

Luke 10:38-42

Introduction: As the previous section emphasized the meaning of the 2nd commandment of loving our neighbors, this account emphasizes the meaning of the 1st commandment of loving God above everything else.

Luke give us the setting for this teaching—10:38

- 1) The anonymous village—³⁸ *Now it happened, as they were traveling, He entered a certain village;*
 - a) The journey to Jerusalem continues.
 - b) This is during the time of the Feast of Tabernacles/Booths (a holiday recognizing God's provision for Israel during their wilderness wanderings, but also of God's provision through the recent harvest).
 - c) We know that this family lived in Bethany just east of Jerusalem. (cf. John 11:1) This is Jesus' first recorded visit to their home.
- 2) The specific house and woman—*and a woman named Martha welcomed [ὑποδέχομαι] (as a guest) Him into her house.*
 - a) She was possibly the older sister, the mistress of the house. Lazarus is not even mentioned in this account.

Luke describes the contrast between these two sisters—10:39-40

- 1) Mary—10:39 ³⁹ *And she had a sister called Mary/Maria,*
 - a) Takes an unusual initiative—*who, having sat at Jesus' feet,*
 - i) Rabbis of this era normally did not permit such thing for women
 - b) Demonstrates a submissive interest—*was listening [impf. ἀκούω] to His message.* (cf. 8:35)
- 2) Martha—10:40
 - a) What Martha did—⁴⁰ *But Martha was distracted (pulled away) [impf. περισπάω] with much [πολύς] serving [διακονία];*
 - b) What Martha said—*and having approached she said,*
 - Apparently her imagination has been running wild
 - i) A self-centered question—*“Lord, is it not of interest [μέλω] to You that my sister has left/abandoned [impf. καταλείπω] me to serve [διακονέω] **alone** (emphatic)?*
 - (1) The sentence structure shows that Martha expected Jesus to respond and rebuke Mary (NET Bible)
 - (2) She is misrepresenting Jesus as being neglectful, insensitive, partial, and inconsiderate. (Rosscup)
 - ii) A self-centered command—*Therefore tell her that she should help [συναντιλαμβάνομαι] **me** (emphatic).”*
 - (1) She wanted Jesus to assist her with Martha's plans rather than learning of His plans as Mary had chosen.

Jesus wisely responds to Martha's accusation—10:41-42 ⁴¹ *But Jesus, having responded, said to her,*

- 1) He tenderly confronts her sin—10:41
 - a) Tenderness—“*Martha, Martha*, (cf. 13:34; 22:31)
 - b) Identifies her as being overwhelmed—*you are anxious* [μεριμνάω] *and bothered* [τυρβάζω] *about many* [πολύς] *things*.
 - i) She allowed her duties as hostess to become too burdensome. Perhaps her desire for something elaborate should have been for something simple instead. (Constable)
 - ii) Wiersbe once wrote, “If serving Christ makes us difficult to live with, then something is terribly wrong with our service!”
 - iii) Martha was troubled by the confusion of things to do and the disorder of her situation. (Magill)
 - iv) This does not mean dropping all gestures of hospitality as if she can throw them to the winds and be negligent or careless towards others. It just means putting things into a Christ-honoring perspective. (Rosscup)
- 2) He wisely reminds her of proper priorities—10:42
 - a) Priorities—⁴² *But one* [εἷς] *thing is necessary* [χρεία],
 - i) To serve others, like the Samaritan (cf. 10:25-37), does not mean that we should be so distract by service that we ignore God. Our service to others is best set in the context of being in contact with God. (Bock)
 - b) Observations
 - i) Concerning the past—*and Mary has chosen* (for herself) [aor. mid. ind. ἐκλέγομαι] *the good* [ἀγαθός] *part* [μερίς],
(1) Jesus dared to compare siblings!
 - ii) Concerning the future—*which shall not be taken away* [fut. pass. ind. ἀφαιρέω] *from her*.”
(1) The blessing that comes to those who pay attention to the teachings of Jesus with an attitude of dependence on Him. (Constable)

Take-home truth: Don't allow the busy-ness of everyday life to prevent us from focusing on God.