

Read: Luke 10:38-42, John 11:1-44, John 12:1-3

MARY and MARTHA

Much has been said about the sisters, Mary and Martha.

Mary desired nothing more than to sit at Jesus’ feet, while Martha was concerned about the practical concerns of the day. When their brother, Lazarus was sick and near death, they sent for Jesus...having to wait and trust. After Lazarus died, Jesus returned to Bethany. Martha, upon hearing of Jesus arrival, rushed to meet Him and in the midst of her grief, exclaimed, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you.”

1

Does Jesus’ correction of Martha in Luke 10: 41-42 mean He rejected her gift of hospitality? 1 Peter 4:9, Romans 12:13, Titus 1:8 are scriptures that encourage hospitality. Martha has often been used as an example of someone “too busy for Jesus”. Was she? Or was serving her unique gift of worship to the King of Kings?

How can our serving become an idol? (*Idol: Noun: That on which the affections, devotions are strongly (often excessively) set; A person or thing greatly loved or adored; An ideal instance; a perfect embodiment of a concept; A representation or symbol of an object of worship; a false notion or conception; a fallacy.*) Why might the Lord want to adjust our priorities about our activities? How might we find direction for our priorities? Psalm 139:23-24.

2

Read Psalm 16:11, Matthew 11:28-29, Psalm 37:4-5. Did Mary emulate these scriptures? Do you think both Mary and Martha were faithful women of God, despite their different personalities?

3

Jesus delayed coming immediately to a sick Lazarus and then waited until He had been in the tomb for four days (John 11:39). Why was His not coming “in time” important? Consider Galatians 4:4, Matthew 24:36.

Describe a situation where you had to trust God’s timing in the past or even presently. How do the following two Scriptures help you put your faith in God? Habakkuk 2:3, 2 Peter 3:9.

4

Do you think Martha was scolding Jesus about His delay in coming to Bethany in John 11: 21? Do you think you can always be honest with Jesus? Why? How would you characterize her statement in verse 22?

5

In our final scene we see the family awaiting a visit from Jesus as described in John 12:1-8. Jesus would be going to the cross in a few days. Mary is preparing to anoint Him with her expensive perfume. Martha is again preparing to serve. Was there a change in the basic ways that they approached this meeting in contrast with the one described in the opening scene and Luke 10:38-42? Discuss how their encounter with the miraculous may have shifted their priorities. Did the nature of who God created them to be change? Look at verses 3-7 and discuss what Jesus meant by His statement in verse 7. Who are the poor today? Matthew 25:35-40.

6

Lazarus was dead, revived, and would eventually die again. Twice God “unwrapped” him and set him free from death. Read Romans 4:4-7, Romans 8:2. Is your salvation sure? How do you know? Galatians 4:4-7 causes us to rejoice!
