

Title: A TALE OF TWO SISTERS

Text: Luke 10:38-42

Intro: Martha and Mary demonstrate the importance of both our service and worship of the Lord. Their attitude and approach towards Jesus are two fine illustrations of us Christians. From this study we shall observe and focus on these two sisters and their different responses to the presence of the Lord along with their resulting experiences. Notice carefully from our passage –

I. MARTHA'S OPEN HOME (v.38)

A. Martha received Jesus *"into her house."* She lives in the town of Bethany with Lazarus and Mary (**John 11:1**). Martha was warm and hospitable. Her home was always open to Jesus. It is important to keep our homes open to the Lord and his people; to practice hospitality without grumbling (**I Pet. 4:9; Rom. 12:13**).

B. Custom in Martha's day demanded a meal for a guest, so she set herself about the task of preparing one. So Martha in fact would seem, from a customary standpoint, to be doing the good thing. But notice how Jesus was not looking for someone to feed Him physically, but for someone whom He could feed spiritually!

II. MARY'S OPEN HEART (v.39)

A. Mary *"sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word."* This speaks of her true devotion and discipleship. Indeed, at the feet of the master was the proper place for a disciple to be. Paul said that he was brought up at the *"feet of Gamaliel"* (**Acts 22:3**).

B. The Bible records that Mary was at the feet of Jesus thrice: (1) Here in **Luke 10:39** where she sat at Jesus' feet; (2) In **John 11:32** where she falls at Jesus feet; and (3) In **John 12:1-3** where she anoints Jesus' feet with spikenard for His burial.

C. See **Phil. 3:10**. Like Paul, another good disciple of Christ, Mary knew three things very well: (1) Christ; (2) Christ's power of resurrection, and (3) The fellowship of Christ's sufferings.

III. MARTHA'S MANY THINGS (vv. 40-41)

A. Mary's problem was that she was distracted by all the kitchen preparations to be made. She probably tried to listen to Jesus as she worked but could not do both at the same time. Jesus was in her home but she had lost focus.

B. She personally could have easily asked Mary to help but she felt responsible to do the work all by herself so much so that

she felt exhausted and irritated. This careless attitude resulted in: (1) Reprimanding Jesus; 2) Insinuating that Jesus is uncaring; 3) Constraining Jesus what He should do! Imagine Martha telling the Lord what she wants Him to do, instead of letting the Lord tell her what she should do? Has Martha forgotten who Jesus is?

D. Martha's service was not inferior at all; but after a while her busyness and impatience caused her to forget why she was doing her work. She felt so sorry for herself and no longer carried out her duties out of love for the Lord, but out of selfish motives.

E. Jesus pointed out Martha's mistake to her by telling her how much she was anxious about many things. If she really did them for Lord she would not have been so anxious (**Col. 3:23**).

IV. MARY'S ONE THING (v.42)

A. Mary sought and put Jesus first! (cf. **Phil. 3:13**) She was not distracted by many things but was totally focused on Jesus!

B. Mary continued to abide in Jesus while Martha did not. This is the *"one thing"* better that Mary chose. Observe that Jesus did not say that Mary did a better thing by not working, but by listening. He did not condemn Martha's service at all. Notice that to dwell in the Lord's presence means that there is a time to serve and a time to be still and silent before the Lord (**Zep. 1:7a**).

C. Our Lord is looking for true worshipers (**John 4:23**) and Mary was indeed a true worshiper. The *"many things"* of Martha could have been done more effectively and without distraction if she had worshiped the Lord first. In God's order of things, worship comes first before service; listening comes first before working!

D. When Jesus left the house, it was less likely that He talked about how good the meal was, how beautiful the table, or how clean the kitchen was? Martha did very useful things, but temporal things that pass away! Jesus told Martha, *"... Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."*

E. Choosing the *"good part"* means being in the right place while listening to the right voice, and setting the right priorities while being careful for distractions (**I Sam. 15:22**).

Conclusion: Mary's priority was to be close to Christ. Martha's priority was to serve Christ. Mary did the right thing at the right time; Martha did the good thing at the bad time! To choose the less, when you could have chosen the best, constitutes one of the greatest tragedies in life! May we be wise as Mary in our choices!