

Jesus walked from town to town followed by His disciples and others interested in His ministry. Jesus would teach the principles of God's kingdom and also heal the sick that were brought to Him.

One day as Jesus was headed toward Jerusalem, He was invited to stop at a village called Bethany, about 2 miles from Jerusalem. A woman named Martha invited Jesus into her home to rest, to eat, and to spend time in a comfortable setting while teaching. It was an honor to invite a visiting teacher into one's home. Martha had a sister named Mary. These sisters had a brother named Lazarus who would also become a special friend of Jesus.

Jesus was probably given a comfortable chair or reclining couch, and the others were seated around Him listening carefully to His teaching. Generally the men would have had their feet and hands washed after their long walk on the hot and dusty roads. They were then given food and beverages, a common practice of hospitality. Normally the women would be busy cleaning, cooking, pouring beverages, and meeting the needs of their guests.

Something different was happening in Martha's home that day. Martha was dashing about trying to meet the needs of Jesus and many of His followers. But Mary was not helping with the serving demands. She was sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to what He was teaching. This was not normal in that culture, and it frustrated Martha. Martha was working hard, and she wanted Mary to help her. Martha finally went to Jesus and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

Jesus received Martha's complaint and the request to make Mary help, and He had a clear answer for Martha. Jesus did not turn to Mary and order her to get up and help Martha. Jesus turned to Martha and gave her a lesson. Jesus assured Martha that He had noticed how upset she was over every detail of her hospitality. Jesus was a recipient of Martha's provisions, but He did not want her to continue worrying over the details of serving. Instead Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Serving will always be a part of ministry. But the Lord wanted Martha to understand that stopping to sit at His feet and listen to His words was more important than scurrying about to serve guests. Jesus was clear that Mary was not going to be scolded, but in fact she was honored by Jesus' words. Jesus clearly explained that Mary, not Martha had chosen to do the right thing. For some, the busy schedule of ministry activities can cause them to miss what is better, time spent directly with the Lord.

## Teacher's Notes

### I. A friendly home.

- A. The village.
- B. The family.

### II. A special guest.

- A. Jesus taught.
- B. The listeners.

### III. A strong complaint.

- A. Martha's work.
- B. Lack of help.

### IV. A clear response.

- A. The worries.
- B. The better thing.

## Activity

Students can create a map of the region of Palestine during the life of Christ. Find a map of the area during that time period and have them put in cities and places where Jesus did miracles or gave major teachings. You may also create a three-dimensional map by using clay or plaster to also include the topography of the region.

## Teacher Growth

As a teacher it is easy to become so busy with church or class activities along with the rest of your responsibilities that it is hard to find time to just sit quietly and listen to what the Lord may be trying to say to you. Be careful to find opportunities to relax and just spend time at Jesus' feet.

## Scripture Passages:

Luke 10:38-42

## Memory Verse:

Psalm 105:3 – "Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice."





