

The Better Choice

Introduction

Our study surrounds the family of Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary. In John 11, it says that Jesus loved these three. We know that Jesus loves everyone but his love for this family is highlighted here in scripture.

“Mary” was a very common name in that geographical region during the first century. There are at least three Mary’s recorded in the New Testament. The three are Mary the Mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene and Mary Martha’s sister.

There are three direct references to Mary, all three the exact same posture... at Jesus feet. Two of those times she was bitterly criticized by her sister and the disciples when she anointed Jesus feet. How awesome is it to have Jesus stand for her and the anointing story will be told until Jesus returns.

Jesus, who was rejected at the end of his life, would be welcome at this Bethany home. A place where he found refuge, he is loved, cared for and worshipped.

Text

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 only one thing is needed. Mary **has chosen** what is better and it will not be taken away from her."
(Luke 10:38-42)*

Martha is very busy, when she finds her sister Mary sitting at Jesus feet listening.

- She is obviously upset and ask Jesus to tell Mary to help her.
- Jesus surprises Martha by telling her that she was worried, distracted and anxious about *many things*.

- She is so readily upset and asks Jesus to tell Mary to help her.
- Jesus surprises Martha by telling her that she was worried, distracted and anxious about *many things*.
- He follows this up by explaining that only *one thing* is needed and should be focused on that.

Mary chose better and it will not be taken from her

- Mary violated all of the social codes of that day
- She was in the men's area; traditionally the women would be serving while the men learned.
- Make no mistake about it, when she sits at Jesus feet it was a posture of a disciple.

“I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in Jerusalem, at the feet of Gamaliel, receiving strict instruction in the law of our ancestors.”
(Acts 22:3)

- Mary had a hunger to learn from Jesus despite the social norms
- Martha was thinking, “you’re not suppose to...” she became distracted and misguided.
- Jesus didn’t address her work or busyness but was dealing with her distraction and worry.

The “Martha’s” have been taught that the main thing that God desires of us is that we do stuff for Him.

“Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.” **(John 14:10)**

Distracted = to lose track of, get off course.

- Activity takes priority over people
- We can begin to think and say, “don’t you know that I’m doing this for you” toward God and each other
- Kids can even feel like they are on a “to do list”

Busyness is a manifestation of the problem of misplaced priorities.

- We have to have the time to sit at Jesus feet, it must be a priority
- Burn out, of all the things she could have chosen, she chose the best. She was teachable, humble, loved him and sat at his feet
- Bail out; we can become so consumed with busyness, become so distracted that we bail out of service all together.

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”
(Matthew 6:33-34)

When “many things” is exchanged for the “one thing” we will have strength for “everything.”

strength for “everything.”

The “one thing” is a person – reprioritize Jesus.

Life Group Sermon Application Curriculum Leader's Guide

Week of **03/15/15**

"The Better Choice"

Main Sermon text: (Luke 10:38-42)

There are some **consistent themes**, and key points, that emerge from these passages:

- Our study begins by focusing on Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha. There are three direct references to Mary in scripture, all three the exact same posture...at Jesus feet. Two of those times she was bitterly criticized by her sister and then by the disciples when she anointed Jesus feet. But Jesus defended her and her actions.
- We find Martha being very busy; she was worried, distracted and anxious about *many things*. Mary on the other hand was sitting at Jesus feet doing the *one thing* that was needed and should be focused on.
- Mary chose better and it would not be taken from her. Mary violated all of the social codes of that day, she had no hesitation sitting in the "men's area" when she sat at Jesus feet. But Mary had a hunger to learn from Jesus despite the social norms. Everyone in the room understood that this was a posture of a disciple.
- Concerning Martha it is important to understand Jesus didn't address her work or busyness but was dealing with her distraction and worry. The "Martha's" have been taught that the main thing that God desires of us is that we do stuff for Him.
- Being distracted can cause us to get off course, an example would be: activity-taking priority over people. Busyness is a manifestation of the problem of misplaced priorities. Sitting at the feet of Jesus must be a priority.

Discussion questions/prompts for your group: (These questions are designed to help your group go deeper, understanding and applying the Bible passage(s) and the sermon)

- 1) Sometimes like Mary, we do the right thing, we hunger and pursue Jesus but we pay a price. Can you think of a time in your life or observed in someone else's life when they were criticized for making the right decision?
- 2) We know that Jesus was not criticizing Martha or correcting her work ethic. But he was confronting her because she was worried, distracted and anxious about many things. Have you found yourself in Martha's situation? On the other hand he acknowledged that Mary had chosen the one thing that was needed. When we find ourselves in the Martha role do we get to

acknowledged that Mary had chosen the one thing that was needed. When we find ourselves in the Martha role do we get to the one needed thing?

- 3) We know that Mary violated all of the social codes of that day to sit at Jesus feet. What are the barriers in your walk and in Christian lives in general that would keep us from choosing to follow that spiritual hunger to spend time with him?
- 4) Please discuss the following three quotes:
 - “Busyness is a manifestation of the problem of misplaced priorities”
 - “When “many things” is exchanged for the “one thing” we will have strength for “everything.”
 - “The “one thing” is a person – reprioritize Jesus

For those who might like to use visual aids in their Bible storying, or study preparation, especially for groups with children, here are some helpful links:

<http://missionbibleclass.org/1b0-new-testament/new-testament-part-1/life-of-christ-middle/mary-and-martha/>

<http://ministry-to-children.com/many-silent-years/>

<http://www.raisingourkids.com/coloring-pages/printable/bible/index-02.html>

Log on and check “Right now Media” there are several good resources that will relate to this study for the kids. Some are for pre-school and older, so go surfing and see if you can find something for your group.