

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

A Message of Hope and Fulfillment For Those Longing For God

The Best Portion

Luke 10: 38-42

After the lawyer and the good Samaritan, Luke shares another episode from Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem. He does not tell us exactly when this event occurred, but indicates it was "as they were traveling along." He is invited into the home of a woman named Martha. We learn about them from other passages in John's Gospel (John 11 & 12). There is no indication in the Scriptures that Martha, Mary, & Lazarus live in the same house, but they all do live in Bethany. Luke never mentions Lazarus, and whenever we see Martha and Mary in Bethany they are together. Interestingly, on the occasion of two dinners, Martha is preparing/serving and Mary is at Jesus feet. There is speculation that this Mary is the same as Mary Magdalene, but again, there is no Biblical certainty that this is so. The underlying message in the record is unmistakable, however, and of great importance:

I. Martha's Distraction

- A. Martha's activity is not an indication of her spiritual passion (or lack of it)
- B. Martha's temperament is not an excuse for being pulled in many directions
- C. Martha's appeal drives home the lesson, however tenderly delivered

II. Mary's Choice

- A. Mary presents an interesting departure from cultural protocol
- B. Mary chooses the position of a disciple, and a close one at that
- C. Mary recognized the value of the options and made the better choice

III. The Best Portion

- A. The Bread of Life and the Living Water, true Meat and true Drink
- B. The eternal value of the portion Mary chose
- C. Recognizing our tendencies and our need: abiding in Christ

Weariness with well doing comes to those who allow the well to run dry. Serving God in the energy of the flesh results in producing only wood, hay, and stubble and leaves the life empty at the end of the journey. Do you recognize the crucial importance of spending time at the feet of Jesus? Do you know how to serve out of the abundance of what you have received rather than the depletion of your energy and passion because you have been giving without restoration. Martin Luther once said, "On most days I spend three hours in prayer, but on the days I am especially busy I spend four." Do you choose the better part?

Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; 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 the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Luke 10: 38-42 NASB

Thus says the LORD of hosts, "Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; They speak a vision of their own imagination

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. Why is it so essential to spend time with Jesus reading Scripture, praying, conversing, and meditating on the Word of God?
- 2. What did Jesus mean when He said Mary had chosen the better portion?
- 3. What did you understand from the sermon about Martha’s internal conflict and her choice?
- 4. In what ways was Mary’s behavior contrary to the cultural norms? How did Jesus react to this?
- 5. Explain the ways in which spending time with Jesus satisfies and nourishes even more than food.
- 6. When you invite guests to your home, what are your priorities or goals?

NOTES

Not from the mouth of the LORD. "They keep saying to those who despise Me, 'The LORD has said, "You will have peace "'; And as for everyone who walks in the stubbornness of his own heart, They say, 'Calamity will not come upon you.' "But who has stood in the council of the LORD, That he should see and hear His word? Who has given heed to His word and listened?

Jer 23:16-18 NASB

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

John 4:10 NASB

He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

John 7:38 NASB

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.

John 6:35 NASB

"For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me. "This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever."

John 6:55-58 NASB