

TEMPORAL MATTERS AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS

BIBLE TEXT : Luke 10:38-42

LESSON 132 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "One thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:42).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Luke 10:38-42

³⁸ Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

⁴⁰ But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

⁴² But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

A Guest

Jesus entered the village of Bethany where Mary and Martha lived (**John 11:1** ¹ Now a certain *man* was sick, *named Lazarus*, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha). He was invited to be a guest in their home. Jesus loved this family (**John 11:5** ⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus) and often visited with them. No doubt, Jesus was very happy to have a home opened to Him. At that time He had no home of His own here upon earth. Perhaps this was the only invitation He was given. There were not many people who wanted Jesus. We do read of another time when Jesus was in Bethany that He stayed at the home of Simon the leper (**Mark 14:3** ³ And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head).

Not many people today want Jesus in their lives and homes. When Jesus comes into one's life, his home is different, too. How fortunate is the one who lives in a home that has invited Jesus to be the Guest! In some homes hangs a motto which says,

**"Christ is the Head of this house,
The unseen Guest at every meal,
The silent Listener to every conversation."**

Happy is the heart and home into which Jesus is invited! Does Jesus live in your heart and life? Has Jesus been invited to be a guest in your home?

Mary and Martha were the sisters of Lazarus (**John 11:1-2** ¹ Now a certain *man* was sick, *named Lazarus*, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. ² (It was *that* Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)). Undoubtedly they were happy to have Jesus in their home. They did not act alike though, after Jesus had accepted their invitation. Let us look into this home to see how they treated Jesus.

Sitting at the Feet of Jesus

The one sister, Mary, seemed to think that this was an opportunity to listen to the words of the Master. No doubt Jesus knew her desire to hear His teachings. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). Mary seemed to lose sight of everything else but her chance to receive teachings from the Great Teacher.

**"Sitting at the feet of Jesus,
O what words I hear Him say!
Happy place! so near, so precious!
May it find me there each day.
Sitting *at* the feet of Jesus,
I would look upon the past;
For His love has been so gracious,
It has won my heart at last."**

**"Sitting at the feet of Jesus,
Where can mortal be more blest?
There I lay my sins and sorrows,
And, when weary, find sweet rest.
Sitting at the feet of Jesus,
There I love to weep and pray,
While I from His fulness gather
Grace and comfort every day.**

**"Bless me, O my Savior, bless me,
As I sit low at Thy feet;
Oh, look down in love upon me,
Let me see Thy face so sweet.
Give me, Lord, the mind of Jesus,
Make me holy as He is;
May I prove I've been with Jesus,
Who is all my righteousness."**

David said, "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple" (Psalm 27:4). Mary must have felt the same way. She was seeking the truths of the Gospel that she might dwell in the House of the Lord forever. She no doubt wanted to behold the beauties of Jesus' teachings and to go deeper into them. Perhaps she had some questions to ask, or just wanted to hear His parables. "He spake many things unto them in parables" (Matthew 13:3).

Mary heard His words. She listened in such a way that she did not lose them. She heard with spiritual ears as well as with her physical ears. Some people hear the Word of God with their natural ears, but it goes no further. They soon forget what they have heard. They are not doers of the Word as well as hearers (**James 1:22** ²² But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves). "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11).

Cumbered and Troubled

The other sister, Martha, had received Jesus into her home. Afterward, she became concerned about temporal things. Perhaps she hurried out, thinking that she would start a lunch and sit at Jesus' feet, too. One thing took her time, and then another, until her thoughts were no longer of Jesus. The meal she was preparing for Him occupied her time and thoughts. In her anxiety to serve Jesus, she crowded out His teachings and His words. Next she was ready to accuse her sister. She found fault because Mary was doing the thing that Martha had neglected, the one thing needful — sitting at Jesus' feet and learning of Him.

One might think that Mary was not doing her part of the work. Jesus would never have commended her if that were the case. It is possible for a person to have his work in order, and with a system, that he may have time for spiritual things and for his work, too. "Let all things be done decently and in order" (I Corinthians 14:40).

Mary was not the only one to be criticized for "sitting at Jesus' feet." Daniel's accusers could find nothing against him but his faithfulness to God (**Daniel 6:4-5** ⁴ Then the presidents and princes sought to find occasion against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find none occasion nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful, neither was there any error or fault found in him. ⁵ Then said these men, We shall not find any

occasion against this Daniel, except we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God). Other Christians, too, have had the same complaint against them. How much better to have men condemn you for your right attitude toward God than to have God condemn you for the wrong way you treat your fellow men. At one time Jesus said, "A man's foes shall be they of his own household" (Matthew 10:36).

Martha had started out well and perhaps she had good intentions. Wanting to do something for Jesus is the natural thing for a person who has been saved. But Martha worried about the serving until she was hindered from listening to the Lord. Martha became so careful and encumbered about her work that the Lord reproved her — not for serving, but for being troubled about much serving.

One Thing Needful

There are people today much like Martha. They have started well by receiving Jesus into their lives and homes. They seem to forget that one must keep walking in the Light in order to enjoy Jesus' fellowship (**John 12:35** ³⁵ Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth). They become so concerned in their work that they lose interest in spiritual things. They soon care more about this life and less about the life to come. Children can become so busy with school activities and play, that they do not take time to read the Bible and to pray, so they are robbed of the one thing needful — perfect peace and truth in the heart.

God does not want His people to be so concerned about the things of this life that they lose the one thing needed — a knowledge of sins forgiven. Most of God's people work for a living. They have their responsibilities and their homes, but are not weighed down by them. Their first interest is in spiritual things and their standing in God's sight. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33).

Some people are careful about many things but they need to apply themselves to one thing. They seem to be doing much — perhaps many things that are needless, instead of the one thing needful. They may have many things to offer the Lord, but He is looking for one essential thing — a conscience void of offense toward God and man. Many are willing to do good works and to spend their money for the church; but if they lack the one thing needful, they lack all things that qualify them for Heaven. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Luke 12:34).

Mary chose the good part, the spiritual — which is lasting and enduring — in contrast with the temporal things which soon pass away. What is your choice?

QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did Jesus go to the home of Mary and Martha?
- 2 What was the good part that Mary chose?
- 3 Why did Mary want to sit at Jesus' feet?
- 4 What was Martha doing?
- 5 What was Martha's complaint?
- 6 Why did Jesus reprove Martha?
- 7 Like which one of these two would you like to be? Why?
- 8 How can you be like her?