

Bible Reading Plan

WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2020

WEEKLY READING: LUKE 7-11

PASSAGES REFERENCED: LUKE 10:38-42;

JAMES 1:22; 1 CORINTHIANS 12

³⁸Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. ³⁹She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. ⁴⁰But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." ⁴¹But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; ⁴²but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." – Luke 10:38-42, NASB

I have been in Bible studies and heard Martha described as bossy and Mary as lazy. But is this true of them? I don't think that's the case. If we are mindful, we recognize we are looking at just one day in their lives.

Yes, this story is polarizing, much like the society we live in today. But it is important. This also isn't just a gender-driven story, but rather one we can all find ourselves in.

This story is a reminder to me not to label people. We are each more than a snapshot, and hopefully, not held to our lowest moments. I have been both a Mary and a Martha. What seems critical here is that Jesus is calling us all to something higher, better. Perhaps to not judge or criticize one another.

We see here that Jesus isn't judging Martha or Mary. Instead, we see Him reminding Martha that being in His presence is the highest goal. Jesus does address the fact that Martha is stressed out and anxious from all of her work. What seems central is that He asks her not to focus on her sister Mary, not to judge or criticize her for doing things differently than Martha was. If we are honest with ourselves, at times, we value tasks at hand over the very people we are serving. Jesus seems to point out to Martha that noticing the gaps in Mary's performance is problematic.

Martha is a 'make things happen woman,' and I believe she has gotten a bad rap at times. It was Martha that initiated the dinner offer; she set it up. I wonder, in this particular scene, if Jesus is reminding her, "I don't want things from you today, but rather I desire things for you." I also wonder if later Mary, the younger sister, thought, "Maybe I should have been more helpful to my sister?" Recognizing being right should not be valued higher than a right relationship.

You see, we are continually holding the balance between being hearers of the Word and doers of the Word (James 1:22). We are called to both. It must be noted that in 1 Corinthians 12, Paul calls us to unity, explaining that we are one body with many different gifts, but one purpose. We need each other; we also need to value our differences.

I love how Jesus steps into the encounter with Martha, reminding her it doesn't all rest on her shoulders. He lifts the pressure from her to make it all happen. He does not condemn her but rescues her with truth and love.

Think over this story of two sisters. What do you see about yourself in their story? How is God speaking to you through this story? Know this, Jesus always pursues us, always calls us closer to Him. – *Holli Deloe*