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### The Women Martha And Mary

The Bible provides for us three accounts of Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, who Jesus raised from the dead.

1. The first is presented to us in the gospel of Luke, as Jesus comes to rest in their house. Lk. 10:38-42
2. The second is when Lazarus is raised from the grave by Jesus. Jn. 11:17-44
3. The third is at the supper made for Jesus. Jn. 12:1-8

The three accounts give us three important contrasts that reveal both bad and good qualities for our life service to Jesus.

- I. The contrasting personalities of Martha and Mary.
- II. The contrasting faith of Martha and Mary.
- III. The contrasting worship of Martha and Mary.

#### **I. The contrasting personalities of Martha and Mary. Lk. 10:38-42**

- A. The scene takes place at Bethany.
  1. The village was called Bethany.
  2. The name means "house of dates" or, "house of misery".
  3. The village is never mentioned in the Old Testament and the first time in the New.

4. The village was on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem and was fifteen stadia, from the Jerusalem, about two miles. Lk. 11:18
5. The journey is about half an hours walk from the Damascus Gate, down the Kidron Valley, up the slope of the Mount of Olives, over the top and down the east side, down the southern shoulder of the mount.
6. Eusebius records that it was "the place of Lazarus" and Jerome says it was two miles from Jerusalem.
7. The village was located on the south-east side of the Mount of Olives.

#### **B. The house of the two sisters is identified as a place of rest and love. Lk. 10:38-39**

1. Jesus entered a certain village, Bethany. vs. 38a
  - a. The house was a place apart from the busy ministry of Jesus.
    - 1) Not that Jesus disliked the crowds, it says, "He looked upon the multitudes and had compassion." Mk. 6:34
    - 2) Nothing could keep Jesus from the needs of the people.
  - b. The business of ministry is tiring.
    - 1) The man who is called does not get tired **of** the work.
    - 2) The man who is called, does get tired **in** the work.

2. Jesus was welcomed by a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. vs. 38b
    - a. Hospitality is her specialty, it is her house.
    - b. Hospitality is valuable by genuine kindness for those who enter and throughout the visit, not just at the greeting.
    - c. Hospitality is refreshing to the weary body and soul.
    - d. Hospitality is enjoyable with people you are comfortable with.
  3. Jesus was contemplated by Mary the sister of Martha, as she sat at the feet of Jesus and heard His words. vs. 39
    - a. The position of humility.
    - b. The posture of a servant.
    - c. The preparation of a disciple.
- C. The complaining of Martha revealed their contrasting personalities. Lk. 10:40-42
1. Martha was distracted with much serving. vs. 40a
    - a. This personal trait can cause problems with loving service.
    - b. This problem is not manifested till self surfaces, the works of the flesh.
    - c. This potential is sure to lead to self exaltation, if not rejected.

2. Martha arrogantly reproves the Lord Jesus. vs. 40b-f
  - a. She was upset with the Lord and said, “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?”
    - 1) Martha was blaming Him for catering to her sister’s selfishness from her perspective.
    - 2) Martha was accusing Him of not caring that she alone was serving.
  - b. She told the Lord to command her sister to help her.
3. Martha is then graciously reproved by Jesus. vs. 41
  - a. She is mildly reproved by Jesus. vs. 41
    - 1) By the tone of voice, calling her name out twice, “Martha, Martha”, almost giving to understand the self-cernterness of her complaint and petition. vs. 41a-c
    - 2) By the pointing out of her problem, she was worried and troubled about many things. vs. 41d
  - b. She is lovingly instructed by Jesus. vs. 42
    - 1) Martha needed to know the one thing that is needed. vs. 42a
      - a) The word “But” marks the sharp contrast between Martha and Mary.
      - b) The one thing is in contrast to the many thing Martha was worried and troubled about.

- c) The many things had distracted her from the purest motive of service, love for others instead of love for self by calling attention to herself by confronting Jesus and criticizing her sister Mary.
- 2) Mary had chosen the good part, which would not be taken away from her. vs. 42b-c
  - a) The choice was a good choice, “the good part”, sitting at the feet of Jesus to hear and learn from Him and of Him.
  - b) The choice is to be one of top priority throughout life.
  - c) The choice will not be denied to anyone who chooses it.

### **Illustration**

No greater example of complementing contrast is the union of a man and a woman in marriage to bring about a completion in the union, for the life long task!

### **Application**

1. Hopefully there are places where each of us can go where we sense love and refreshment among the people of God.
  - a. Paul told the Romans that he was looking forwards to being refreshed by them, in his visit. Rom. 1:11-12

- b. Paul declared how much he had been refreshed by the fellowship of Ephaphroditus. Phil. 2:25
- 2. Too often much of the service rendered to God is ruined by being aware of what others are not doing, resulting in murmuring, complaining and comparing, leading to the Elijah complex, due to pride and self love.
  - a. We are to, “Do all things without complaining and disputing”. Phil. 2:14
  - b. All will have appear before the Judgment of Christ and give an account of what was done in their bodies, good and evil. 2Cor. 5:10
  - c. The only thing God will reward is what was done out of the motivation of love. 1Cor.4:5
  - d. The possibility of a person receiving no reward is clear. 1Cor. 3:14-15
- 3. Each of us must learn these important lessons of sitting at the Lord’s feet, exercising self denial, to serve from the heart or we will never please God.
  - a. Unless our righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees, we will in no way enter the kingdom of God. Matt. 5:20
  - b. It is possible to do right things but for all the wrong reasons, called eyeservice! Eph. 6:6
- 4. Any fellowship that fails to confront and make one accountable in their carnality is not true spiritual fellowship but a disservice in Christ.
  - a. We are to be iron, sharpening one another. Prov. 27:17

- b. Paul told the Thessalonians that they saw how he and the others conducted themselves as nursing mothers. Thess. 2:7
- c. Martha and Mary's personalities are complementary contrasts if they are exercised in the Spirit, the flesh makes them consternating contrasts! Rom. 12, 1Cor. 12

*The contrasting personalities of Martha and Mary, reveal a beautiful complement!*

## II. The contrasting faith of Martha and Mary. Jn. 11:17-44

- A. The context is the death of Lazarus. Jn. 11:1-16
  - 1. John's introductory commentary are some 60 or so years after the fact. vs. 1-3
    - a. John identifies the three main persons of the story. vs. 1-2
      - \* Pointing out Mary with a special event, anointed the Lord. vs. 2
    - b. John indicates the purpose of their message was to inform Jesus that Lazarus was severely sick. vs. 2b-3
      - \* Three times the word "sick" appears in the first three verses, yet it says the Lord loved "phileo" him. vs. 3
  - 2. Jesus responds to the message. vs. 4-6
    - a. The words of Jesus are due to the fact that He knew all things. vs. 4

- \* He declared the sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God that the Son of God may glorified through it, being dead already dead four days at this time most likely.
- b. The words of John are that no body misunderstand the actions of Jesus. vs. 5
  - \* Jesus loved "agapao" Martha, Mary and Lazarus.
- c. The will of Jesus was to remain two more days. vs. 6
- 3. Jesus reveals His plan to His disciples. vs. 7-11
  - a. He told his disciples His desire to return to Judea again and His disciples were astonished. vs. 7-8
    - \* The Jews had attempted to stone Jesus lately "nun" meaning at the present time, being in danger.
  - b. He declared His will. vs. 9-10
    - \* Jesus tells them that His hour had not yet come to cease working and that He is the light of the world. vs. 9-10
  - c. He declared to His plans to go to Lazarus to awaken him from his sleep. vs. 11
    - \* Jesus calls Lazarus "our friend" revealing his relationship to him as well as theirs. vs. 11a-b
- 4. Jesus was misunderstood by His disciples. vs. 12-16

- a. His disciples thought that sleep would help him get well and John reveals the misunderstanding of the disciples by commentary. vs. 12-13
- b. Jesus “plainly” told them that Lazarus was dead, meaning openly or unreserved, declaring that He was glad He was not with Lazarus for their sake in order that they believe! vs. 14-15
- c. Thomas declared to the disciple they should accompany Jesus even if it meant death. vs. 16
  - \* Contrary to what is often said about Thomas, he was courageous in love and devotion to Jesus despite the danger.

**B. The compromised faith of Martha. Jn. 11:17-27**

- 1. Jesus on His arrival to Bethany was informed that Lazarus was already dead. vs. 17-19
  - a. He had already been in the tomb for four days at Bethany. vs. 17-18
  - b. The family was well known and loved for even some Jews came to comfort the sisters in their mourning. vs. 19
- 2. The reaction of Martha to the arrival of Jesus. vs. 20-22
  - a. The character of the two sisters is consistent, Martha was impulsive and one who would always take the lead,

- while Mary was more calm and passive. vs. 20; Lk. 10:38-42
  - 1) Martha went out to meet Jesus.
  - 2) Mary was sitting in the house.
- b. Martha declared her disappointment with Jesus. vs. 21
  - \* Even as she reproved the Lord for not having her help with the work.
- c. Martha yet declared her frail faith in Him even at this point. vs. 22
- 4. The proclamation of Jesus to Martha. vs. 23-27
  - a. He declared to her that her brother will rise again and she acknowledged the Jewish hope of a future resurrection in the last days. vs. 23-24
  - b. Jesus declared to her that He was the resurrection and the life. vs. 25-26
    - 1) He corrects her theology, “I am the resurrection and the life”, and I am here now and you don’t have to wait for the future. vs. 25a-b
    - 2) He says that whoever believes in Him, though he or she may die physically, shall live again. vs. 25c-e
    - 3) He says that whoever lives and believes in Him shall never die eternally. vs. 26a
      - \* This is the fifth “I Am” of the seven in John’s gospel.

- 4) He asks Martha straight out, “Do you believe this?” vs. 26b
- c. Martha proclaimed her strained but settled faith in Him. vs. 27
  - 1) The word believe is in the perfect tense, literally, I have believed and still believe. vs. 27a-d
  - 2) The particulars are stated was a nice theological doctrinal belief about Him! vs. 27d-f

C. The confident faith of Mary. Jn. 11:28-44

- 1. The reaction of Mary at the arrival of Jesus. vs. 28-32
  - a. Martha went to call Mary according to the words of Jesus, secretly at the place Martha met him outside of town.. vs. 28-30
  - b. The Jews saw her leave and thought she was going to the tomb in order to weep there. vs. 31
  - c. Mary seeing Jesus worshipped Him. vs. 32
    - 1) She fell at His feet a position of worship before a superior despite the circumstance. vs. 32a-c
    - 2) She used the same words as her sister, but I believe in an affirming and sympathetic way not as her sister, knowing her character. vs. 32d-f

- 3) She entrusted herself to as when she sat at His feet in her sister’s house. Lk. 10:38-42
- 2. The reaction of Jesus to Mary. vs. 33-44
  - a. Jesus is moved by what He saw. vs. 33-35
    - 1) Mary’s weeping was a loud wailing for the great loss, the Jew’s was hypocritical . vs. 33  
\* The word groaned “enebrimaomai” means to snort like a horse and connotes anger and the word troubled “etaraxen” is a reflexive verb expressing agitation. vs. 33d
    - 2) The description is in His spirit, His human spirit not the Holy Spirit.
  - b. The Lord asks where they have laid him and He wept. vs. 34-35
    - 1) His perfect humanity did not keep Him from experiencing all the emotions that you and I feel yet without sin.
    - 2) His ability makes Him a faithful High Priest. Heb. 4:14-16
    - 3) He wept for three reasons, from the internal evidence.
      - a) To reveal the reality of His humanity.
      - b) To reveal His grief over what sin had done.

- c) To respond to the hypocrisy of the Jews.
  - \* The word wept “edakrusen” is different from the one of Mary and the Jews, it refers to shedding tears quietly, literally, he burst into tears!
- c. The Jews were divided in their assessment of Jesus. vs. 36-37
  - 1) Some acknowledge His love. vs. 36
  - 2) Some faulted Him for not having done something for Lazarus as the blind man in chapter nine. vs. 37
- d. Jesus went to the sealed tomb. vs. 38-40
  - 1) He again groaned in Himself demonstrating His pain and righteous anger. vs. 38
  - 2) He commanded that the stone be removed but Martha cautioned Him, reminding the Lord that by now the stench had set in. vs. 39
  - 4) Jesus reminds her of what He had told her, “If you only believe you would see the glory of God”. vs. 40
    - a) Demonstrating that she did not understand, when Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life”.
    - b) Demonstrating that her theology was worthless without active faith.
    - c) Martha was emotionally wrapped up and louding her view of Jesus.

- 3. The reaction of Jesus was to thank the Father. vs. 41-42
  - a. He did so as they removed the stone. vs. 41a
  - b. He thanked the Father for having heard Him, past tense, the raising of Lazarus was settled way before. vs. 41b-d
  - c. He declared that the Father always heard Him. vs. 42a
  - d. He revealed the reason for saying this, for the people, that they may believe. vs. 42b-c
- 4. The love of Jesus called Lazarus out of the grave. vs. 43-44
  - a. Jesus gave a loud imperative command, to come forth. vs. 43
    - \* He called Lazarus by name, lest the entire cemetery come forth.
  - b. Lazarus came out bound hand and foot with gravclothes and his face was wrapped with a cloth. vs. 44a-b
  - c. Jesus commanded them to let Lazarus go. vs. 44c-d
    - 1) A beautiful type of our call to salvation, raised in the life of the Spirit.
    - 2) A beautiful type of our being set free from our sins that bound us up and kept us from living.

### Illustration

Elijah's servant saw the Syrian army all around them and feared for their lives, but Elijah prayed to God that He would open the eyes of his servant and he saw all the angelic host, all around. 2Kings 6:17

### **Application**

1. We must always remember that Jesus is all knowing, He does not need to be informed about anything and as difficult as the situation may be we need to remember that nothing is impossible for Jesus. Heb. 4:13

2. We are to ask in faith without doubting, knowing the scriptural will of God as James tells us and not like a double minded man. Ja. 1:6-8

\* But we need to know that there are certain things that regardless if I believe God can do them or not, He will do them sovereignly!

3. The greatest kind of faith, is the one that entrusts self to Jesus in personal suffering, as a faith Creator. 1Pet. 4:19

a. Knowing that He is sufficient for all things. 1Cor. 10:13

b. knowing He has given me everything necessary for life and godliness. 2Pet. 1:3-4

\* Broken inside but a tower of strength on the outside by the grace of God!

***This is the contrasting faith of Martha and Mary, a difference to be marked!***

### **III. The contrasting worship of Martha and Mary. Jn. 12:1-8**

A. The supper took place the last week of our Lord's ministry. vs. 1a-b

1. John tells us it was six days before the Passover, not that it took place on that day.
2. Matthew and Mark tells us that it was on the second day before the Passover that the supper took place. Matt. 26:2; Mk. 14:1, 3
3. The Passover is the one in which Jesus will be put to death.
4. The day when Jesus arrived was most likely Friday evening before the Sabbath and the supper took place on Saturday evening after the Sabbath.

B. The supper was at Bethany. vs. 1c-d

1. Bethany was the destination of Jesus coming from Jericho where he visited Zacchaeus. Lk. 18:35-19:10
2. Bethany was the place where Lazarus had been raised from the dead. Jn. 11:43
3. Bethany was the place from which Jesus had removed Himself from the Jew as they sought to kill Him. Jn. 11:53-54
4. Bethany was the place where the one whom He loved lived. Jn. 11:3
5. Bethany was where the supper took place at the house of Simon the leper. Matt. 26:6, Mk. 14:3

- C.** The supper was in honor of Jesus. vs. 2
1. The supper without any doubt was in gratitude of the raising of Lazarus. vs. 2a
  2. The sister of Lazarus, Martha served. vs. 2b
    - a. Martha had learned to operate her gift without complaining and bringing attention to herself. Lk. 10:40
    - b. Martha learned to be worshipper of God by her loving service without comparing herself to others.
    - c. Martha learned to enjoy her ministry and gifts.
  3. The man Lazarus who had been brought back to life sat in the place of honor with Jesus at the Table. vs. 2c
- D.** The supper was interrupted by Mary. vs. 3
1. Mary anointed the feet of Jesus. vs. 3a
    - \* Matthew and Mark tell us she began at His head. Matt. 26:7; Mk. 14:3
    - a. The amount was a pound, twelve ounces.
    - b. The quality was unadulterated spikenard from India.
      - \* Such is mentioned in the song of Solomon, “The Shulamite ‘While the king is at his table, My spikenard sends forth its fragrance’. Song Sol. 1:12
  - c. The woman Mary was declaring that their was nothing too valuable that could be given to Jesus.

2. Mary wiped the feet of Jesus with her hair. vs. 3b
    - a. The hair of a woman is declared to be her glory. 1Cor. 11:15
    - b. The hair of a woman would never be let down in public for it was a sign of immorality and loose living.
    - c. The woman Mary was placing the glory of the woman at His feet in adoration and worship of who He was.
  3. Mary affected the atmosphere. vs. 3c
    - a. The house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.
    - b. The act was to be the customary duty of a the lowest of slaves as the guest arrived.
    - c. The responsibility would fall on the master of the house if he had no slave.
      - \* Mary was declaring to Jesus, both in deed and attitude, that she was one who worshipped Him!
  4. The anointing by Mary should not be confused with the one in Luke when the prostitute washes the Lord’s feet with her tears and wipes them with her hair. Lk. 7:38
    - a. The house is that of Simon the Pharisee.
    - b. The event and message is entirely different.
- E.** The Lord defends the worship of Mary. Jn. 12:4-8
1. The subtle disciple was Judas. vs. 4

- a. He was one of the twelve disciples.
  - b. He was the one who would betray Jesus.
  - c. He was the one who ate, walked and talked with Jesus.
  - d. He was present at the miracles with Jesus.
2. The seeming concern appeared honorable. vs. 5
- a. The tone of his voice can only be guessed at but knowing the context and the atmosphere it probably was in astonishment and indignation in order to appear sensitive.
  - b. The presence of many people would cause them to think how spiritual he was.
  - c. The amount declared would cause others to think and consider the waste, \$300, one years wages.
  - d. The concern for the poor would bring him favor in the eyes of some even implying that he was more sensitive and caring than Jesus.
    - 1) Judas like many didn't like to share the center stage but like to be it!
    - 2) Judas like people, like to rob people in the true work of God by questioning it and bringing opposition to it!
3. The simple commentary revealed his dishonesty. vs. 6
- a. John tells us that he did not care for the poor. vs. 6a-b

- b. John declares that he did what he did due to the fact that he was a thief. vs. 6c
  - c. John reveals that Judas was the treasurer and that he not only carried the box but carried from the box money. vs. 6d-e
4. The sensitive command of Jesus rebuked Judas. vs. 7-8
- a. Jesus commanded that Mary be left alone. vs. 7a-b
  - b. Jesus commended Mary for what she had done, her deed was for the keeping of His burial. vs. 7c
  - c. Jesus commended Mary for her priorities, the poor were not the priority at that moment seeing they will always be with man but not Himself. vs. 8
    - \* “Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.” Matt. 26:13

### **Illustration**

Many years ago, Thomas K. Beecher once substituted for his famous brother, Henry Beecher, at the Plymouth Church in brooklyn, New York. Many curiosity seekers had come to hear the renowned Henry Beecher speak. Therefor, when Thomas Beecher appeared in the pulpit instead, some people got up and started for the doors. Sensing that they were disappointed because he was substituting for his

brother , Thomas raised his hand for silence and announced. “All those who came here this morning to worship Henry Ward Beecher may withdraw from the church; all who came to worship God may remain.”  
NO one left! #7584

### **Application**

1. Does Jesus see that you worship Him through and in your service or does He see through it?
2. Do you express your gratitude to Jesus as you sit at His feet or is it only when you are at church or before people?
3. Do you take what is the best and give it to Jesus or is He constantly getting your leftovers?
5. Do you think that worship is confined to singing and prayer, no it is manifested in the heart!

***This was the contrasting worship of Martha and Mary, a common worship of Jesus!***

### **Conclusion**

These three different accounts have given to us three important contrast that reveal to us both bad and good qualities for our life service to Jesus.

- I. The contrasting personalities of Martha and Mary, reveal a beautiful compliment!
- II. The contrasting faith of Martha and Mary, reveal a difference to be learned!
- III. The contrasting worship of Martha and Mary, reveal a common worship of Jesus!