

# MARY HATH CHOSEN THAT GOOD PART

**TEXT: LUKE 10:38-42**

## **Introduction:**

1. Martha and Mary, and their brother Lazarus, lived in Bethany (John 11:1), about two miles southeast of Jerusalem.
2. The Lord Jesus Christ enjoyed fellowship with these two sisters and their brother Lazarus, whom he raised from the dead (John 11).
3. Apparently Martha was the older sister, and it was she who received our Lord into their home (Luke 10:38).
4. The two sisters had different personalities, and each seems to have formed their own ideas as to how to entertain Jesus. Martha was a good housekeeper. She was very busy. She “was cumbered about much serving” (Luke 10:40). She was “careful (“full of care”) and troubled about many things” (10:41).
5. On the other hand, Mary “sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word” (10:39). And our Lord commended her for that (10:42).
6. One preacher put it like this:

Martha was SERVING; Mary was SITTING

Martha was WORRYING; Mary was WORSHIPPING

Martha was HURRYING; Mary was HEARING

Martha was busy with the WORK; Mary was attentive to the WORD

Martha was troubled about many things; Mary was concerned about one thing.

Martha was trying to UNDERTAKE; Mary was trying to UNDERSTAND  
Martha was OVER-OCCUPIED; Mary was OCCUPIED WITH CHRIST  
Martha was LABORING; Mary was LEARNING and LOVING

Martha was ENERGETIC; Mary was ENJOYING the Lord

Martha was BUSY and BOTHERED; Mary was BLESSED – George W. Zeller

(<http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/christia/mary.htm>)

## **I. MARY SAT AT JESUS' FEET (10:39).**

1. The expression, "sat at Jesus' feet" was a Hebrew idiom and it is found several times in the Bible. For example, the apostle Paul said, "I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel" (Acts 22:3).
2. In Luke 8:35, we read that the Gadarenes came to Jesus, "and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid."
3. To sit at one's feet means to put oneself under the instruction of another. It means to become one's pupil. Saul of Tarsus was the pupil of the renowned Gamaliel. The demoniac of Gadara became the pupil of Jesus. Mary "also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word" (Luke 10:39). She was His disciple.
4. Our Lord said, "But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42).
5. Not just needful for Martha and Mary, but for you and me and for everybody. We can become so busy doing things for the Lord that we fail to sit at His feet.
6. I have listened to certain preachers preach and I have to wonder – how much time have they sat at Jesus' feet? (Perhaps they are spending too much time sitting at the feet of the television set.)
7. I heard a missionary friend preach about a time another missionary invited him into his home to watch a movie. The movie was very objectionable and my friend wisely got up and left.
8. He said a couple of years later he heard that missionary had to leave the mission field because of immorality.
9. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7, 8).
10. It is safe to sit at Jesus' feet.

## **II. THE CURE FOR ANXIETY**

1. Our Lord said to Martha, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things" (Luke 10:41). "Careful" here simply means "full of care."
2. "Be careful (full of care, anxious, agitated, worried) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).
3. The cure for anxiety is to sit at Jesus' feet. When we read the Bible, we "hear His word" (Luke 10:39b). When we pray and let our requests be

- made known unto God, “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7).
4. This is what it means to sit at Jesus’ feet. This is “one thing that is needful” and “that good part, which shall not be taken away” (Luke 10:42).
  5. Martha “was cumbered about much serving” (10:40). She was very distracted. In modern vernacular, she was getting “stressed out.”
  6. One would have to be stressed out to say to Jesus, “Lord, dost thou not care?” (10:40).
  7. Over 100 years ago, a man named Frank Graeff was going through some very difficult trials. It was a period of great despondency, doubt and physical pain. He wrote the words to this great Gospel song:

*Does Jesus care when my heart is pained  
Too deeply for mirth or song,  
As the burdens press, and the cares distress  
And the way grows weary and long?*

*Oh yes, He cares, I know He cares,  
His heart is touched with my grief;  
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary,  
I know my Savior cares.*

*Does Jesus care when I’ve tried and failed  
To resist some temptation strong;  
When for my deep grief there is no relief,  
Though my tears flow all the night long?*

*Oh yes, He cares, I know He cares,  
His heart is touched with my grief;  
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary,  
I know my Savior cares.*

*Does Jesus care when I’ve said “goodbye”  
To the dearest on earth to me,  
And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks,  
Is it aught to Him? Does He see?*

*Oh yes, He cares, I know He cares,  
His heart is touched with my grief;  
When the days are weary, the long nights dreary,  
I know my Savior cares.*

8. When Mr. Graeff was going through the slough of despond, the Holy Spirit directed him to I Peter 5:7. “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”
9. Yes, Jesus cares. Martha was so distracted with all of her cooking and cleaning and household chores that she forgot that Jesus cares.
10. Martha was “cumbered about much serving” (Luke 10:40). This means she was weighed down; she was under a heavy burden.
11. The word “cumbered” is seldom used today. However, the word “cumbersome” is, and it means “troublesome and burdensome.” Are you like Martha? Is your service for Christ troublesome and burdensome?
12. Are you anxious? Our Lord said, “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment” (Luke 12:22, 23).

### III. THE GREAT NEED OF THE SOUL

1. DL Moody rightly said, “We ought to see the face of God every morning before we see the face of man.” But oftentimes we rush off in the morning without spending time at Jesus’ feet.
2. Let me emphasize that this is a choice we make. Our Lord said, “Mary hath chosen that good part” (Luke 10:42).
3. Over and over again in the Bible, we are told to choose between the things of this world and the things of God. Jesus said, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).
4. Joshua said, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve” (Joshua 24:15).
5. Elijah said, “How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him” (I Kings 18:21).
6. Jesus said, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24).
7. BH Carroll said, “Over against the perishable, in sublime contrast, Christ puts the imperishable. Over against the things that slip through our fingers even while we grasp them, and the robes that fade even as we wear them, He puts the crown of eternal life and predicates the wisdom of choice upon the fact that no change of season, no vicissitudes of life, no emergency that can arise under the sun, can ever jeopardize what you have gained when your soul once gets that good part” (*Revival Messages*).
8. Our Lord commended Mary because she chose that good part. Have you? (Cf. Psalm 73:23-28).

9. It is strange indeed, and very sad that so many people mistakenly believe that to make the kind of choice Mary made means missing out on some of the good things in life.
10. But Jesus said, “But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her” (10:42).
11. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, “Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours” (I Cor. 1:31, 32).
12. People ask, “Preacher, if the Bible says, “all things are yours,” how come there are so many Christians who have so little?”
13. It is because they chose not to get bogged down with all of the vanities of this foolish world. Regarding Moses’ choice to turn his back on the riches and treasures of Egypt, the Bible says, “Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward” (Hebrews 11:26).
14. In May, 1842, a man sent an expensive gold watch and chain to George Muller, accompanied by a brief note, “A pilgrim does not want such a watch as this to make him happy; one of an inferior kind will do to show him how swiftly time flies.”
15. Like Mary, that Christian chose that good part and it shall not be taken away from him.
16. The story is told of an occasion where two RC priests were walking through a big ornate RC cathedral. Referring to a coffer filled with precious coins, the priest remarked, “The church can no longer say, as St. Peter, ‘Silver and gold have I none!’” The other priest replied, “Alas, neither can we say what follows, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’”
17. Unfortunately, that same worldly spirit has permeated many Baptist churches.
18. John 11:2 tells us it was Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair.
19. John 12:3 says, “Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”
20. Some of the disciples (John 12:4 tells us Judas Iscariot was the ringleader) were indignant, and they criticized Mary for her act of devotion. They said, “What a waste!”
21. But our Lord said, “Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her” (Matthew 26:13).

22. There are many memorials here in New York City – WWI & II memorials, 9/11 memorials, etc. There is a Titanic memorial down by the South Street Seaport.

23. But Jesus said that where ever in this world the Gospel is preached, what Mary has done, will “be told for a memorial of her.”

**CONCLUSION:**

Martha in the kitchen, serving with her hands;

Occupied for Jesus, with her pots and pans.

Loving Him, yet fevered, burdened to the brim.

Careful, troubled Martha, occupied for Him.

Mary on the footstool, eyes upon her Lord;

Occupied with Jesus, drinking in His Word.

This the one thing needful, all else strangely dim:

Loving, resting Mary, occupied with Him.

So may we, like Mary, choose the better part:

Resting in His presence – hands and feet and heart;

Drinking in His wisdom, strengthened with His grace;

Waiting for the summons, eyes upon His face.

When it comes, we're ready – spirit, will, and nerve;

Mary's heart to worship, Martha's hands to serve;

This the rightful order, as our lamps we trim--

Occupied with Jesus, then occupied for Him!

--Lois Reynolds Carpenter