face of God's grace being bestowed on one demonstrating true love & devotion to the Father!!!

******* Love before labor... for labor without love is legalism.
- These 3 remain: faith, hope & love...
- The greatest of these is love!

******* Worship before work or warfare... for work or warfare without worship is weak, worldly, & worrisome!

******* See the 3 or 4 Great C's... The order is intentional!!!

******* **Acts 17:25** shows "service" is not "needed" - that's why it is not the "one thing" that Martha needs & Mary has...

INTRO: What have you got to do this week... month... year... LIFE?

- Key is to define "got."

Got could mean "possess"

Got could mean "must"

- Understanding that difference is the first step in reaching a right & righteous answer to my question

- Understanding that there is a right & righteous sequence to the order of that discernment is also essential

- Too many people apply both definitions but mix up their order, thereby creating prolonged problems vs. proper perspective & powerful peace.

Illustrations:

- Visualize **overflowing plates**... (not healthy)

- Visualize **multiple spinning-plates** (hectic)

- Visualize **paper-plates** (dispose/throw away)

Context: Note the setting & its kinship to our LIFE Groups... some things happen in homes & informal fellowships that can't be duplicated anywhere else...

Two words frame the text to reveal its thrust... distracted & best... (A + B = C)

*** PLUS... look back at Luke 10 & ahead to the cross...

*** Teaching/Equipping from here to the cross...

A = Distracted

B = Best

C = PRIORITY

PRIORITY...Prior... that which comes 1st

*** Blessed are those who hear & do My Word

Best does not balance! - JDP

**Beware becoming istracted by doing man's
"good" vs. BE-ing God's best...
= definition of balance**

Work or Worship

- Martha was doing what was expected...

Her work would have been applauded

Martha WAS balancing!

- **Martha went from distracted to disgruntled!** (see that pattern in our day)

*** **"Distracted" does NOT mean overburdened or doubly-busy... but rather wrongly focused & disobedient...**

**The work was not too much for Martha... No. Instead,
Martha made too much of the work.**

Jesus didn't correct her for her actions as much as He was
correcting her attitude behind (and causing) her actions...

--- Lord don't You care...

--- Trashing of sister

--- Commands Jesus to do as she insists

- **Mary was counter cultural!** (*"at the feet of"*)

* Definition = "Being DISCIPLED!"

* See **Acts 22:3** (Paul defines it...)

* **Misnah said:** burn Torah before giving it to a woman...

Mary is applauded by Jesus

***"Mary turned Jesus' seat into a pulpit,
His feet a pew, & the room a chapel..."***

***** My sheep hear & obey My voice**

Mary was BE-ing obedient

Note: obedient is not always busy but it is
always best!

Balance comes at the cost of best!

******* Parable of Good Sam, coupled with Mary & Martha
DEMANDS a loving, faithfully-obedient ONLY interpretation.

Jesus corrects Martha & commends Mary...

Labor or Listen

- Value of God's Word...
- Wisdom (salvation, sanctification)
- Communion/connection with Christ
- Perspective (it calibrates our priorities)
- Sustenance: Man not live on bread alone...

***** List hindrances.....**

- Worries & cares of this world:

Parable of soils!

Lovers before laborers...

Soldier wrapped up in civilian affairs...

***** Seek first the kingdom...** all else will be added.

AND

- **We are commanded to bear much fruit...**
- **See how faithful obedience vs. balance is the only way to meet God's seemingly paradoxical, tension-creating commands**

Luke 10 Context:

1. Listen (...the Lord appointed 70...)
2. Leave (He sent out the 70 two by two...)

3. Laborers (the harvest is plentiful but...)
4. Look-for (Persons of Peace)
5. Look-out (Woe to you!)
6. Lord's-name (power in the name of Jesus)
7. Love-from-God ("Blessed" to see = grace)
8. Love-for-man (Good Samaritan)
9. Love-for-Messiah (Mary & Martha)
10. Lessons learned: (Laz is coming up...)
 - Like Luke 15... Luke 10 has a theme...

CLOSE: When we PRIORITIZE the RIGHT THING, the LORD takes care of EVERYTHING (see Rom 8:28)

Key: Christian living is about the centrality OF Christ vs. productivity FOR Christ!

Spurgeon: "We are like a fly on the wall of St. Paul's cathedral, thinking that if we move our feet all chaos will breakout below us.... Wake up! We/you/I are no more eternally influential than the fly on the wall."

- Don't prioritize hearing for your ears. It's for your head, heart & hands (in that order)

Songs:

Have It All (clay heart...)

Come as you are (after martha Martha)

Come to the alter (close)

Unspoken: the cure (after Mary)

Tasha Cobbs: Fill Me Up God (pre Mary)

10:38-39 The **village** in [v. 38](#) was **Bethany, just over the Mount of Olives and two miles east of Jerusalem.**

Martha and Mary were the sisters of Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead ([Jn 11:1-44](#)). **Sat at the Lord's feet... listening** was **the posture of a committed disciple.**

10:40-42 Martha was **distracted** from what should have been her highest priority—learning from Jesus. She was **worried and upset** about all the household chores that needed to be done and irritated with her sister Mary because it was the role of women to serve men in such a setting.

Jesus indicated that Martha's exclusive focus should be the same as her sister's—discipleship, an eternally commendable choice (**it will not be taken away from her**).

- HCSB Study Bible.

10:38-42 Mary and Martha both loved Jesus. On this occasion they were both serving him. But **Martha thought Mary's style of serving was inferior to hers.** She didn't realize that in her desire to serve, she was actually neglecting her guest. **Are you so busy doing things *for* Jesus that you're not spending any time *with* him?** Don't let your service become self-serving. Jesus did not blame Martha for being concerned about household chores. **He was only asking her to set**

priorities. Service to Christ can degenerate into mere busy work that is totally devoid of devotion to God.

- **Life Application Study Bible.**

10:38-42 *Martha and Mary.* village. Bethany (cf. [John 12:1](#); see note on [John 11:1](#)). who sat at the Lord's feet. A disciple's proper place (cf. [Luke 8:35](#); [Acts 22:3](#)); unlike some in his culture, **Jesus encouraged women to study the Scriptures.** you are anxious... about many things. Cf. [Luke 8:14](#); [12:11](#), [22-30](#); [21:34](#). Mary has chosen the good portion echoes

OT passages where the greatest possession is close fellowship with the Lord as one's "portion" in life (cf. [Ps. 16:5](#); [27:4](#); [73:26](#); [119:57](#); [142:5](#); also [Josh. 18:7](#)).

Mary has chosen this, and it **will not be taken away from her**—neither now to help Martha in the kitchen, nor for all eternity.

- **ESV Study Bible.**

Verse 38. *A certain village.* Bethany. See [John 11:1](#). It was on the eastern declivity of the Mount of Olives. [Matthew 21:1](#).

Received him. Received him kindly and hospitably. From this it would seem that *Martha* was properly the mistress of the house. Possibly she was a widow, and her brother Lazarus and younger sister Mary lived with her; and as she had the care of the household, this will also show why she was so diligently employed about domestic affairs.

(*) "Martha" [John 11:1](#), [12:2,3](#)

[Verse 39.](#) *Sat at Jesus' feet.* **This was the ancient posture of disciples or learners.** They sat at the *feet* of their teachers—that is, beneath them, in **a humble place**. Hence **Paul is represented as having been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, [Acts 22:3](#).** When it is said that Mary sat at Jesus' feet, it means that she was *a disciple* of his; that she listened attentively to his instructions, and was anxious to learn his doctrine.

(*) "sat at Jesus' feet" [Luke 8:35](#), [Acts 22:3](#)

[Verse 40.](#) *Martha was cumbered about much serving.* Was much distracted with the cares of the family, and providing suitably to entertain the Saviour. It should be said here that there is no evidence that Martha had a worldly or covetous disposition. Her anxiety was to provide suitable entertainment for the Lord Jesus. As mistress of the family, this care properly devolved on her; and the only fault which can be charged on her was too earnest a desire to make such entertainment, when she

might have sat with Mary at his feet, and, perhaps, too much haste and fretfulness in speaking to Jesus about Mary.

Dost thou not care, he encouraged Mary in neglecting her duty. Or perhaps Martha supposed that Mary was sitting there to show him the proper expressions of courtesy and kindness, and that she would not think it proper to leave him without his direction and permission. She therefore hinted to Jesus her busy employments, her need of the aid of her sister, and requested that he would signify his wish that Mary should assist her.

Verse 41. *Thou art careful. Thou art anxious.*

Troubled. Disturbed, distracted, very solicitous.

Many things. The many objects which excite your attention in the family. **This was probably designed as a slight reproof, or a tender hint that she was improperly anxious about those things, and that she should, with Mary, rather choose to hear the discourses of heavenly wisdom.**

(*) "thou art" [Mark 4:19](#), [Luke 21:34](#), [1 Corinthians 7:32,35](#)

Verse 42. *But one thing is needful.* That is, religion, or piety. This is eminently and peculiarly needful. Other things are of little importance. **This should be secured first, and then all other things will be added.** See [1 Timothy 4:8](#); [Matthew 6:33](#).

That good part. The portion of the gospel; the love of God, and an interest in his kingdom. She had chosen to be a Christian, and to give up her time and affections to God.

Which shall not be taken away. **God will not take away his grace from his people, neither shall any man pluck them out of his hand,** [John 10:28,29](#).

From this interesting narrative we learn—

1st. The cares of this life are dangerous, even when they seem to be most lawful and commendable. Nothing of a worldly nature could have been more proper than to provide for the Lord Jesus and supply his wants. Yet

even for this, because it too consumed her mind, the Lord Jesus gently reproved Martha. Thus, a care for our families may be the means of our neglecting religion and losing our souls.

2nd. It is of more importance to attend to the instructions of the Lord Jesus than to be engaged in the affairs of the world. The one will abide for ever; the other will be but for a little time.

3rd. There *are* times when it is proper to suspend worldly employments, and to attend to the affairs of the soul. It was proper for Mary to do it. It would have been proper for Martha to have done it. It is proper for *all*—on the Sabbath and at other occasional seasons—seasons of prayer and for searching the word of God—to suspend worldly concerns and to attend to religion.

4th. If attention to religion be omitted at *the proper time*, it will always be omitted. **If Mary had neglected to hear Jesus then, she might never have heard him.**

5th. Piety is the chief thing needed. Other things will perish. We shall soon die, All that we can gain we must leave. But the *soul* will live. **There is a judgment-seat; there is a heaven; there is a hell; and *all* that is needful to prepare us to die, and to make us happy forever, is to be a friend of Jesus, and to listen to his teaching:**

6th. Piety is the chief ornament in a female. It sweetens every other virtue; adorns every other grace; gives new loveliness to the tenderness, mildness, and grace of the female character. Nothing is more lovely than a female sitting at the feet of the meek and lowly Jesus, like Mary; nothing more unlovely than entire absorption in the affairs of the world, like Martha. The most lovely female is she who has most of the spirit of Jesus; the least amiable, she who neglects her soul—who is proud, gay, thoughtless, envious, and unlike the meek and lowly Redeemer. **At his feet are peace, purity, joy. Everywhere else an alluring and wicked world steals the affections and renders us... wicked, proud, and unwilling to die.**

(*) "one thing" [Psalms 27:4](#), [Ecclesiastes 12:13](#), [Mark 8:36](#), [Luke 18:22](#), [1 Corinthians 13:3](#)

- Barnes' Notes on the New Testament.

Worshippers: Listening to the Lord (Luke 10:38-42)

CONTEXT:

Worship is at the heart of all that we are and all that we do in the Christian life. It is important that we be busy ambassadors, taking the message of the Gospel to lost souls. It is also essential to be merciful Samaritans, seeking to help exploited and hurting people who need God's mercy. But before we can represent Christ as we should, or imitate Him in our caring ministry, we must spend time with Him and learn from Him. We must "take time to be holy."

Mary of Bethany is seen three times in the Gospel record, and on each occasion, she is in the same place: at the feet of Jesus. She sat at His feet and listened to His Word ([Luke 10:39](#)), fell at His feet

and shared her woe ([John 11:32](#)), and came to His feet and poured out her worship ([John 12:3](#)). It is interesting to note that in each of these instances, there is some kind of fragrance: in [Luke 10](#), it is food; in [John 11](#), it is death ([John 11:39](#)); and in [John 12](#), it is perfume.

Mary and Martha are often contrasted as though each believer must make a choice: be a *worker* like Martha or a *worshiper* like Mary. Certainly our personalities and gifts are different, but that does not mean that the Christian life is an either/or situation.

Charles Wesley said it perfectly in one of his hymns:

*Faithful to my Lord's commands,
I still would choose the better part;
Serve with careful Martha's hands,
And loving Mary's heart.*

It seems evident that the Lord wants each of us to imitate Mary in our worship and Martha in our work.

Consider Martha's situation. She received Jesus into her home *and then neglected Him as she prepared an elaborate meal that He did not need!* Certainly a meal was in order, but **what we do *with* Christ is far more important than what we do *for* Christ.**

Mary had done her share of the work in the kitchen and then had gone to "feed" on the Lord's teachings. Martha felt neglected after Mary left the kitchen, and she began to complain and to suggest that neither the Lord nor Mary really cared!

Few things are as damaging to the Christian life as trying to work for Christ without taking time to commune with Christ.

"For without Me ye can do nothing" ([John 15:5](#)). Mary chose the better part, the part that could not be taken from her. She knew that she could not live "by bread alone" ([Matt. 4:4](#)).

Whenever we criticize others and pity ourselves because we feel overworked, we had better take time to examine our lives. Perhaps in all of our busyness, we have been ignoring the Lord. Martha's problem was not that she had too much work to do, but that she allowed her work to distract her and pull her apart.

She was trying to serve two masters!

If serving Christ makes us difficult to live with, then something is terribly wrong with our service!

The key is to have the right priorities: Jesus Christ first, then others, then ourselves. **It is vitally important that we spend time "at the feet of Jesus" every single day, letting Him share His Word with us.**

The most important part of the Christian life is the part that only God sees. Unless we meet Christ personally and privately each day, we will soon end up like Martha: busy but not blessed.

Often in my pastoral ministry, I have asked people with serious problems, "Tell me about your devotional life." The usual response has been an embarrassed look, a bowed head, and the quiet confession, "I stopped reading my Bible and praying a long time ago." And they wondered why they had problems!

According to [John 12:1-2](#), Martha must have learned her lesson, for she prepared a feast for Jesus, the Twelve, and her brother and sister—that's fifteen people—*and did not utter one word of complaint!* She had God's peace in her heart because she had learned to sit at the feet of Jesus.

We are ambassadors, neighbors, and worshipers, these three; and the greatest of these is worshipers. – Warren Wiersbe

- Bible Exposition Commentary

Luke 10:38-42... Critical Notes

Ver. 38. **A certain village.**—There can be no doubt that this was Bethany, and that the persons mentioned were sisters of Lazarus.

The names are not only the same, but the words and actions of both are characteristic of the two sisters described in [John 11](#); [John 12](#). Bethany was an hour's walk from Jerusalem, and was a favourite resort of our Lord, when He was in the neighbourhood of the capital. *Farrar* considers that the phrases "a certain village" and "a certain woman" are obvious traces of a tendency to reticence about the family of Bethany which he thinks are to be found in the synoptic Gospels ([Matt 26:6](#); [Mark 14:3](#)). Such reticence he attributes to the danger to which more special notice of the family might have exposed them—a danger which was probably long past when St. John wrote his Gospel. This idea seems, however, to be far-fetched and baseless. The notices in St. Matthew and St. Mark are definite enough; and here the vague phrase, "a certain woman," is followed by her name and the name of her sister. Probably Bethany was not a name as familiar to Theophilus as it is to us. **Martha**.—The name is Aramaic, meaning "lady." She may have been a widow or a married woman; but we have no information on the point.

Ver. 39. The character of Mary is suggested with wonderful skill and simplicity by this description of her. **Sat at Jesus' feet**.—As a disciple; not while He was reclining at table for the meal was being prepared.

Ver. 40. **Cumbered**.—Lit. "distracted," drawn this way and that by a multitude of things needing her personal supervision. **Came to Him**.—The word implies "suddenly appearing before Him," evidently coming from the room where the preparations were being made into that in which Jesus was. Probably the homely phrase "she flounced in" would best describe her action and mood

Ver. 41. **Martha, Martha.**— **Kindliness as well as reproof is indicated in the repetition of the name.** **Careful and troubled.**—The one word indicates inward anxiety, the other outward bustle.

Ver. 42. **One thing is needful.**— **The food of the soul— feeding on the bread of life; this is “the good part”— the choice portion which Mary has chosen.** A curious variation which is founded on good MS. authority is given in the margin of the R.V.—“but few things are needful or one.” This evidently arises from a misunderstanding of Christ’s words, as though by “the one thing needful” He meant one dish instead of Martha’s more bountiful provision; *i.e.* “there is need for few things, indeed one would be sufficient.” But apart from the evident mistake as to Christ’s words, any reference of the kind to the literal food seems trivial.

Main Homiletics of the Paragraph — [Verses 38-42](#)

—This is one of the few passages in the life of the Saviour in which we are admitted to view Him in the circle of His domestic life—in which we see Him as a guest and a friend, receiving hospitality, and by gentle words allaying the angry feelings which are so apt to spring up from the most trivial causes, and mar the peace of the home. **He had arrived at Bethany perhaps unexpectedly, and evidently accompanied by some of His disciples, and thus occasioned some little stir in the household there.**

Martha was naturally anxious to provide fitting entertainment for such an honoured Guest. For a time, apparently, Mary had

assisted her in making the needful preparations for the supper, but after a little had stolen away to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to His words. Probably she felt that there was a reasonable limit to the work of providing for material wants, and that it was making good use of the precious time of Christ's sojourn with them to allow Him to minister to them as well as to be ministered to by them.

I. **Martha's complaint.**—She is angry and put about by being left to serve alone, and in her hastiness she falls into various mistakes.

1. She attaches an undue importance to the kind of work she was engaged in.

2. She regards her sister's employment as mere waste of time.

3. She accuses the Saviour of unkindness in allowing her sister to shirk her share of the work. Specially censurable is her endeavour to get the Saviour to take her part in this difference with her sister. For it is always very embarrassing to a guest to be asked to take a side in a family dispute.

II. **The reply of Jesus.**—He reminded Martha that she was distressing and harassing herself about many trivial things, but that Mary's attention was fixed upon the one thing of supreme importance. The slight degree of blame implied in the answer, and in the repetition of her name, was no doubt robbed of its sting by the gentle tone of voice and the kindly air of the Speaker. For this was not an occasion when anything like severity was called for. **Both sisters were friends and disciples of the Saviour; and He was as**

considerate to the weaknesses and foibles of the one, as pleased with the pure and intense devotion of the other. We have here both a warning against allowing our minds to be distracted and worried by passing trifles, and a statement of the secret of a true and lasting peace. **Those that pursue various aims are drawn hither and thither by conflicting cares and duties: those that have the one true aim in view rise above all that is superficial and trifling, and enjoy a peace which the world can neither give nor take away.**

Suggestive Comments on [Verses 38-42](#)

Ver. 38-42. —Let us regard this incident as illustrative of a few practical considerations. Observe—

I. **The absence of all reference to Lazarus in this narrative.**—Is this because he was younger than the sisters, and of least account in the household? In John's Gospel, too, Lazarus brings up the rear. Many think that he was the young ruler who came to Christ and went away sorrowing. Whatever be the truth on this point, Christ loved this "weak brother." He seems to have lacked force of character, decision, readiness to sacrifice for Christ's sake. Such a man may certainly be saved, but he misses much.

II. **The distinguishing character of the two sisters, and our Lord's treatment of them.**—We have the active Martha, who carries her peculiarities into her friendship with and her loyalty to Jesus Christ. This is quite right. Christ does not

take from us our individuality. He does not want every one to be a Martha or every one to be a Mary. There was variety of character among the twelve. Varied services are needed. Jesus Christ needed food, and He needed willing learners. Martha was right in serving, Mary in listening. The danger is that one kind of worker thinks that the only service that should be rendered to Jesus Christ is the service he or she is rendering. Those who are active are apt to be hard upon those who are not so active as they are, or in the way which they approve. Christ taught Martha that all things are secondary to the one great thing—love to Himself. Let all learn the lesson of serving the Master in the sphere for which we are best fitted, and withal be tolerant, yea appreciative of those who serve Him in different ways.—*Davies*.

Three Faults of Martha.—Though the hospitality of Martha deserved commendation, and is commended, yet there were three faults in it which are pointed out by Christ.

- I. Martha carried her activity beyond proper bounds; for Christ would rather have chosen to be entertained in a frugal manner, and at moderate expense, than that the holy woman should have submitted to so much toil.
- II. Martha, by distracting her attention, and undertaking more labour than was necessary, deprived herself of the advantage of Christ's visit.
- III. Martha was so delighted with her own bustling operations, as to despise her sister's pious eagerness to receive instruction. This example warns us that, in doing what is right, we must take care not to think more highly of ourselves than of others.—*Calvin*.

Ver. 38-39. — We find in Martha the type of a life busily devoted to externals, such as is frequently exemplified in this passing world; in Mary, the type of quiet self-devotion to the Divine as the one thing needful. To a certain extent both tendencies will be combined in each believer, but it is not to be overlooked that there are different vocations, and many are better fitted for busy outward labour than an inward contemplative life, although the most active must be from the depths of his soul given up to the Lord, and the man of contemplation must consecrate his energies to the advancement of God's kingdom.—*Olshausen*.

Ver. 39. — This incident gives a clear and certain answer to the question of the scribe as to inheriting eternal life: it is to listen to the words of Jesus, and to choose by faith in Him “the good part, which shall not be taken away.”

“*Sat at Jesus' feet.*” — This is a living commentary on the words, “Yea, He loved the people; all His saints are in Thy hand: and they sat down at Thy feet; every one shall receive of Thy words” ([Deut 33:3](#)).

Absence of Censoriousness.— **Mary sits quiet and silent at His feet, and it never occurred to her to be discontented** and to exclaim, “Master, tell my sister to come and listen too with me.”

“*Heard His word.*” — **As the tender flowers love to open to the rays of the sun and silently absorb its light.** Jesus had not come to be served, but to serve.

Ver. 39-40. — The respective characters of the two sisters again come clearly into view on the visit recorded by St. John ([John 12:2-3](#)). There it is said that “Martha served,” and that Mary “anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair.”

The Judge becomes an Advocate.—Mary commits her cause to the Judge, and He becomes her Advocate.—*Augustine*.

Christ defending His Disciples.—The Gospels record various instances of Christ thus taking the part of them who trust their cause to Him. Cf. chaps, [Luke 6:2-3](#); [7:39-40](#); [Matt 26:10](#).

Pleasure of giving and of receiving.—With Martha the pleasure of giving much to Jesus is pre-eminent: Mary feels the necessity of receiving much.

Ver. 41-42. “*Many things ... one thing.*” —Note the contrast between carefulness about many things and the needfulness of but one. When we possess God in Christ, we have the one thing needful to

- (1) *a true life,*
- (2) *a true growth,*
- (3) *a true service,*
- (4) *a true happiness.*

Ver. 42. “*But one thing is needful.*” —Needful for what? For rightly receiving the Saviour—the disposition which Mary was manifesting at this moment, the sitting at the feet of Jesus, the

receptivity for hearing and laying up the words of eternal life.—
Van Oosterzee.

“*That good part.*” — Why was Mary’s choice better? Because “it shall not be taken away from her.” From thee the burden of business shall one time be taken away; for when thou comest into the heavenly country, thou wilt find no stranger to receive with hospitality. But for thy good it shall be taken away, that what is better may be given thee. Trouble shall be taken away, that rest may be given thee. But in the meantime *thou* art yet at sea; *thy sister* is in port.—*Augustine.*

“*The good part.*” — Mary’s choice is commended. The object of her choice is characterised and commended as “the one thing needful,” “the good part.” True religion is —

I. Indispensably needful.

II. Perfectly good.

III. Absolutely inalienable.

Its claims are paramount. Heaven is gained; hell is avoided. It is not only “good” in name, but in reality. It wears, lasts, satisfies. It is the only possession that is inalienable. Honour, wealth, reason, health, home, friends, all may go. This abides.—*Morris.*

I. The essence of the Christian religion is that it is a religion of receiving.—Martha desired to give, Mary to receive. Mary was praised; Martha was reprov'd. **The leading trait of a Christian is that he sits at Christ’s feet. Those please God most who take in most.**

II. Mary's spirit rested.—Martha worked anxiously. **The difference between them was greatest, not so much in what they did, as in the spirit in which they did it.** Drink in God's peace. Be a little child.

III. Mary had learnt to concentrate her mind.—Martha could not do this. Mary gathered all to a single point, and that point was Christ. Martha was full of distracting and unnecessary cares. Too many of God's dear children are the same. What vain solitudes! What is the use of it all? What is the remedy? Simplify. Throw out what is wrong, what is trivial, what is underweight. "One thing" is all that will be left. To find, to love, and to enjoy the Saviour. There is nothing else. This is "the good part." —*Vaughan*.

— **Preacher's Complete Homiletical Commentary**

**JESUS' TEACHING THAT ATTENTION TO HIM IS
THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN LIFE ([10:38-42](#))**

[10:38-42](#).

The focus of this passage is... that the proper attitude toward Jesus is to listen to Him and obey His words.

The **village** where **Martha** opened her home to **Him** was Bethany ([John 11:1-12:8](#)), a few miles east of Jerusalem. Jesus stayed in Bethany during His final week on earth. A sharp contrast was portrayed between the two sisters. **Mary... sat** and listened to Jesus, while **Martha** made **preparations** for a meal.

The phrase, *only one thing is needed* ([Luke 10:42](#)), refers to listening to His words, which **Mary** had *chosen* to do. The same theme is seen in [8:1-21](#).

**- The Bible Knowledge Commentary:
An Exposition of the Scriptures by
Dallas Seminary Faculty.**

Mary and Martha Disagree About What's Important

In another story recorded only by Luke, Jesus is invited to have dinner at the home of Martha, who has a sister named Mary. (They also have a brother named Lazarus [[John 11:1-2](#)], whom Jesus raised from the dead.) Martha appears to be the older of the two sisters. In [Luke 10 verses 38](#) and [40](#), Martha is depicted as the hostess, who invites Jesus into her home. Martha seems not only to be the older, but the more aggressive and outspoken of the two women. It is she who went out to meet Jesus after Lazarus died, and to inform Him that this would not have happened if He would have been there sooner ([John 11:20-21](#)).

Mary sits at the feet of Jesus while Martha is busy preparing a meal in the kitchen, which finally aggravates Martha to the point where she goes and asks Jesus to tell Mary to help her ([10:40](#)). It's easy to assume that Mary is clearly the more spiritual of the two, yet Martha has a point. This is no small meal. Jesus has His disciples with Him ([10:38](#)), which at the time might have been a number much larger than twelve. Who can blame Martha for wanting help? For Luke's first-century audience, Martha's role seems much more understandable than Mary's. They would have been shocked by Mary's behavior—in Judaism, women did not learn at the feet of a rabbi.

Still, Martha seems more angry than jealous. It must be hard to hear that Mary has made the better choice ([10:42](#)). **Jesus shows no anger toward Martha. Nor does He impose a stereotypical “woman’s role” on either of the women. He merely tries to clarify what should have been the highest priority at that moment. And He deals more with their attitudes than their actions.**

The story of Martha and Mary underscores the importance and priority of learning at the feet of Jesus, that is, being His disciple. It was not the frantic activity of Martha that won Jesus' commendation, but the quiet activity of Mary, who sat at the feet of her Savior...

Take It Home

Are you by nature more like Mary or Martha? At church meetings or similar gatherings, are you more attentive to the needs of the group or the content being discussed ...or are they equally important to you?

Regardless of your natural tendencies, how can you ensure that you stay focused on what is better—the one thing that is needed ([10:42](#))?

- Layman's Bible Commentary

38. Entered into a certain village. Bethany, the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. It is probable that this incident is not related in its order of time. It may have occurred on the last journey.

39. Sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word. Martha seems to have been mistress of the house. Her thought was to entertain the Lord; Mary's to hear his word; both commendable; the latter, best.

40. Dost thou not care? Her sister seemed to her negligent and selfish, when...

Mary's apparent neglect was do to the absorption in the truth.

41, 42. Thou art anxious and troubled. Agitated over temporal matters while there are others more important.

One thing is needful. Jesus cared nothing for bodily indulgence. **The important thing was the bread of life.** That, Mary had chosen. Heed the lesson that...

He who receives most of his word and spirit, is most pleasing in his sight.

- Johnson's Notes on the New Testament.

The Journey to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51-19:27)

A. Samaria (9:51-10:37)

1. A Village Turns Him Away (9:51-56)

9:51 steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. This begins a major section of Luke's Gospel. From here to 19:27, Christ's face was set toward Jerusalem (see note on v. 53), and Luke's narrative is a travelogue of that long journey to the Cross. This was a dramatic turning point in Christ's ministry.

After this, Galilee was no longer His base of operation. Although 17:11-37 describes a return visit to Galilee, Luke included everything between this point and that short Galilean sojourn as part of the journey to Jerusalem. **We know from a comparison of the Gospels that, during this period of Christ's ministry, He made short visits to Jerusalem to celebrate feasts (see notes on 13:22; 17:11).**

Nonetheless, those brief visits were only interludes in this period of ministry that would culminate in a final journey to Jerusalem for the purpose of dying there.

Thus, Luke underscored this turning point in Christ's ministry more dramatically than any of the other Gospels, by showing Christ's determination to complete His mission of going to the Cross. See note on 12:50.

9:52 Samaritans. These people were descendants of Jewish mixed marriages from the days of captivity. They were rivals of the Jewish nation and had devised their own worship, a hybrid

of Judaism and paganism, with a temple of their own on Mt. Gerizim. They were considered unclean by the Jews and were so hated that most Jewish travelers from Galilee to Judah took the longer route east of the Jordan River to avoid traveling through Samaria. *See note on [John 4:4](#).*

9:53 *because His face was set for... Jerusalem.* Traveling to Jerusalem for worship implied rejection of the temple on Mt. Gerizim and a contempt for Samaritan worship (*see note on [v. 52](#)*). This was a strong point of contention between Jews and Samaritans (cf. [John 4:20-22](#)).

9:54 *James and John.* Jesus nicknamed these brothers “Boanerges” — Sons of Thunder ([Mark 3:17](#)) — a fitting title, apparently. This was John’s second sin against charity in such a short time (*see note on [v. 49](#)*). It is interesting to note that several years later, the apostle John journeyed through Samaria once again with Peter, this time preaching the gospel in Samaritan villages ([Acts 8:25](#)).

Others and Demons in the Gospels				
	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
1. The Twelve	10:1, 8	6:7, 13 ; 9:1		-
2. The Twelve	-	3:15	-	-
3. Unknown disciples-		9:38	9:49	-

Others and Demons in the Gospels

4. The Twelve	-	16:17	-	-
5. The Seventy	-	-	10:17-20	-

9:55 *rebuked them*. Christ's response to the Samaritans exemplifies the attitude the church ought to have with regard to all forms of religious persecution. The Samaritans' worship was pagan at heart, plainly wrong (*see note on [John 4:22](#)*).

Compounding that was their intolerance. Yet, the Lord would not retaliate with force against them. Nor did He even revile them verbally. He had come to save, not to destroy; and so His response was grace rather than destructive fury. Nonetheless, **Christ's words of disapproval here must not be taken as condemnation of Elijah's actions in [1 Kings 18:38-40](#) or [2 Kings 1:10-12](#)**. Elijah was commissioned to a special ministry as prophet in a theocracy, and it was his God-ordained task to confront an evil monarch (Ahab) who was attempting to usurp God's authority. **Elijah was specifically authorized to measure out the reprisal of God's wrath**. Elijah acted with an authority comparable to that of modern civil authorities (cf. [Rom. 13:4](#))—not in a capacity that parallels that of ministers of the gospel.

2. He Turns Away the Half-Hearted ([9:57-62](#))

9:59, 60 *See notes on [Matthew 8:21, 22](#)*.

9:62 *looking back*. A plowman looking back cuts a crooked furrow.

3. He Sends Out the Seventy (**10:1-24**)

10:1 *seventy others*. **The commissioning of the seventy is recorded only in Luke. Moses also appointed seventy elders as his representatives** (**Num. 11:16, 24-26**). The twelve disciples had been sent into Galilee (**9:1-6**); the seventy were sent into every city and place where He was about to go—i.e., into Judea, and possibly Perea (*see note on Matthew 19:1*). *two by two*. As the Twelve had been sent (**Mark 6:7**; cf. **Eccl. 4:9, 11**; **Acts 13:2, 15:27, 39, 40, 19:22**; **Rev. 11:3**).

10:3 *lambs among wolves*. I.e., they would face hostility (cf. **Ezek. 2:3-6**; **John 15:20**) and spiritual danger (cf. **Matt. 7:15**; **John 10:12**).

10:4 *neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals*. I.e., travel without luggage. This does not mean they would be barefoot. *See note on 9:3*.

greet no one. **A greeting in that culture was an elaborate ceremony, involving many formalities, perhaps even a meal, and long delays** (*see note on 11:43*). **A person on an extremely urgent mission could be excused**

from such formalities without being thought rude. Everything in Jesus' instructions speaks of the shortness of time and the great urgency of the task.

10:7 *Do not go from house to house.* I.e., for lodging (see note on [Mark 6:10](#)). **They were to establish headquarters in a village and not waste time moving around or seeking more comfortable housing.**

10:11, 12 See notes on [Matthew 10:14, 15](#).

10:13-15 See notes on [Matthew 11:21, 23](#).

10:16 These words elevate the office of a faithful minister of Christ, and magnify the guilt and the condemnation of those who reject the message.

10:17 *returned with joy.* How long the mission lasted is not recorded. It may have been several weeks. The seventy probably did not return all at once; but this dialogue appears to have occurred after they had all reassembled.

10:18 *I saw Satan fall.* In this context, it appears Jesus' meaning was, ***“Don't be so surprised that the demons are subject to you; I saw their commander cast out of heaven, so it is no wonder if his minions are cast out on earth. After all, I am the source of the authority that makes them subject to you”*** (v. 19). **He may also have intended a subtle reminder and warning against pride—the**

reason for Satan's fall (cf. [1 Tim. 3:6](#)). For discussions of Satan's fall, *see notes on [Isaiah 14:12-14](#); [Ezekiel 28:12-15](#)*.

10:19 serpents and scorpions. Cf. [Psalm 91:13](#); [Ezekiel 2:6](#). These appear to be figurative terms for demonic powers (cf. [Rom. 16:20](#)).

10:20 do not rejoice in this. Rather than being so enthralled with extraordinary manifestations such as power over demons and the ability to work miracles, **they should have realized that the greatest wonder of all is the reality of salvation—the whole point of the gospel message and the central issue to which all the miracles pointed.**

because your names are written in heaven. Cf. [Philippians 4:3](#); [Hebrews 12:23](#); [Revelation 21:27](#). By contrast, unbelievers are “written in the earth” ([Jer. 17:13](#)).

10:21, 22 *See notes on [Matthew 11:25, 26](#)*.

4. He Gives the Parable of the Good Samaritan ([10:25-37](#))

10:25 lawyer. I.e., a scribe who was supposedly an expert in the Law of God. Aside from one usage of this word in [Matthew 22:35](#) (*see note there*), Luke is the only one of the Gospel writers who uses it ([11:45, 46](#)). *what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* The same question is raised by several inquirers ([18:18-23](#); [Matt. 19:16-22](#); [John 3:1-15](#)).

10:27 *he answered.* The lawyer summed up the requirements of the law ([Lev. 19:18](#); [Deut. 6:5](#)) exactly as Christ did on another occasion (*see notes on [Matt. 22:37-40](#)*).

10:28 *do this and you will live.* Cf. [Leviticus 18:5](#); [Ezekiel 20:11](#). “Do and live” is the promise of the law. But since no sinner can obey perfectly, the impossible demands of the law are meant to drive us to seek divine mercy ([Gal. 3:10-13](#), [22-25](#)). This man should have responded with a confession of his own guilt, rather than self-justification ([v. 29](#)).

10:29 *wanting to justify himself.* This reveals the man’s self-righteous character. *who is my neighbor?* **The prevailing opinion among scribes and Pharisees was that one’s neighbors were the righteous alone.** According to them, the wicked—including rank sinners (such as tax collectors and prostitutes), Gentiles, and especially Samaritans—were to be hated because they were the enemies of God. They cited [Psalm 139:21, 22](#) to justify their position. As that passage suggests, hatred of evil is the natural corollary of loving righteousness. But the truly righteous person’s “hatred” for sinners is not a malevolent enmity. It is a righteous abhorrence of all that is base and corrupt—not a spiteful, personal loathing of individuals.

Godly hatred is marked by a broken-hearted grieving over the condition of the sinner. And as Jesus taught here and elsewhere ([6:27-36](#); [Matt. 5:44-48](#)), it is also tempered by a genuine love.

The Pharisees had elevated hostility toward the wicked to the status of a virtue, in effect nullifying the second Great

Commandment. Jesus' answer to this lawyer demolished the pharisaical excuse for hating one's enemies.

10:30 *down from Jerusalem to Jericho.* A rocky, winding, treacherous descent of about 3,300 feet in 17 miles. That stretch of road was notorious for being beset with thieves and danger.

10:32 *Levite.* These were from the tribe of Levi, but not descendants of Aaron. They assisted the priests in the work of the temple.

10:33 *Samaritan.* For a Samaritan to travel this road was unusual. The Samaritan himself was risking not only the thieves, but also the hostility of other travelers.

10:34 *oil and wine.* Probably carried by most travelers in small amounts as a kind of first-aid kit. The wine was antiseptic; the oil soothing and healing.

10:35 *two denarii.* I.e., two days' wages (*see notes on [Matt. 20:2](#); [22:19](#)*). Probably more than enough to permit the man to stay until he recovered.

10:36 *neighbor to him.* Jesus reversed the lawyer's original question ([v. 29](#)). The lawyer assumed it was up to others to prove themselves neighbor to him (*see note on [v. 29](#)*). **Jesus' reply makes it clear that each has a responsibility to be a neighbor—especially to those who are in need.**

B. Bethany and Judea ([10:38-13:35](#))

1. Mary and Martha ([10:38-42](#))

[10:38](#) a certain village. Bethany, **two miles east of the temple in Jerusalem, on the east slope of the Mount of Olives.** This was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (cf. [John 11:1](#)).

[10:40](#) distracted. Lit. “dragging all around.” The expression implies that Martha was in a tumult. *with much serving.* Martha was evidently fussing about with details that were unnecessarily elaborate.

[10:42](#) one thing... good part. Jesus was not speaking of the number of dishes to be served. **The one thing necessary was exemplified by Mary (i.e, an attitude of worship and meditation), listening with an open mind and heart to Jesus’ words.**

- The MacArthur Bible Commentary.

Christ's Entertainment at the House of Mary and Martha

[10:38-42](#)

We may observe in this story,

I. The entertainment which Martha gave to Christ and his disciples at her house, [v. 38](#). Observe,

1. Christ's coming to the village where Martha lived: As they went (Christ and his disciples together), he and they with him entered into a certain village. This village was Bethany, nigh to Jerusalem, whither Christ was now going up, and he took this in his way. Note

(1.) Our Lord Jesus went about doing good ([Acts 10:38](#)), scattering his benign beams and influences as the true light of the world.

(2.) Wherever Christ went his disciples went along with him.

(3.) **Christ honoured the country-villages with his presence and favour, and not the great and populous cities only; for, as he chose privacy, so he countenanced poverty.**

2. His reception at Martha's house: A certain woman, named Martha, received him into her house, and made him welcome, for she was the housekeeper. Note,

(1.) Our Lord Jesus, when he was here upon earth, was so poor that he was necessitated to be beholden to his friends for a subsistence. **Though he was Zion's King, he had no house of his own** either in Jerusalem or near it.

(2.) There were some who were Christ's particular friends, whom he loved more than his other friends, and them he visited most frequently. He loved this family

([John 11:5](#)), and often invited himself to them. **Christ's visits are the tokens of his love, [John 14:23](#).**

(3.) There were those who kindly received Christ into their houses when he was here upon earth. It is called Martha's house, for, probably, she was a widow, and was the housekeeper. Though **it was expensive to entertain Christ for he did not come alone, but brought his disciples with him, yet she would not regard the cost of it.** (How can we spend what we have better than in Christ's service!) Nay, though **at this time it was grown dangerous to entertain him especially so near Jerusalem, yet she cared not what hazard she ran for his name's sake.** Though there were many that rejected him, and would not entertain him, yet there was one that would bid him welcome. **Though Christ is every where spoken against, yet there is a remnant to whom he is dear, and who are dear to him.**

II. The attendance which Mary, the sister of Martha, gave upon the word of Christ, [v. 20](#).

1. **Mary heard his word.** It seems, our Lord Jesus, as soon as he came into Martha's house, even before entertainment was made for him, addressed himself to his great work of preaching the gospel. He presently took the chair with solemnity; for Mary sat to hear him, which intimates that it was a continued discourse. **Note, A good**

sermon is never the worse for being preached in a house; and the visits of our friends should be so managed as to make them turn to a spiritual advantage. Mary, having this price put into her hands, sat herself to improve it, not knowing when she should have such another. Since Christ is forward to speak, we should be swift to hear.

2. **Mary sat to hear, which denotes a close attention. Her mind was composed, and she resolved to abide by it: not to catch a word now and then, but to receive all that Christ delivered.** She sat at his feet, as scholars at the feet of their tutors when they read their lectures; hence Paul is said to be brought up at the feet of Gamaliel.

Our sitting at Christ's feet, when we hear his word, signifies a readiness to receive it, and a submission and entire resignation of ourselves to the guidance of it. We must either sit at Christ's feet or be made his footstool; but, if we sit with him at his feet now, we shall sit with him on his throne shortly.

III. The care of Martha about her domestic affairs: But Martha was cumbered about much serving ([v. 40](#)), and that was the reason why she was not where Mary was-sitting at Christ's feet, to hear his word. She was providing for the entertainment of Christ and those that came with him. Perhaps she had no notice before of his coming, and she was unprovided, but was in care to have every thing handsome upon this occasion; she had not such guests every day. Housekeepers know what care and bustle there must be when a great entertainment is to be made. Observe here,

1. Something commendable, which must not be overlooked.

(1.) Here was **a commendable respect to our Lord Jesus**; for we have reason to think it was not for ostentation, but purely to testify her good-will to him, that she made this entertainment. Note, **Those who truly love Christ will think that well bestowed that is laid out for his honour.**

(2.) Here was **a commendable care of her household affairs.** It appears, from the respect shown to this family among the Jews ([John 11:19](#)), that they were persons of some quality and distinction; and yet Martha herself did not think it a disparagement to her to lay her hand even to the service of the family, when there was occasion for it. Note, **It is the duty of those who have the charge of families to look well to the ways of their household.** The affectation of state and the love of ease make many families neglected.

2. **Here was something culpable, which we must take notice of too.**

(1.) She was for much serving. Her heart was upon it, to have a very sumptuous and splendid entertainment; great plenty, great variety, and great exactness, according to the fashion of the place. She was in care, *peri pollēn diakonian*-concerning much attendance. Note, **It does not become the disciples of Christ to affect much serving, to affect varieties, dainties, and superfluities** in eating and drinking; what need is there of much serving, when much less will serve?

(2.) She was cumbered about it; *periespato*-she was just distracted with it. Note, Whatever cares the providence of God casts upon us we must not be cumbered with them, nor be disquieted and perplexed by them. **Care is good and duty; but cumber is sin and folly.**

(3.) She was then cumbered about much serving when she should have been with her sister, sitting at Christ's feet to hear his word. Note, **Worldly business is then a snare to us when it hinders us from serving God and getting good to our souls.**

IV. The complaint which Martha made to Christ against her sister Mary, for not assisting her, upon this occasion, in the business of the house ([v. 40](#)): "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister, who is concerned as well as I in having things done well, has left me to serve alone? Therefore dismiss her from attending thee, and bid her come and help me." Now,

1. **This complaint of Martha's may be considered as a discovery of her worldliness: it was the language of her inordinate care and cumber.** She speaks as one in a mighty passion with her sister, else she would not have troubled Christ with the matter. Note, The inordinacy of worldly cares and pursuits is often the occasion of disturbance in families and of strife and contention among relations. Moreover, those that are eager upon the world themselves are apt to blame and censure those that are not so too; and while they justify themselves in their worldliness, and judge of others by their serviceableness to them in their worldly pursuits, they are ready to condemn those that addict themselves to the exercises of religion, as if they neglected the main chance, as they call it. Martha, being angry at her sister, appealed to Christ, and would have him say that she did well to be angry. Lord, doest not thou care that my sister has let me to serve alone? It should seem as if Christ had sometimes expressed himself tenderly concerned for her, and her ease and comfort, and would not have her go through so much toil and trouble, and she expected that he should now bid her sister take her share in it. When Martha was caring, she must have Mary, and Christ and all, to care too, or else she is not pleased. **Note, Those are not always in the right that are most forward to appeal to God; we must therefore take heed, lest at any time we expect that Christ should espouse our unjust and groundless quarrels.** The cares which he cast upon us we may cheerfully cast upon him, but not those which we foolishly draw upon ourselves.

He will be the patron of the poor and injured, but not of the turbulent and injurious.

2. It may be considered as a discouragement of Mary's piety and devotion. Her sister should have commended her for it, should have told her that she was in the right; but, instead of this, she condemns her as wanting in her duty.

Note, It is no strange thing for those that are zealous in religion to meet with hindrances and discouragements from those that are about them; not only with opposition from enemies, but with blame and censure from their friends. David's fasting, and his dancing before the ark, were turned to his reproach.

V. The reproof which Christ gave to Martha for her inordinate care, [v. 41](#). **Martha appealed to him, and he gives judgment against her:** Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, whereas but one thing is needful.

1. He reproved her, though he was at this time her guest. Her fault was her over-solicitude to entertain him, and she expected he should justify her in it, yet he publicly checked her for it. Note, **As many as Christ loves he rebukes and chastens. Even those that are dear to Christ, if any thing be amiss in them, shall be sure to hear of it.** Nevertheless I have something against thee.

2. **When he reproved her, he called her by her name, Martha;** for reproofs are then most likely to do good when

they are particular, applied to particular persons and cases, **as Nathan's to David, Thou art the man.**

He repeated her name, Martha, Martha; he speaks as one in earnest, and deeply concerned for her welfare. Those that are entangled in the cares of this life are not easily disentangled. To them we must call again and again, O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.

3. That which he reproved her for was her being careful and troubled about many things. **He was not pleased that she should think to please him with a rich and splendid entertainment, and with perplexing herself to prepare it for him;** whereas he would teach us, as not to be sensual in using such things, so not to be selfish in being willing that others should be troubled, no matter who or how many, so we may be gratified. **Christ reproves her, both for the intenseness of her care** ("Thou art careful and troubled, divided and disturbed by thy care"), **and for the extensiveness of it, "about many things;** thou dost grasp at many enjoyments, and so art troubled at many disappointments. Poor Martha, thou hast many things to fret at, and this puts thee out of humour, whereas less ado would serve."

Note:

Inordinate care or trouble about many things in this world is a common fault among Christ's disciples; it is very displeasing to Christ, and that for which they often come under the rebukes of Providence. If they fret for no just cause, it is just with him to order them something to fret at.

4. That which aggravated the sin and folly of her care was that but one thing is needful. It is a low construction which some put upon this, that, whereas Martha was in care to provide many dishes of meat, there was occasion but for one, one would be enough. There is need but of one thing—*henos de esti chreia*. If we take it so, it furnishes us with a rule of temperance, not to affect varieties and dainties, but to be content to sit down to one dish of meat, to half on one, [Proverbs 23:1-3](#). It is a forced construction which some of the ancients put upon it:

But...

Oneness is needful, in opposition to distractions. There is need of one heart to attend upon the word, not divided and hurried to and fro, as Martha's was at

this time. The one thing needful is certainly meant of that which Mary made her choice-sitting at Christ's feet, to hear his word.

She was troubled about many things, when she should have applied herself to one:

godliness unites the heart, which the world had divided.

The many things she was troubled about were needless, while the one thing she neglected was needful.

Martha's care and work were good in their proper season and place; but now she had something else to do, which was unspeakably more needful, and therefore should be done first, and most minded. She expected Christ to have blamed Mary for not doing as she did, but he blamed her for not doing as Mary did; and we are sure the judgment of Christ is according to truth. The day will come when Martha will wish she had set where Mary did.

VI. Christ's approbation and commendation of Mary for her serious piety: Mary hath chosen the good part. Mary said nothing in her own defence; but, since Martha has appealed to the Master, to him she is willing to refer it, and will abide by his award; and here we have it.

1. She had justly given the preference to that which best deserved it; **for one thing is needful, this one thing that she has done, to give up herself to the guidance of Christ, and receive the law from his mouth.** Note, Serious godliness is a needful thing, it is the one thing needful; for nothing without this will do us any real good in this world, and nothing but this will go with us into another world.

2. She had herein wisely done well for herself. Christ justified Mary against her sister's clamours. However **we may be censured and condemned by men for our piety and zeal, our Lord Jesus will take our part:** But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Let us not then condemn the pious zeal of any, lest we set Christ against us; and let us never be discouraged if we be censured for our pious zeal, for we have Christ for us.

Note, **Sooner or later, Mary's choice will be justified**, and all those who make that choice, and abide by it. **But this was not all; he applauded her for her wisdom**: She hath chosen the good part; for she chose to be with Christ, to take her part with him; she chose the better business, and the better happiness, and took a better way of honouring Christ and of pleasing him, by receiving his word into her heart, than Martha did by providing for his entertainment in her house. Note,

(1.) A part with Christ is a good part; it is a part for the soul and eternity, the part Christ gives to his favourites ([John 13:8](#)), who are partakers of Christ ([Hebrews 3:14](#)), and partakers with Christ, [Romans 8:17](#).

(2.) It is a part that shall never be taken away from those that have it. A portion in this life will certainly be taken away from us, at the furthest, when we shall be taken away from it; but nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ, and our part in that love. Men and devils cannot take it away from us, and God and Christ will not.

(3.) **It is the wisdom and duty of every one of us to choose this good part, to choose the service of God for our business, and the favour of God for our happiness**, and an interest in Christ, in order to both. In particular cases we must choose that which has a tendency to religion, and reckon that best for us that is best for our souls. **Mary was at her choice whether she would partake with Martha in her care, and get the**

reputation of a fine housekeeper, or sit at the feet of Christ and approve herself a zealous disciple; and, by her choice in this particular, Christ judges of her general choice.

(4.) Those who choose this good part shall not only have what they choose, but shall have their choice commended in the great day.

- Matthew Henry's Commentary

Have you ever noticed that the story of Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42) comes right after the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)?

There is a purpose in that — the authors of the gospels arranged their material very carefully, with thought and intention.

The connection between the two is not hard to see. **The story of Mary and Martha is intended, in part, to correct a possible misunderstanding of the parable of the Good Samaritan.**

The parable of the Good Samaritan tells us how we are to be as Christians — we are to show mercy to others

whenever the opportunity is before us, and indeed we are to seek out opportunities to do good and serve. We are to *“go and do likewise”* (Luke 10:37), just as the Samaritan did. *This is what it means to “love your neighbor as yourself”* (v. 27).

But we could mis-apply that by allowing true service to transform into mere busyness. This is what we see with Mary and Martha.

Mary “sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to his teaching” (v. 39). Martha, on the other hand, “was distracted with much serving” (v. 40). When Martha asked Jesus to rebuke Mary and help her serve, Jesus said “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” (vv. 41-42).

The lesson:

Do indeed be radical in doing good, just like the Good Samaritan (v. 37). But don’t take this to mean that you should be scrambling around frantically, over-committing yourself and becoming

overly busy. We ought to sacrifice and endure hardship. But don't let your service to others distract you from the ultimate reason for your service, which is Jesus himself.

Serve, but don't be frantic. Sacrifice and go out of your way, but don't neglect devoted time to worship and prayer and reading the Bible.

The point of seeing these things together here in Luke 10 is that there is enough time for both. Don't let your service turn into frenetic anxiety.

And here's one other thought:

We also see here that God values — indeed, requires — *both action and thought*. Radical action for good is illustrated in the Good Samaritan. And deep consideration of the teaching of Jesus is modeled in the story of Mary and Martha.

Don't play doing and thinking off against one another. Do both. There is time for both and, ironically, each serves the other.

Edwin Bliss once said, *“The pursuit of excellence is gratifying and healthy. The pursuit of perfection is frustrating, neurotic, and a terrible waste of time.”*