

ONE THING IS NEEDFUL

Luke 10:42

Introduction:

Martha and Mary represent a woman who cooked, and a woman who prayed.

These two sisters appear in three unforgettable scenes in the Gospel.

Luke sketches the first one. And John, in the two other scenes. The first scene shows the sisters at supper with our Lord. The second, shows them at a funeral. And third, at a banquet. But in every scene, these women are busy in the same way.

As you go out of Jerusalem, taking the road to Jericho, you come to Bethany - about three miles along the road. Just where it begins to drop down toward Jericho. In this village lived Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary.

Martha seems to be the head of the house. Some have indicated that Martha was the widow of Simon, the leper. It is true she had the responsibility of the household. And Martha received Jesus in her home. He stopped there to drink water - to be refreshed. To enjoy their friendship. And he was a beloved guest.

In Capernaum, he spent time in the home of Peter. But while in Bethany, this home meant a great deal to him.

First, a supper. We look at these two sisters - first seen by Luke, as described in V. (38). Jesus came into their village. And Jesus was traveling

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food. Others were trying to get the guest chamber
preparation, Jesus was seated in the shade of the
building over the walls. Mary joins him and listens
things.

working. And she wonders where is Mary - why doesn't
she goes to search for her - and she finds her
going to the words of wisdom. And Martha explains to
her that my sister hath left me to serve alone - V. 40
and help me.

Jesus said, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and
one thing is needful and Mary has chosen that

Martha, for her zeal to have a good supper ready.

Jesus scolded all those noisy housekeepers like Martha.

While she was being straightened, the dinner was being prepared. Everyone
was having his a wonderful pleasant occasion. And the younger sister
Mary was listening to Jesus.

You remember later on, the disciples, the apostles became cumbered about
with serving tables and that is when they appointed deacons.

Now Martha's work was necessary. And he merely emphasized that one work

One Thing is Needful

2 Sisters - Jesus Home - Capernaum Peter -

3 Unforgettable Scenes

I - Supper - Luke 10:38-42

Man Good Wife - Martha - Rouge etc -
"40 yrs old - Socks - Lock Refrigerator -

II. Funeral John 11:21-25
Martha →

Mary - V. 32-35
Raised from Dead - V. 43

III. Banquet John 12:1-3

Luke 11:41 One Thing Needful
Family Working - for - Plans, M - Sister - 4-5
"Husband makes living, but I make the
living worthwhile -"

Man - "Houses - planned - parties -
Business - No Time for God"

to show love. Love's privilege is to express itself—to show that you mean it when you say to another member of the family, "I love you."

Our Heavenly Father, we are thankful you've loved us and that we can love one another. In the spirit of Christ. Amen.

Love's Privilege
Read Ephesians 5:22-33

What is the formula for a happy home? Love given + love received x number of members in the family = happiness.

Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband (Eph. 5:33).

(Prayer suggestion: Pray for each person present, each one praying for the one on his right. Hold hands if it seems natural.)

"The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world." Do you agree with these quaint words from the last century by William Ross Wallace? (Evaluate them.)

Some of the spokesmen for women's rights today are putting into words what men have long known deep in their hearts—a woman is valuable. Ask any insurance man. He'll tell you that when a man loses a wife, he can't replace her with cheap labor. If he tried to hire a cook, a housekeeper, and nursemaid, he would find himself paying \$159.34 per week. That amounts to \$8,285.68 per year! A wife and a mother is worth a lot, and the monetary value is only the beginning of her total worth to the family.

Children shouldn't wait until Mother's Day to cook her a breakfast and tell her they appreciate her. Husbands ought to show a little affection at times other than wedding anniversaries.

And neither should the woman wait until birthdays to tell her husband and children how much she loves them. Anytime is a good time to show love. Don't wait until Valentine's Day. Love's privilege is to express itself—to show that you mean it when you say to another member of the family, "I love you."

Our Heavenly Father, we are thankful you've loved us and that we can love one another. In the spirit of Christ. Amen.

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and listening to the words of wisdom. And Martha explains to

you not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone - V. 40.

that she come and help me.

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because all those noisy housekeepers like Martha.

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traveling through the country with his disciples - probably coming from Jericho. Now they could expect him for supper - maybe a messenger came ahead. One servant was sent to the market for some food. Others were trying to get the guest chamber ready. In the midst of this preparation, Jesus was seated in the shade of the yard where there were vines climbing over the walls. Mary joins him and listens to some of the stories and teachings.

Martha is in the kitchen working. And she wonders where is Mary - why doesn't she help me with the work. Off she goes to search for her - and she finds her comfortably seated and listening to the words of wisdom. And Martha explains to Jesus, Lord, doest thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone - v. 40. Bid her, suggest, that she come and help me.

At this point, v. 41. Jesus said, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things but one thing is needful and Mary has chosen that good part.

Jesus does not rebuke Martha, for her zeal to have a good supper ready.

I think God blesses all those noisy housekeepers like Martha.

The rooms were being straightened, the dinner was being prepared. Everyone was working to make this a wonderful pleasant occasion. And the younger sister was just listening to Jesus.

You remember later on, the disciples, the apostles became cumbered about with serving tables and that is when they appointed deacons.

Now Martha's work was necessary. And he merely emphasized that one work was better than another.

Every housework, house maid, or housewife, does her work as unto the Lord.
And of course, every Mary must also serve her Lord.

Now a man looking for a good wife will do well to look for one who has some of the qualities of Martha. Martha's housekeeping qualities will wear a long time. They will be much better than a lot of rouge, and enameled fingernails, and permanent waves. The divorce rate would be cut down considerably, if we had more wives that had the knowledge of Martha. She was very practical.

Martha was busy about the home. Now she wasn't out in clubs and organizations, and social affairs. But she was an old-time Christian woman who felt that home ought to take some of her devotion.

Now I read about a man who was in a hurry to get dressed. Now you would think that a 40 year old man would be able to keep up with his clothes. But he says, honey, where are my socks, he called. His wife felt like saying, have you looked in the refrigerator. Now she knew that they were right on the dresser where she had put them. It had been like this ever since they had gotten married. But it was good to feel that she was needed.

Now Martha was the kind of woman who took care of these little details around the home.

And Jesus dropped in here often unexpectedly. And Martha was preparing the meal - and the pots and pans were rattling in the kitchen. She attempted to get a good meal prepared, but Mary was anxious to stay and listen to Jesus talk.

Now I want you to notice that Jesus did not rebuke Martha. Household routine must be maintained. Meals must be prepared, clothes washed, kept clean, and in order. Now these functions are necessary. And Jesus did not condemn

Martha for her love and loyalty, about this. But he did point out to her that she ought not to be over troubled with these things of the dinner. But to think about these other things that are needful also. And that is where he pointed out to Mary. One thing is needful - that good part. And he pointed out that she had chosen this.

Second, the funeral. The next scene I want to point out is this home in the time of sorrow. Lazarus, whom Jesus loved, lay dead and buried. He was on the other side of Jordan at this time. And this had slipped by before Jesus could get there. And finally, as Lazarus was sick, these sisters were taking care of him. They looked after their sick brother. It takes a heap of living to make a home. You plant shrubbery, and you improve things around the house. You fix the porch. You remodel something. But then in the quiet hours of the night you awake by the side of the bed of some loved one who is sick. Until morning light, and you hope that the suffering will be over.

The house has become a home. The very walls of that home are filled with memories. It becomes a place that wherever you are in the world, you can always look back to that and call it "home". Even, perhaps, some of the members are not still there - the mother, the father, the sister. But there is no place like home.

And in the 11th chapter of John is this touching story, and Martha and Mary and Lazarus has died - and been embombed and placed in a grave up on the hill.

And these sisters keep watching that road to the East - watching toward Jericho to see if Jesus and his disciples would pass. Four days passed. And finally Jesus makes a trip and Martha said, Lord, if thou hath been here, my brother had not died. But I know that even now, whatsoever thou would ask of God,

God will give it to thee. What a remarkable faith that it. What a triumphant statement. What a confession to the Lord.

Her faith was great - Jesus merely said, thy brother shall rise again. She said that I know he is going to rise from the resurrection at the last day. Here was a woman who declared her faith, that she would be united again with her brother. And Jesus said, I am the resurrection and the life. And this was a vision of her faith.

Martha went and told Mary - and Mary came and immediately she said the same thing. Lord, if you had been here, my brother would have not died. And tears came in the eyes of our blessed Lord. And at his command the stone was rolled away from the grave. And Lazarus came forth - and the body of the man Lazarus came forth bound with grave clothes.

There is no way to imagine how happy that home at Bethany was that night. Heaven, I think, will be just like that. Just as simple, just as real. A father, there, mother is there, brother is there, sister is there. All of the dear old memories about us.

Third, a banquet. The last scene that these two women appear in is for Christ at Bethany. They are giving a thanksgiving banquet for the resurrection of Lazarus. It says in the home of Simon, the leper. It does not make it clear but it tells us this - that Martha was the one that served and was in full charge. And Lazarus was there -and best of all, Jesus was there. How wonderful to sit beside a man who had been among the dead.

Martha had ordered her vegetables and meat supply from the best market up

in Jerusalem, and she had everything wonderfully prepared.

Now Martha gave her wonderful expression of gratitude, for the celebration of the raising of her brother, Lazarus.

I'll tell you, all the Martha's in the church ought to take comfort in the fact that Jesus acknowledges their service and he accepts their service. Someone has to perform this toil and this service.

Now Mary expresses her gratitude in a different way. She took the costly ointment that had been purchased. Perhaps at the price of her savings, and poured the ointment on Jesus. The pleasant odor. For this, she was rebuked by Judas.

Now this makes us happy that Jesus was here in this house - the last week of his life.

I wonder if you have chosen the one thing that is needful.

Think about when you come to worship. Suppose when the family gets up and comes to church, Junior puts a model airplane or toy in his pocket, and he slips it into a sack and brings it along to church with him.

Suppose Mother is a little late getting the dinner started and she puts a few potatoes and carrots in a bag and slips them in the car and brings them along with her. And suppose the Father has been working on his income tax and he hasn't finished and he puts that in a case and he figures that he'll get around to doing that in Sunday School.

And in church, we sit down and begin to sing. And Junior gets out his plastic

toy and begins to put it together. Mother pulls out her knife and begins to peel potatoes and scrape carrots. And Dad gets ready to figure out his income tax. Now, I am not saying physically this takes place. And Jesus says Martha, Martha, you worry about all these things. There is nothing wrong with making a plastic toy, or filling out your income tax, or getting lunch ready. But these things have a place.

It is like your home. Some women have such good furniture, and they exhaust themselves trying to keep it spotless and clean. And when the children arrive from school, the first yell she lets out is - don't come in here. I've spent all day cleaning up this house. It is good for a woman to have a good reputation about house keeping.

A Negro woman put it - my husband, he makes a living. But I make the living worthwhile.

In business, you may get caught up with an accumulation of things and the children say, well Daddy, you always are busy. He replies, well, I am doing this for you. I am trying to get you a college education. His wife says slow down, you work everyday and every night. Well, he says, I am working for your security. And one of these days I can retire. Well - the first thing he knows, the children are gone. And then he's gone. And he leaves a rich widow to enjoy all he has accumulated.

I think Jesus would say, Martha, Martha, get out of the kitchen.

Even Sunday School Teachers, Deacons, and Church Officers - we get absorbed sometimes in the little tiny things when we ought to be concerned about lost men and women. And how we can reach them for Jesus.

There were 40 men present. The spiritual leaders of the church - the powerhouse of the whole organization that should have been concerned with turning the world upside down for Jesus. They spent two hours talking about how to get rid of the pigeons in the tower.

Now, on this Baptist Women's Day - Jesus said to these women - one thing is needful. She hath chosen the better part. Mary chose that good part - that one needful thing. Have you that one needful thing. Have you chosen the good part in salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Sometimes you read the death of men in newspapers - what they have done in life, the institutions they have founded, books they have written, factories they have built. But what about the one thing needful - did they have that? Saving faith and service for Jesus Christ is the good part.

A prominent man lay dying - a man of wealth. He owned a lot of horses. Acres of land and barns and a big bank account. He faced the wall in the dying hour and he said, "time enough for horses, time enough for parties, time enough for business, but no time for God." The daughters embarrassed by their father said he's out of his mind. He doesn't know what he is saying.

But in a still louder voice, he began to cry for all his friends to hear - and he died that way. Time enough for everything - but no time for God. One thing is needful - one thing more than anything else today is your presence and power of Jesus Christ in your life. Come in - the better part of life - come sit at his feet. Join these women for this glorious experience in your life.