

Luke 10:38-42

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things,⁴² but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

MONDAY: LUKE 10:38-42—CONTEXT, CONTEXT, CONTEXT

Short scenes like this usually have a point, perhaps more than one. Usually with short gospel stories like this, the main point lies in the climactic saying of Jesus. The rest of the scene sets up Jesus' statement, giving it a context.

- Reflect on the point that many of Jesus' sayings in the gospels are a response to a particular statement or action. In other words, they are all contextual. When Jesus says, "one thing is necessary" he does not just say this randomly. He is responding to something particular. Does this have an effect on the way you read the Bible?
- The word used for "needed" or "necessary" usually refers to things of duty or necessity for life. Jesus says that there is *one* such duty or necessity. But he does not quite say what that is. Any thoughts? Is there something you would like to know more about to answer this?

TUESDAY: LUKE 10:39—SITTING AND LISTENING

In contrast with her sister, Mary sits at Jesus' feet. Is she being lazy? We might think so in our busy culture today. But in the first century, sitting and listening implied something very different.

- Mary's action of sitting at the Lord's feet and listening to what he said seems to have caught Jesus' attention. Often in Greek the main verb sets the emphasis. In this passage the main verb is not sitting, but *listening*. What impact does this have on your interpretation of this scene?
- Sitting at a teacher's feet was an act of discipleship. This is not just the case for Jesus and his disciples. It was typical "disciple" activity. That's what disciples did. They sat at the feet of a teacher—symbolizing the status of the teacher and student—and listened and learned, so that they could follow. How does sitting *and* listening happen for you today?
- This action of sitting and listening seems lazy today. Perhaps it is from an outsider's view. In sitting and listening, you are *not doing other things*. What does this suggest about the relationship between following Jesus in discipleship and all other things one could be, or should be according to the world's standards, doing?

WEDNESDAY: LUKE 10:39—DISCIPLESHIP

In the first century, roles were very defined. Men traditionally sat at the feet of a teacher, gaining wisdom and instruction. Women were to be occupied with domestic things.

- Jesus not only welcomes Mary's action, he encourages it from Martha as well. In the first century, this was not necessarily radical, but certainly not typical. Women did not take up to be disciples of teachers. Discuss the implications of this then. Today is very different. So much so that the radical acceptance of Mary's discipleship is lost today. How can we restore the radical implications of this message today? In other words, how does discipleship crack the earthen vessels that hold our human, culturally devised expectations?
- Can we be sitting at Jesus' feet but not be listening?

THURSDAY: LUKE 10:41—MARTHA, MARTHA

Jesus confronts Martha's concern.

- Martha, Martha. Reminds me of a certain 70s TV show. Jesus' approach to Martha seems soft, compassionate. "Martha, Martha." Do you ever say a person's name twice like this? Why?
- How does Jesus pull Martha away from her distractions? Does he say, you are doing the wrong thing?
- What does Jesus' example of Mary suggest about discipleship in community?

FRIDAY: LUKE 10:42—IT WILL NOT BE TAKEN FROM HER

"Mary has chosen the better part which will not be taken from her."

- Jesus' statement not only points out the "better" thing that Mary has chosen. He also says it will not be taken from her. Why would he say this? Is there something about what Martha is distracted by that will be taken from her?
- Is the contrast between Mary and Martha merely about "busy-ness"? I suggest it is not. Looking back on what sitting at Jesus' feet signifies, what is the contrast between the two? What is Martha's busy-ness about?

SATURDAY: LUKE 10:38-42—SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE

The story in Luke 10 is short. It seems to be random. It sits between the scene where Jesus tells the parable of the good Samaritan and a scene where Jesus is caught praying and his disciples ask him to teach them to pray.

- What connections do you see with this scene and those before and after it? How do you explain these connections? Is there repetition of certain words or CLEAR themes or issues raised?
- Does it help your interpretation and application of Scripture to try and understand how one scene follows another?