



## STORY

Mary and Martha - Luke 10, 38-42

## TEACHER PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, grant that the door to my heart may always be open to welcome You to dwell there. Open my lips to make You known in all Your graciousness to the children in my care so that You may come and dwell in their hearts. Amen.

## VOCABULARY

### OUTER AIM

Jesus welcomed into the home of Martha and Mary

### INNER AIM

**BACKGROUND** *Rupprecht Bible History References, Vol. 2, pp. 236 ff.*

Jesus and His disciples were on the way from Perea (land east of the Jordan river) to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple. This festival had its beginnings some 160 years before the birth of Christ. It was also called the Festival of Lights. It is still observed by the Jews today. It is called Hanukkah. As they journeyed, the disciples, and perhaps Lazarus, with them went on to Jerusalem; Jesus stayed behind in Bethany at the home of Martha and Mary. This was a home that the Lord entered often and to which He enjoyed going.

Everything in life is a matter of priorities. People who can't prioritize their time will often find that although they have been running around all day, the things that need to get done are not done. People who can't prioritize their finances will constantly find themselves in debt or other financial troubles.

But the biggest problem that we all have is that we tend to prioritize the earthly over the spiritual. It is easy to think that eating and cleaning are more important than prayer and God's word, but Jesus teaches otherwise.

In our sinfulness we often think that our service to God is what is most important. Jesus teaches us that he cares far more about serving us than about us serving him.

**Mark 10:45** 45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Our whole lives we are taught it is more blessed to give than to receive. And that is true when we are talking about one another. But it is not true when we are talking about Jesus. Jesus has something to give us that is far more important than anything we could give him.

The teachers notes for today's lesson have a good suggestion for introducing the story. Bring three objects, a life preserver, an apple, some money. If you are on a sinking ship, which is most important? Because of our sin we are on a sinking ship. This earth is headed for judgement. The only thing that can save us is Jesus' forgiveness. Just like the life preserver the most important thing for us is Jesus' blessings in word and sacrament.

**A certain village** - Bethany, only a couple miles from Jerusalem, Jesus on more than one occasion stayed there when he had reason to visit Jerusalem. This takes place 3-4 months before Jesus' death. He is on his way to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of dedication. The festival of dedication is

well known to most of us even today, but is usually known by a different name, Hannukah or the festival of lights. This was a celebration of the rededication of the temple after it was defiled by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. That would put our story in mid-December.

**Martha** - Martha had two siblings, Mary and Lazarus. Martha is probably the eldest and it sounds like the house belongs to her. In Aramaic Martha actually means mistress, as in mistress of the house. Out of love for Jesus, she regularly welcomes him into her home and provides for him. What a wonderful testament to her faith and love for Jesus, although as we are going to see she takes it a little too far. **"Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore, tell her to help me."**

How often do we think that we are right and that the Lord, if he were here, would back us up. Very often couples will come to me for counseling, each convinced that they are right and the other is wrong. In reality they aren't coming to hear God's word, they are coming so that I can back them up and tell their spouse they are wrong. The problem is that because of our sinful nature our priorities are wrong, and so hard for us to see that. We put being right first. It is more important to be forgiving than to be right. The one who is first to forgive is the one who wins the argument. We put cleanliness and tasks first. It is more important to have a loving attitude than to have a clean house. We put money first. It is better to be broke and happily married, than to be rich and be divorced. Above all else we ought to put the word of God first.

Martha's words may actually emphasize her love of Jesus, and in a good way her jealousy of Mary. Perhaps she was motivated because she too wanted to sit and listen to Jesus, but felt like she had to finish the tasks first. Perhaps she wanted Mary to help her so she could get done and they could sit together at Jesus' feet. Jesus however reminds Martha and us not to allow earthly tasks to keep us from sitting at his feet. Simply put the housework down and come sit at my feet.

Jesus' words also show his love for Martha and for us. He doesn't need the food and service that Martha was offering. He doesn't care about our service to him nearly as much as he cares about his service to us. He would much rather serve us than that we serve him. So many churches get this backwards, they care more about serving God rather than receiving Jesus' service.

**Luke 10:41-42 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 "But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.**

What a privilege it is to sit at the feet of Jesus. How often have you had questions about God and thought wouldn't it be nice to ask Jesus, Or been told we'll find out when we get to heaven. Mary and Martha had the opportunity to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen and ask questions. But Martha thought it more important to clean up and serve the food. It is easy to judge other people and think they should do this or they should do that. But life is always a matter of priorities. You always have to choose.

Martha thought that cooking and cleaning should come first. Jesus disagreed. Mary had her priorities straight, to receive Jesus' gifts comes first. Getting our priorities straight not only brings us closer to God but releases us from the cares and worries of this world. Jesus promises that when we seek him first he will take care of all the rest.

**Matthew 6:33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

There is nothing more important than going to Jesus to receive from him the blessing and gifts that he offers. What a privilege to set down our daily tasks and sit with Mary at Jesus' feet.

**Titus 2:11-13 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.**

### **STUDENT PRAYER TLH #286, v. 1 and 6**

How precious is the Book Divine, by inspiration given; Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine to guide our souls to heaven.

This lamp through all the tedious night, of life shall guide our way Till we behold the clearer light Of an eternal day.

### **PRESENTATION**

Briefly review previous story as time allows. Make links to the new story when possible. Tell the story: Teachers, be encouraged to tell the story in your own words while remaining faithful to the scriptural account. When scripture records the story in more than one place, you may want to harmonize the accounts (including extra details found in each account). Let the students know where they can find the additional details in the Bible.

Discuss the story: While reviewing the major events of the story, discuss the possible applications to the students' lives. Ask questions that make them think about the story and show that they understand the story.

### **APPLICATION**

As Jesus blessed the family in Bethany, so you will want Him to:

- bless your heart and home with His presence
- bless your heart and home with His instruction
- bless your heart and home with His correction

### **PASSAGES**

**These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.**

#### Lower

Luke 11:28 - "blessed are those who hear the Word of God, and keep it." Samuel  
3:9 - "Speak, Lord; for Your servant hears."

#### Middle

Luke 11:28 - "blessed are those who hear the Word of God, and keep it." Samuel  
3:9 - "Speak, Lord; for Your servant hears."  
Luke 19:5 - "today I must stay at your house."

#### Upper

Luke 11:28 - "blessed are those who hear the Word of God, and keep it." Samuel  
3:9 - "Speak, Lord; for Your servant hears."  
Luke 19:5 - "today I must stay at your house."  
Luke 24:29 - "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to stay with them."

### **HYMN CHOICES**

The Lord My Pasture Shall Prepare - TLH 368, vs. 1-4 The  
Savior Calls; Let Every Ear - TLH 281, vs. 1-5