

[171029-1] Luke Series, 10, 38-42, Martha's Trouble – Craig Thurman

38 ¶ *Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.*

received, ὑπεδέξατο, hupedexato, 3ps. aor. ind. of ὑποδέχομαι, ὑπό among, by, from, **under**, with + δέχομαι to receive (*oft*), take, accept; ὑποδέχομαι, is used 4 times in the N.T. and always with reference to receiving someone (cf. Lk.10.38; **19.6, Zacchaeus received** [**very same Gr. ὑπεδέξατο**] **Christ to his house**; Acts 17.7, Jason had received [entertained] Paul and His missionary entourage; Ja.2.25, Rahab receiving the spies); so always the lesser receiving the greater, a deference, a willful subordination to take one into the house.

ὑπεδέξατο, 'The idea of hospitality (under one's roof) is natural with ὑπο-δέχομαι ...' *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament, In the Light of Historical Research*, A. T. Robertson, p.633

Immediately we are informed of real history. The word *certain* sets aside the notion that this might only be an instance for some kind of moral illustration. We are given the name of a particular place and a particular person.

Bethany is near Jerusalem.

Mr 11:11 And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

Lk.24.50 ¶ And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

This is the first mention of Martha in the gospel of Luke.

38 Ἐγένετο δὲ Ἐν τῷ πορεύεσθαι αὐτοὺς καὶ αὐτὸς εἰσῆλθεν εἰς κώμην τινὰ γυνὴ δὲ τις ὀνόματι Μάρθα ὑπεδέξατο αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτῆς

39 And she had a sister called Mary,

She has also a brother named Lazarus.

Joh 11:1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

παρακαθίσασα παρὰ
which also sat at Jesus' feet, and
near

sat, παρακαθίσασα, nom. sing. fem. part. aor. of παρακαθίζω; παρά at, beside, near, with, from + καθίζω KJV, to sit, sit down, to be set; παρακαθίζω, is only this once in the N.T.

'It is not clear what the point is of καὶ here. It may mean that Martha loved to sit here also as well as Mary.' *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, A. T. Robertson, vol. 2., p.155

I do not doubt that that is true (with reference to the above remark by Robertson.

'All powerful testimony for God has its origin in *secret* communion.' *Handfuls of Purpose*, James Smith, vol. 1, series 3, p. 142

ἤκουεν
heard

his word.

and went on listening to ... (the imperf.) cf. A. T. Robertson

which also sat, παρακαθίσασα, nom. sing. fem. part. aor. of παρακαθέζομαι, παρά beside, near, at, with + καθέζομαι, KJV, to sit (6); παρακαθέζομαι, is only this once by Luke.

heard, ἤκουεν, 3ps. **imperf.** act. of ἀκούω, to hear; the hearing was not completed, but she was attending to the things that Jesus said.

As our Lord spoke she listened.

39 καὶ τῆδε ἦν ἀδελφὴ καλουμένη Μαριά, ἣ καὶ παρακαθίσασα παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, ἤκουεν τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ

ἡ δὲ Μάρθα περιεσπᾶτο περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν
40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving,
was drawn about concerning

was cumbered, περιεσπᾶτο, 3ps. **imperf.** pass. of περισπάω, περί about, concerning + σπάω, to draw out i.e. the sword; comp. to the Gr. σπάομαι (σπάω) to draw the sword, and, ἀποσπάω, to be withdrawn (Lk.22.41, he was withdrawn from them), draw away (Acts 20.30 to draw away disciples); περισπάω, is only this once in the N.T., perhaps drawn about concerning much serving.

The imperfect verb tells of an incomplete action. During this episode Martha is drawn over the issue of serving Christ and those with Him. Being in the passive voice means that she is receiving the action.

‘Dr. Chalmers complained, “I am hustled out of my spirituality.”’ *My Sermon Notes*, Charles Spurgeon, vol. 3.p.100

‘A weary, burdened servant, just at the point of breaking down. What to her was duty has become drudgery.’ *Handfuls of Purpose*, James Smith, vol. 2, series 4, p.217

‘Activity and service are necessary. But when they become the source of distraction and anxiety and bustling, the cure is to sit at the feet of Jesus and listen.’ *Layman’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 18, p. 106

‘If attention to religion be omitted at *the proper time*, it will always be omitted. If Mary had neglected to hear Jesus *then*, she might never have heard him.’ *Barnes’ Notes*, vol. 9, Luke, p.71

The verb is imperfect passive. To put it in an active voice, ‘The service drew away Martha.’ This is one of those instances when we can say, Martha was out of control. She was not in control of the things, but the things were controlling her.

This dear disciple of Christ might have received Christ into her house, but she did not receive him into her fellowship. Why? Because she was too busy. Her service though it was *for the Lord* excluded the Lord. She was too busy to hear what her Lord was saying. That’s too busy.

‘Martha’s attention, instead of centring *round* Jesus, was drawn hither and thither.’ *Vincent’s Word Studies in the New Testament*, vol. 1, p.356

Martha was a server. Thank God for servers. Servers never get into trouble do they? Well, they do. And she needs some loving correction. To be honest, if I had a choice about which I must be corrected for, between being a server or being a sluggard, I’d rather be corrected being a server. And if I had a choice about which I would prefer, being a *work-a-holic* or a *sluggard* I’d prefer the *work-a-holic*. I’d rather have to battle against over-doing than not doing at all. But all of us have something to be learned. Whether servers or not, we all got ‘stuff’ that needs fixin.’ And the Lord will help Martha in such a way, not to discourage her, but to help her keep focused on the important matters. (Jn.12.2 ... praise God she is still serving.)

and came to him, and said, Lord,

came upon
stood before

came to, ἐπιστάσα, nom. sing. fem. part. aor. of ἐφίστημι, ἐπί
among, on, upon, at, + ἵστημι, stand, lay, set, appoint, establish;

bid, εἰπέ, 2ps. aor. imper. act. of εἶπον, ἔπω; KJV tss. this imperative as *command, speak, tell, say on, bid, say*.

help, συναντιλάβηται, 3ps. aor. subj. of συναντιλαμβάνομαι, σύν fellow, together, with, co- + ἀντί for, in the room (against, contrast or contradiction) + λαμβάνομαι to take, receive; cf. also the Gr. λαμβάνομαι, ἀντιλαμβάνομαι.

‘The one thing you need is not a *helping* hand, but a *restful heart*.’ *Handfuls of Purpose*, James Smith, vol. 2, series 4, p.219

We can be thankful that Martha took her complaint to the Lord Jesus. Many prefer to wag their tongues to everyone but the Lord. But she might have done this before everyone, and doubtless Mary heard her sister’s remarks.

40 ἡ δὲ Μάρθα περιεσπᾶτο περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν ἐπιστᾶσα δὲ εἶπεν Κύριε οὐ μέλει σοι ὅτι ἡ ἀδελφὴ μου μόνην με κατέλιπεν διακονεῖν εἰπέ οὖν αὐτῇ ἵνα μοι συναντιλάβηται

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful
care or take
thought

careful, μεριμνᾷς, merimnais, 2ps. pres. ind. of μεριμνάω; KJV, tss. *take thought, care, careful*; the noun μέριμνα, is always tss. with the English word *care* (6 times, Mt.13.22; Mk.4.19; Lk.8.14; 21.34; 11co.11.28; 1Pe.5.7)

and troubled **about** **many things:**
bring yourself trouble - much -

troubled, τυρβάζη, turbadzei, 2ps. pres. ind. **mid.** of τυρβάζω; only this once in the N.T.; if related to the Latin *turbara* means to be *agitated, disturbed, troubled*; **the middle voice stresses that the subject is participating in the results of the action of the verb. The actor not only causes it, but receives it as well. Like throwing a**

baseball into the air and catching it. We entertain ourselves with our own action.

'The many things she was troubled about were needless, while the one thing she neglected was needful.' *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 282

Martha was that one which thought too much about things that simply did not need that much concern, and because of that she borrowed trouble. If there weren't any trouble she made trouble. It is certain, that we have enough trouble without manufacturing our own. But notice, that this not only affected her but the one closest to her. And let's consider for a moment just who that was which was closest to her? It was her sister; her blood relative: her family. Look at this carefully. Look at every instance where brothers and sisters knew Christ. He never corrected them because they might have had a very *close* relationship. What difference does it make if it is two sisters that are very close in their fellowship or two from different families are dearest of friends? The only difference that I can see is the one that we make in our heads. I cannot find any biblical error in it. There is no error. The error to guard against, for all of us, is to keep from schisms. But let's be frank: we don't love everyone equally. We should love everyone in the body. I think we do. But I don't think that we love everyone equally. I'm not sure that it is possible. Some of our best friends and closest fellowships in Christ can be our own family members: my brother, sister, cousin, father, mother. I think it is a blessing from the Lord to enjoy such a relationship. Don't avoid it. Bless God for it. We pointed this out earlier in this study in the gospel of Luke that of those twelve disciples there were three sets of families represented. There were the brothers James and John, sons of Boanerges; Peter and Andrew; and those related to Christ through his mother Mary, whether through Joseph or Alphaeus, James the less, Jude (Thaddaeus/Labbeaus), and Matthew. Seven of the twelve are related by natural birth, and family ties. Scriptures are ample which instruct us how to maintain proper relationship in a church setting.

Eph. 5.25, husbands love your wives; 5.24, wives be subject to their husbands; 6.2 children are commanded to honor their parents;

Col.3.20, children obey your parents; 1Ti.4.16; [1Pe.3.1, some are unbelieving]); take care of your widows.

The reality is that most churches are made of family units. It is no mystery here that this is true. But I believe that most of us have learned that family is not what runs a church. I believe it is true in you, that most of you have learned to have high regard for the word of God. In other words family does not come between us and the truth of the word of God. Martha needed correction because she erred in her conduct as a Christian, and in this instance it affected her sister.

41 ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Μάρθα Μάρθα μεριμνᾷς καὶ τυρβάζῃ περὶ πολλὰ

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen

necessary (for middle voice,v.41])

needful, χρεία, noun; KJV, *need*, (39, Mt.3.14), *needful* (1, Lk.10.42), *necessity* (3, Acts 2.34), *necessary* (1, Acts 28.10), *use* (2, Eph.4.29), *business* (1, Acts 6.3), *wants* (1, Phl.2.25), *lack* (1, 1Thes.4.12)

hath chosen, ἐξελέξατο, 3ps. aor. ind. **mid.** of ἐκλέγω, ἐκ from, of, out, out of, forth + λέγω, to call, say, name, tell, describe; ἐκλέγω, is tss. *chose*, *chose out*, and *choice*; the noun ἐκλεκτός, *chosen*, *elect*, *election*.

‘One thing is needful – If Christ is ours, we have all, and abound.’
Expository Thoughts, Luke, p. 387

ἥτις οὐκ ἀφαιρεθήσεται ἀπ’ αὐτῆς
that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.
portion

part, μερίδα, acc. sing. of μερίς; KJV, tss. *part*, *partaker* (marg. share); the verb μερίζω, *divide*, *deal*, *distribute* (1Co.7.17), *difference* (1Co.7.34).

shall ... be taken away, ἀφαιρεθήσεται, 3ps. fut. pass. of ἀφαιρέω, ἀπό from of, off, out of, since + αἰρέω, haireo, KJV, to choose [the noun αἵρεσις, haireosis, sect, heresy; αἱρετικός, heretick; αἱρετίζω, chosen]; ἀφαιρέω is tss. smote off (Mt.26.51), cut off (Mk.14.47), take away (Lk.16.3; Ro.11.27); so to cause a separation.

'Except we watch and pray 'things' will eat up our spirituality and bring leanness to our souls.' *Expository Thought, Luke*, p. 385, J. C. Ryle,

What is that good part? It is that fellowship that she had with Jesus as she sat at Jesus feet. She willingly subjected herself to His instruction. She evidently treasured His doctrine. Christ would not deny Mary this portion. It is that time of close communion or fellowship. It is that joy of fellowship. Christ will not deny her this joy with Him. He will not deny His children that will subject themselves to Him that joy.

Jn.15.10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Joh 16:22 And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

Jesus' correction helped Martha. She was not discouraged from serving. She continued serving, but in a better way.

Jn.12.1 ¶ Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

2 There they made him a supper; and Martha served ...

This could have as easily been an episode between two brethren. We get so busy about *things*, things which might surround Christ, his people, his church, so that we neglect those instances when the congregation comes to

sit and learn of the truths of Christ. There is a time for service, and there is a time when we should be diligent to stop, unplug, disconnect, turn off the devices and the cel phones. The world will go on without us. We must fellowship with the saints of God around the word of God. All of us need to *sit at the feet of Jesus*. Don't let things run our lives. Keep this time at the top of our mental *to do* list. It is my opinion that the relationship between Martha and Mary was strengthened because they learned that day the importance of taking the time out to feed upon His word. They probably renewed their commitment to Christ, His word, and to one another to be faithful to assemble together with the church at every opportunity.

42 ἐνὸς δέ ἐστιν χρεία Μαριά δέ τὴν ἀγαθὴν μερίδα ἐξελέξατο ἥτις οὐκ ἀφαιρεθήσεται ἀπ' αὐτῆς