

Mary and Martha

Day 1

Jesus at Mary and Martha's House. Read Luke 10:38-42

1. What service did Martha do for the Lord? Luke 10:38 How do you picture her?
 - What role did many women have in Jesus' ministry? Mark 15:40,41
2. Summarize what the following say about hospitality.
 - Romans 12:13
 - Matthew 25:37-40
3. While Jesus was visiting their home, what was Mary doing? Luke 10:39
4. How was Martha's service affecting her mood? 10:40a
 - How did Martha's busyness project into her relationships? 10:40b
 - How would you say her service was affecting her spiritually? See Matthew 13:22

FYI: Distracted/cumbered NT:4049 *perispao*; to drag all around, i.e. (figuratively) to distract (with care) to draw around, to draw away, distract; to be driven about mentally; to be over-occupied, too busy, about a thing

5. How did Jesus first address the problem? 10:41 (See Matthew 6:25)

FYI: "Worry can turn into resentment. Resentment can turn into bitterness. Bitterness can turn into harsh words. It's a vicious cycle...Jesus could have responded harshly to Martha's outburst, but he didn't. In fact, his saying Martha's name twice demonstrated his tenderness."
- Max Lucado

6. What did Jesus say about Mary's choice? 10:42 (See Psalm 27:4) Did He answer Martha's original question?

FYI: that good part. Today, we can only sit at Jesus' feet and hear His word by reading and meditating on the Scriptures. Important as our daily responsibilities may be to meet our material needs, we should somehow make time for this "good part."
- Henry Morris

7. What did the Lord say about priorities in Matthew 6:33?
8. If Martha had wanted to both serve **and** listen to the Lord, what could she have said or done differently? What might Jesus have done for her?

FYI: "It is easy for us to be distracted from God when we think we're ministering to Him. So remember, when your work for the Lord damages your relationship with Him, you need to reassess the amount of work and motivation for your service. God wants you to serve Him – but not at the expense of spending quality time with Him. If lately you are doing more for God but are colder toward God, if you are working harder but praying less, recall that it was Mary who made the right choice."
- The Tony Evans Bible (1198)

"What makes the story of these two sisters so interesting is that Martha was worried about something good. She was literally serving God, and her aim was to please Jesus. But she had made a common mistake: As she began to work for him, her work became more important than her Lord. What began as a way to serve Jesus became a way to serve herself.

Maybe the process went something like this. As she began to prepare the meal, she anticipated the compliments on the food. As she set the table, she imagined the approval. But things didn't turn out like she'd planned. No standing ovation. No compliments. No adulations. No one even noticed. And that irritated her. Martha was long on anxiety and short on memory. She forgot the invitation was her idea. She forgot that Mary had every right to be with Jesus. Most of all, she forgot the meal was to honor Jesus, not herself."
- Max Lucado

9. Considering the fact that Jesus was about to face death, what do you think Mary's devotion would have meant to Him?

Applying the Word: *On a scale of 1-10, how busy would you be? Where do you see some ways that you can decrease how busy you are so that you can have more "Mary moments"?*

Day 2

Lazarus' Death. Read John 11:1-32

10. What happened to Mary and Martha's brother Lazarus? John 11:1-2
- On what basis did Mary and Martha appeal to Jesus? 11:3

11. What purpose did Jesus say would be accomplished through Lazarus' sickness? John 11:4

- How did Jesus feel about this family? 11:5 (See 12:1-8) What does this indicate about the presence of trials and God's love?
- Surprisingly, what did Jesus do? 11:6

FYI: "Jesus... knew that the events recorded in this chapter would set the religious leaders in determination to kill Jesus. This meant the end result would be **that the Son of God may be glorified** in His death and resurrection."
– David Guzik

"The delay of Jesus in replying to the urgent plea of the sisters is difficult to explain on any ground other than that of His complete mastery of death. Had He been only human, He would have hurried to the bedside of Lazarus to give what He could of aid and comfort. Knowing, however, that He was the resurrection and the life, it was just as easy to raise the dead as to cure the sick, and far more necessary to His purpose which was the creation of a fixed faith in the souls of the sisters and of His own disciples."
– Merrill C. Tenney (172)

12. What did Jesus know about Lazarus? 11:11-14

- Instead of going to Lazarus, what *could* Jesus have done? John 4:46-54

Digging Deeper

For other references to death as "sleep" see:
Acts 7:60;
1 Corinthians 15:6,18,20;
1 Thessalonians 4:13-15.

13. Through Lazarus' death, what else would be accomplished? 11:15,42 In what sense do you think Jesus was *glad*?

Digging Deeper

What do the following reveal about how God feels about death? Hosea 13:14; 2 Timothy 1:10; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 21:4

FYI: "*Sleep*" is occasionally used to refer to death, though only the death of believers (e.g., 1 Thessalonians 4:13)...His purpose in waiting was to demonstrate beyond question both His omniscience and omnipotence (John 11:4,15)."
– Henry Morris

"By raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus would demonstrate His deity in an undeniable way...Jesus was *glad* (vs. 15) for the opportunity the disciples would soon have to see an amazing miracle. The disciples had already believed (2:11) but each new trial offered an opportunity for their faith to grow."
– The Nelson Study Bible (1784,1785)

14. After arriving, what did they find? 11:17 What power does this give to the miracle? (i.e. How convinced would the people be of Lazarus' death? What would have to be restored?)

FYI: "The messenger's journey from Bethany to Perea (twenty miles) took about one day; then Jesus delayed two days; then Jesus' journey to Bethany was one day. By the time Jesus arrived at Lazarus' tomb, Lazarus had been entombed four days."
– Irving Jensen (91)

15. How did the sisters respond to the news of Jesus' coming? John 11:20 What do you think held Mary back?

16. What belief did Martha have in Jesus' ability? 11:21,22

17. What hope did Jesus give Martha? 11:23

- How far was she able to go in understanding His statement? 11:24 (Compare 6:39,40)

Digging Deeper

For other references to Jesus and life see:
John 1:4; 3:16;
5:21,24; 6:39,47;
14:6

18. How did the Lord challenge Martha? What opportunity was He giving her? 11:25,26 (Cf. John 5:24,25)

- Amazingly, how did she respond? 11:27 (Compare Peter's declaration in Matthew 16:16)
- Consider: How did Martha benefit by making herself available and sharing her concerns with Jesus in spite of her grief and confusion?

FYI: "Martha is often remembered for her shortcoming recorded in Luke 10:40,41. But she was a woman of faith, as this magnificent declaration shows."
- The Nelson Study Bible (1786)

19. What did Martha immediately do? 11:28

- How did Mary react? 11:29 (Why do you think Jesus stayed where He was?)
- How did Mary's greeting (11:32) compare to Martha's (11:21). What does this reveal about their feelings and what they had been thinking/experiencing for 4 days?

Applying the Word: Are you ever hesitant to share your disappointments with the Lord? What do you learn through this account?

Day 3

Lazarus' Resurrection. Read John 11:33-53

20. What emotions did Jesus display at this event and why? 11:33,35

FYI: "deeply moved" Strong's #1690 *embrimaomai*; *en* and *brimaomai* (to snort with anger); to have indignation on, i.e. to blame, to sigh with chagrin, to sternly enjoin

"troubled" Strong's #5015 *tarasso*; to stir or agitate

21. How did the people interpret Jesus' weeping (literally: shed tears)? 11:36

- What did others question? 11:37 What does this say about their state of mind?

FYI: "[Jesus] did not weep because the situation was hopeless, for He knew that He would raise Lazarus from the dead. He did so because He shares the emotions of those He loves." - Africa Bible Commentary (1275,1276)

"[Jesus] grieved with personal pain and sorrow over the death-dealing effects of sin on those He loves."
- The Tony Evans Study Bible (1248)

"This verse is widely recognized as the shortest verse in the English Bible, but it is also one of the most poignant...[Jesus] was sharing the grief of Mary and Martha, for He too loved Lazarus (John 11:5), but He also "groaned in the spirit, and was troubled" (John 11:33) at the very existence of death and the universal phenomenon of sin by which death reigned. His raising of Lazarus, however, would... testify that He was able to give life and would one day put away sin and death forever."
- Henry Morris

22. How did Jesus react again? 11:38 What do you think was the cause this time?

23. Why did Martha object to the stone being removed? 11:39

- How did Jesus answer that objection? 11:40 ((What wasn't she anticipating?))

FYI: Take away the stone "Jesus would perform no miracle on that which men could do for themselves. Hence His commands to remove the stone, and then later to "Loose him, and let him go" (John 11:44). He had earlier rebuked those who wanted to see miracles just for some kind of spiritual display (John 4:48)." - H. Morris

24. What did Jesus pray about *before* He raised Lazarus? 11:41,42 (For whose benefit? Compare John 12:30 For what purpose? What did they learn about Jesus?)

25. What did it take for Jesus to raise Lazarus? 11:43 (Compare Genesis 1:3; John 5:25)

Food for Thought: "I once heard a country preacher say that if Jesus hadn't called Lazarus by name, every grave within earshot would have rumbled open and their long-dead inhabitants would have answered His call. One day, 'all who are in the tombs will hear His voice,' but on this day, only Lazarus had been summoned... Rather than being resurrected...his old body had been reanimated, but it was the same body that had fallen ill and stopped working. Sometime after Lazarus had been summoned from beyond, he went there again... He was buried and his body decayed. It awaits its resurrection (I Thessalonians 4:13-17)." - Charles Swindoll (202)

26. How did Lazarus appear? 11:44 (How does this differ from Jesus' resurrection? John 20:6,7)

FYI: "The Jewish system of preparing a body for burial provided for swathing it in bandage-like wrappings from the armpits to the feet, leaving the shoulders bare, and with a cloth ('napkin') wrapped around the head. Such enswathement would effectively prevent any ordinary means of locomotion on the part of Lazarus. The only explanation of his appearance at the door of the tomb is that the power that galvanized him into life brought him forth to the door, so that Jesus could say, 'Loose him, and let him go' (44)." - Merrill Tenney (177)

27. How were people affected by this effect? 11:45,46

28. Why did this event lead to hatred and danger? 11:47,48,53 (What did the leaders know about the miracles Jesus was performing? How do you account for their unbelief?)

Applying the Word: *When has God delayed in answering your prayers? How did you feel? What happened?*

Day 4

Mary Anoints Jesus. Read John 12:1-8

29. Why did Jesus "therefore" go back to Judea? John 12:1 (See Luke 9:51; Matthew 16:21)

- What was going on in the city? John 11:57

FYI: "**Bethany**— A village on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem and the final station on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem." - The NIV Study Bible (1472)

30. Where were Martha and Lazarus? 12:2 (Imagine the atmosphere and the conversations at the dinner!)

31. What do Mary’s actions say about her attitude and devotion? 12:3

FYI: Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:1-9 describe an anointing a few days later. Luke 7:36-50 describes what seems to have been an earlier anointing.
 “Mary’s gift was remarkably *extravagant*. She used a lot (**a pound**) of a **very costly oil of spikenard**. Spices and ointments were often used as an investment because they occupied a small space, were portable, and were easily negotiable in the open market. Judas believed this oil was worth *300 denarii* (John 12:5), which was worth a year’s wages for a working man.” - David Guzik

“Mary’s act was also an unusual act, both because she poured the oil on Jesus’ feet (normally it was poured on the head) and because she used her hair to wipe them (a respectable woman did not unbind her hair in public). Further, it shows her humility, for it was a servant’s work to attend to the feet.” - The NIV Study Bible (1620)

“As Jesus hung on the cross, we have to wonder if he detected the fragrance on his skin. It’s not unlikely that he could. After all, it was twelve ounces’ worth. Imported. Concentrated. Sweet. Strong enough to scent a man’s clothes for days.” - Max Lucado

32. Compare Mary and Judas in 12:3-6:

	Mary	Judas
Action		
Attitude		(Compare Mark 14:4,5)
Motive		

- How are Mary and Judas each remembered?

FYI: “Interestingly, Scripture usually shows Mary at Jesus’ feet (Luke 10:39). In John 11:32, she fell at Jesus’ feet. In 12:3, she anointed Jesus’ feet. In Luke, she’s listening at Jesus’ feet. To sit at one’s feet was the position of a learner in submission to a teacher.” - The Tony Evan’s Study Bible (1198)

12:6 he was a thief. Thus Judas was dishonest and a false disciple all along. His act of betrayal, in return for money, was fully in character. He had evidently gone along with the disciples, thinking he would profit when Jesus established His kingdom and overthrew the Romans. When he finally saw this was not going to happen, he decided to get what he could for his trouble and betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver.” - Henry Morris

33. How did Jesus respond to Judas' objection? 12:7,8

- What significance did Jesus give to Mary's actions? (Compare Mark 14:6-9) Do you think she understood what that meant?

Food for Thought: "Jesus' burial was only a few days away. Providing for the poor is a biblical mandate for God's people (see Lev. 19:9-10...Eph. 4:28). (Of course, the Bible is talking about those who are legitimately poor, not those who are poor through their own laziness; see 2 Thess. 3:10.) But dealing with poverty is an unending reality in this sinful, fallen world. And this reality was not to prevent Jesus' followers from honoring their long-awaited Messiah who would only be with them a short while longer." - The Tony Evans Bible (1249)

poor always. "This could be taken as a fulfilled prophecy. No matter what scheme of government or economics has been tried throughout history, poverty has never been eliminated; this is as true today as in the days of Jesus."
- Henry Morris

34. What kind of danger was Lazarus in? Why? 12:10,11 (Cf. 11:47,48)

- What does this risk say about the devotion of this family?

FYI: "It is interesting to note that only the chief priests are mentioned here. They were from the Sadducees' party, which did not believe in the resurrection, and the fact that Lazarus was alive contradicted their beliefs. (See Acts 23:8) But the primary reason was that *many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in Him*. Lazarus was attracting others to Jesus."
- Africa Bible Commentary (1277)

35. What effect did this miracle have? 12:11 (See also 11:45,46)

FYI: went away, and believed. "It is noteworthy that the miracles of Jesus, especially that of the raising of Lazarus, were never doubted by the generation living at the time, because they had seen them. Skeptics in later generations have said the miracles could not have happened, but the opponents of Jesus in His own generation, since they could not question the reality of His miracles, decided simply to slay Him, preventing Him from doing any more."
- Henry Morris

36. God documented the actions and words of these two sisters and Lazarus for all time. What do you think they would say about Jesus' work in their lives? About the dangers it brought?

Applying the Word: If you had a year's wages to spend for Christ, what would you do with it? What would you say is one of the most beneficial gifts you can give Him?