

# TEMPORAL MATTERS AND SPIRITUAL NEEDS

**BIBLE TEXT** : Luke 10:38-42

LESSON 132 **Senior Course**

**MEMORY VERSE:** "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" (Matthew 6:25).

## **BIBLE TEXT in King James Version**

### **Luke 10:38-42**

<sup>38</sup> 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.

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

<sup>40</sup> 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.

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

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

## **BIBLE REFERENCES:**

### **I Christ at Martha's Home**

1 The hospitality of Martha is shown as Jesus enters this little village, Luke 10:38;

#### **2 Kings 4:10**

<sup>10</sup> Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

#### **Matthew 27:55**

<sup>55</sup> And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:

#### **Romans 12:13**

<sup>13</sup> Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

#### **Romans 16:12**

<sup>12</sup> Salute Tryphena and Tryphosa, who labour in the Lord. Salute the beloved Persis, which laboured much in the Lord.

#### **1 Timothy 3:2**

<sup>2</sup> A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

#### **1 Timothy 5:10**

<sup>10</sup> Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

#### **Hebrews 13:2**

<sup>2</sup> Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

#### **1 Peter 4:9**

<sup>9</sup> Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

2 Martha had a sister, Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and heard His words, Luke 10:39;

#### **Proverbs 20:12**

<sup>12</sup> The hearing ear, and the seeing eye, the LORD hath made even both of them.

#### **Luke 8:40**

<sup>40</sup> And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people *gladly* received him: for they were all waiting for him.

#### **Acts 2:41**

<sup>41</sup> Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

#### **Acts 17:11**

<sup>11</sup> These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

### **II Fretfulness and Anxiety**

1 Martha was cumbered about much serving and complained to the Lord that Mary had left her to serve alone, Luke 10:40;

#### **Psalms 142:2**

<sup>2</sup> I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before

him my trouble.

**Matthew 7:4**

<sup>4</sup> Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

**John 6:43**

<sup>43</sup> Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves.

**1 Corinthians 10:10**

<sup>10</sup> Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.

**Philippians 2:3**

<sup>3</sup> Let nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

2 Jesus rebukes Martha for her troubled spirit, Luke 10:41;

**Luke 12:29**

<sup>29</sup> And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

**Matthew 13:22**

<sup>22</sup> He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

**Philippians 4:6**

<sup>6</sup> Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

**1 Peter 5:7**

<sup>7</sup> Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

3 Jesus said, "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her," Luke 10:42;

**Ruth 1:16**

<sup>16</sup> And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God:

**Hebrews 11:25**

<sup>25</sup> Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

**2 Corinthians 4:18**

<sup>18</sup> While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

**NOTES:**

Jesus entered the little town of Bethany, which was situated just two miles from Jerusalem. Two sisters, Martha and Mary, and their brother Lazarus, lived in this little town. Martha, the eldest and head of the house, received Jesus into their home. As the head of the house, Martha felt the responsibility of serving Jesus, the burden of getting the dinner ready.

Mary was all absorbed in hearing the gracious words that fell from the Master's lips. Perhaps Martha was trying to serve too elaborate a dinner. She was "cumbered about much serving." Maybe a more simple meal would have given her time to listen to Jesus, too. At least, things were not going smoothly in the kitchen. Perhaps the baking was not turning out right, or the water was all gone out of the pail, or she needed some extra things from the market. Martha felt she just could not do all this work alone. She needed help. Mary had left it all for her to do. Surely it was not right for her to have all the work to do while Mary sat at the feet of Jesus listening to His words. Thoughts like these must have been going through Martha's

mind. Her spirit became vexed and troubled. She decided to tell Jesus about it, for He was just and holy and would do the right thing.

### **Jesus' Rebuke**

Jesus saw that Martha's life was much taken up with serving. It was not wrong for Martha to serve, but she did not put first things first. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). The one thing needful, the one all-essential thing, was for the soul to be fed on the heavenly manna. Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:41, 42).

Many today are concerned with the affairs of this life and with the things which will all soon perish with the using. Of how much greater importance is the soul, which will live forever!

### **Hospitality**

This is a good lesson on hospitality. In every body of believers you will find some whose homes are always open, and who welcome the saints into their homes. Others never have room. We sometimes wonder if they would have room for Jesus if He came to town. One requirement of a bishop was that he be "a lover of hospitality" (Titus 1:8).

It was a wonderful privilege Martha had of entertaining Jesus that day. The Word tells us, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2). Martha had One who was higher than the angels in her home, One who had created all things. The Maker of Heaven and earth, the divine Son of God, was her Guest. He was worthy of all that her lavish hands could bestow upon Him. But Martha was too much concerned with temporal things, to the neglect of her soul. We believe if she had stopped her work long enough to have sat a while at the feet of Jesus and heard His words, the work in the kitchen would have gone smoother. No doubt her soul would have been singing praises to God in place of fretting and murmuring. Many times we find "a little talk with Jesus makes it right - all right."

### **The Spiritual-Minded Mary**

Mary's choice was not in the sense of good in opposition to bad. But her choice was the better of the two ways of serving the Lord. Her choice was spiritual. Her calm and complacent spirit, coupled with her deep spirituality, was set over against Martha's active but *worried* spirit. When the Marthas have been sanctified the Church will need the Marthas as well as the Marys.

Mary was spiritual-minded. She took her place as a scholar at the feet of Jesus. She was desirous of gaining heavenly wisdom. She drank deep of those fountains of Living Waters, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). She had chosen the better part, that good part which would not be taken away from her. The one essential thing in life is to be made holy, Christlike, to prepare our souls to live in the world to come. That part should have pre-eminence over domestic duties. Martha was busily employed providing perishing food for perishing bodies; but Mary was securing spiritual food for her immortal soul. The salvation of the soul should be the first and greatest concern of any human being, "The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment" (Luke 12:23). In Acts 6:1-5 we read that the Apostles

felt led to give their time to prayer and the ministry of the Word and they chose men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom to serve tables. We would say that Martha had a high calling but Mary had a higher calling.

### **Life's Calling**

As we trace the lives of these two sisters we find that Martha still followed her calling to serve (John 12:2). But her spirit of service had been more fully consecrated; and when her brother, Lazarus, died she was the first to go to meet Jesus when He came into town. Her life shows that the Spirit of the Lord can change our lives and take out the worry and trouble and let us follow the work the Lord has given us to do with praises in our heart instead of murmurings. The Word tells us, "Be careful for nothing" (Philippians 4:6), and also, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares" (Luke 21:34).

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (John 11:5). When Lazarus was sick his sisters sent word to Jesus, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick" (John 11:3). We know that Lazarus died and Jesus raised him from the dead. Because of this miracle many of the Jews believed on Jesus. Then when He came to Bethany, six days before the Passover, they made Him a supper. We find Martha serving, but we also find Mary 'choosing the good part. While Jesus and the disciples were feasting on the bounty that had been prepared for them, Mary slipped in with a pound of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair (John 12:3).

Some of the disciples had indignation and wanted to know why the ointment had not been sold and the money given to the poor. Jesus reproved them and said, "Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always" (John 12:7, 8).

We see that Mary was still choosing the good part, leaving us an example of what it means to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him. The soul that has a craving for spiritual food will never be denied a place at His feet.

Martha was busy preparing a meal in the kitchen; Mary was dining on a sumptuous repast given by the Master Himself. Martha was troubled; Mary was peaceful. Martha was looking at the present difficulties; Mary was looking toward heavenly things. There are many in the world today, like Martha, thinking only of the present; there are very few, like Mary, looking into the future to see what it holds in store for them. Those who are occupied with the affairs of this life only, will have no hope when they face eternity. Why not choose that good part — a place at Jesus' feet whence troubles flee?

### **QUESTIONS**

- 1 What was the name of the little town which Jesus entered?
- 2 How far was it from Jerusalem?
- 3 In whose home did Jesus stay?
- 4 What difficulty arose between the two sisters in the home?
- 5 What was the rebuke Jesus gave Martha?
- 6 What did Jesus say about Mary?
- 7 What is the essential thing in life?
- 8 What loving deed did Mary do that has been told down through the centuries?
- 9 Which part are you choosing, the one Martha chose? or the one Mary chose?

