

JESUS VISITED MARTHA AND MARY

Luke 10:38-42

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Jesus, Martha, and Mary

Key-location: Bethany

Key-repetitions:

- Martha's actions: welcomed Jesus (Lk 10:38); worked (Lk 10:40); interrupted Jesus (Lk 10:40); demanded Jesus to order Mary (Lk 10:40).
- Mary's actions: sat listening to Jesus (Lk 10:39); chose what was best (Lk 10:42).

Key-attitudes:

- Martha's anxiety.
- Mary's interest in hearing Jesus.
- Martha's anger at Mary.
- Jesus' compassion when he corrected Martha.

Initial-situation:

During the second half of the third year of Jesus' public ministry, he made three trips to Jerusalem to participate in three different religious feasts. The first trip was for the Feast of the Tabernacles. On the Sabbath after the Feast, while still in Jerusalem, Jesus healed the man who was born blind. That provoked a conflict with the Pharisees because Jews weren't allowed to work on the Sabbath. Healing was considered work.

After the Feast of the Tabernacles, it is assumed Jesus went to the region of Perea.

Initial-problem:

Jesus entered the village of Bethany where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. Her sister Mary sat at the Lord's feet listening to him.

Final-situation:

Jesus accused Martha of worrying and being upset about many things, and said that Mary chose what was best.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus and his disciples were traveling to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Dedication. They came to the village of Bethany. A woman named Martha welcomed Jesus into her home. Martha's sister, Mary, sat at the Lord's feet listening to Jesus.

Martha was upset over all the work she had to do. Martha interrupted, "Lord, don't you care that my sister left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

Jesus said, “Martha, Martha, you’re worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is essential; Mary chose what is best, and that one thing won’t be taken away from her” (Lk 10:38-42).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened when Jesus visited the home of Martha and Mary?
2. How did Martha’s busyness interfere with her serving Jesus?
3. How can good intentions to help sometimes harm instead of help?
4. How were Mary and Martha similar, and how were they different?
5. Who do you most identify with: Martha or Mary? Why?
6. Why do we need people like Martha?
7. Why do we need people like Mary?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Jesus values friendship and social life.** Martha, Mary, and their brother Lazarus were Jesus’ close friends, and he visited their home (Lk 10:38-42).
2. **To learn from Jesus, is more important than to perform activities.** Martha was worried about serving a banquet worthy of Jesus, while Mary enjoyed the spiritual banquet of listening to Jesus (Lk 10:38-42).
3. **The desire to help a person can be expressed in an inappropriate manner that hinders instead of helping.** Jesus was going to Jerusalem and he knew opposition, conflict, and the cross were in his near future. Jesus needed solitude and silence. Mary understood, and she gave Jesus what he needed. Martha, with her concern for serving a banquet worthy of Jesus, expressed her affection in a way that didn’t meet Jesus’ most important needs (Lk 10:38-42).
4. **Different temperaments exist among Jesus’ followers.** Martha was an active take-charge person concerned with practical activities. Mary liked to sit and contemplate (Lk 10:38-42). After the resurrection of Lazarus, Martha served a banquet for Jesus, and Mary impulsively poured perfume onto Jesus (Jn 12:2-3). It is puzzling for an activity-minded person to understand the contemplation-minded person and vice-versa.

5. **People who desire to serve Jesus risk becoming so busy doing things for Jesus that they don't spend time with him.** Martha became so concerned with household chores that her service to Christ degenerated into mere busy work (Lk 10:41-42).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. Have three volunteers act out the story. The volunteers will represent:
 - Martha.
 - Mary.
 - Jesus.

2. Have two volunteers, one pretending to be a "Mary," and the other pretending to be a "Martha" planning a Day of Prayer for the church.