IBEING A MARY IN A MARTHA WORLD
Luke 10:38-42

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Note: The following are the pastor’s notes used in preaching this message. This is not a complete, word-for-word transcription of what was preached. These notes serve as a companion to the complete message, which is available by listening to the audio version.

Temperament – God given emotional make-up – passive or aggressive – talker or not – extrovert or introvert – different challenges with each – this is not about temperament

I. MARTHA’S LIFE

A. Aggressive

Martha was a New Testament Energizer Bunny® – energetic and always on the go – always in the lead role – indicates she was oldest – younger siblings often don’t recognize the weight on the oldest sibling:

1) Luke 10:38 – “Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.” – why not Lazarus’ home? – parents must have been dead for three siblings to be living together – duties of running the home fell on oldest

2) John 11:20-27 – Lazarus died, Jesus returned to Bethany – verse 20 – “Martha therefore, when she heard Jesus was coming, went out to meet Him...”
   o Unusual for a woman in mourning to do this – showed great love for Jesus as a friend
   o Also showed great respect for Jesus as a teacher – engaged in theological discussion – not demur – verses 21, 22 – she knew God answered Jesus’ prayers – “…Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You.” – verse 25, 26 – “…I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?” – verse 27 Mary replies, “…Yes Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world.” – profound confession of faith.

3) John 12:2 – six days before Jesus’ crucifixion – Jesus returned to Bethany – “So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving...”

Martha was aggressive but – John 11:5 – “Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.” – still something was missing

B. Distracted

Luke 10:40 – “But Martha was distracted with all her preparations...” – Mary had been helping – but now, “…she has left me to do all the serving alone...” – sounds like kids complaining – dishes?

“distracted” – “to be dragged around, to be drawn away or drawn to two things at the same time” – Martha was being dragged around all over the house trying to make preparations for Jesus – Martha Stewart on steroids! – but she was dragging herself! – no one was making her – prisoner of her own expectations – Jesus could have been entertained underneath a tree with a glass of water – He didn’t require a fancy lunch

C. Selfish

The problem with strong personalities is that they think everyone else should be driven too – Luke 10:40 – “she came up to Him” – the grammar indicates it was sudden – she noticed Mary wasn’t living up to her expectations! – “…Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.” – she was spitting mad! – demanding people can suck the air right out of a room – angry men can leave women and children afraid to breathe because of their expectations – demanding women can emasculate a man – he can’t do anything to please her!

The problem wasn’t Mary – it was Martha! – she was angry, disrespectful, childish – Jesus clearly told her that her expectations were misplaced – verse 42 – “…Mary has chosen the good part...”

Martha’s motive was good – she wanted to serve Jesus – but she wanted to do it her way! – she failed to grasp the reality of the situation – Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem to be crucified – struggling in His
humanity to obey the will of the Father and submit to the way of the cross – He did not want a big party! – she was selfishly offering Jesus something He didn’t need or want – she was imposing her expectations on Mary and Jesus – she thought she was doing it for Him – but she was actually doing it for herself?

D. Worried

Luke 10:41 – “‘…Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about many things...’” – the words mean “anxious” and “in an uproar” – or “whining and complaining” – “about many things” – preparing the meals – shopping, cooking, preparing, presenting – His room – flowers, comfy bed – entertaining Him – showing Him the sights, arranging for certain people to meet Him etc.

Implication – you brought this on yourself – no one asked you to do all this – “Martha” types set their own task list – work themselves to the bone – and then complain about being over-worked!

“Martha” personalities:
• Work with hands and head – but not with heart
• Set their own agenda – demand everyone live up to it
• Take it personally when someone differs with them
• Judge others for failing to see things their way

II. MARY’S LIFE

A. Wise choices

God made us with different temperaments – talkers think non-talkers are boring – non-talkers think talkers are obnoxious – some people can’t sit still for five minutes – others look comatose when walking – Martha and Mary were completely different – Martha was bold and brash – Mary was quiet, demurring, more meditative – in the background.

But the main difference wasn’t personality or “birth-order” – it was spiritual maturity – Luke 10:42 – “‘…Mary has chosen the good part...’” – spiritual maturity is the result of a thousand small choices in the right direction – she saw the same things Martha did – made different choices – decided to develop spiritual life rather than her hospitality skills.

Joshua 24:15 – right before children of Israel went in to possess the promised land – “If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

Good choices are not the result of temperament – Joshua was a “Martha” personality too – stood with Caleb against ten other spies in advocating entering the Promised Land – but he chose rightly.

Making right choices involves:
• Determination to do what is right – ignore the crowd
• Right information
• Good counsel

Making right choices starts young
• Follow Christ – or is He Mom and Dad’s God?
• Friends you “hang out” with or godly friends to stimulate and encourage you – [difference between “texting” and conversation]
• Dating – you will not “change” the person you are dating

The most important thing in life is what you choose to do with Jesus – religious figure – nice man – philosopher – or God!?

B. Right priorities

Luke 10:42 – “but only one thing is necessary…” – Martha missed it – “distracted by many things” – Mary figured it out – clue – verse 39 – she was “…seated at the Lord’s feet, listening to His word.” – the sign of a disciple – unusual for a woman – that “one thing” eludes most people
Mary of Bethany is seen three times in the Gospel record, and on each occasion, she is in the same place:

- **Luke 10:39** – she was “…seated at the Lord’s feet, listening to His word.”
- **John 11:31, 32** – when Jesus came to heal Lazarus Martha greeted Him first, but when she told Mary Jesus was there, Mary came out of the house – the friends with her followed her, “…supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there.” – but she didn’t – verse 32 – she went to Jesus
- **John 12:3** – later on Jesus returned to their house six days before His crucifixion – John 12:2 – “…Martha was serving…” – no complaints, maybe it was just sandwiches – but Mary anointed Jesus’ feet with costly perfume

The most important thing in life is not your education – job – family – how your house looks – becoming V.P. – getting your own way – it is sitting at Jesus’ feet

You will get out of life exactly what you want! – what you do with Christ is more important than what you do for Him.

C. **Committed action**

“Mary has chosen the good part” – her actions revealed her heart – she chose to be “seated at Jesus’ feet” – not a choice between good and bad – not like Moses in Hebrews 11:25 who chose “…rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasure of sin.” – or Joshua in Joshua 24:15, who told the people to “…choose this day who you will serve…” – the foreign gods around them or the true God.

No – Mary’s choice was between hospitality and learning – she chose to spend time with Jesus before going off to work for Him – she chose to do what He wanted and not what she wanted.

You ask yourself – “If Jesus examined my life, what would He take out?” – soccer, piano lessons, gymnastics, hobby, etc.?

Mary and Martha are often contrasted – Martha was the worker and Mary was the worshipper – we don’t have to make that choice – we can chose to worship before we work – we are to serve with Martha’s hands and Mary’s heart.

The clincher – “…Mary has chosen the good part which shall not be taken away from her.” – all the meals, the decorating, the planning, the shopping, the running around to ball games, piano lessons, etc. will not last – only the investment made in your spiritual life will.

Being a “Mary” means:

- Sit at Jesus’ feet
- Make the hard choices
- Serve with your heart – then your hands and head

**QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

1. How do you think most people determine their purpose for living?
2. What can we learn about Martha’s spiritual life from John 11:20-28?
3. In Luke 10:40, what was Martha distracted from, and how was she distracted?
4. What clue do we have about Mary’s life in Luke 10:42?
5. What is the main difference between the lives of Mary and Martha?
6. Is your life patterned more after Mary or Martha?