

Martha & Mary: The Gift of Hospitality

Luke 10:38-42

*“Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered.
“You are worried and upset about many
things, but only one thing is needed.”*

Martha & Mary

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha & Mary

- Women's Role in Jesus' culture
- Doing vs. Being – Which is better?
- A Model of Hospitality

Women's Role

- Women in ancient Jewish culture

Women

Inward

Private

Restraint

Concern for Shame

Submission

Protect

Men

Outward

Public

Boldness

Concern for Prestige

Authority

Challenge

Women's Role

- Culturally unexpected details
 - Recognizes and respects Martha's status
 - Relates to women with intimacy and affection
 - Reverses gender role for Mary

Women's Role

Jesus is more respectful, more affectionate, and more empowering of these women than he should be as a well-raised, socially appropriate adult male in 1st century Palestine!

Jesus...

respects,

loves,

and elevates

all persons regardless of social status!

Doing vs. Being

- Which is better?

MARTHA: task-oriented, busy body = BAD

MARY: relationship-oriented, spiritual = GOOD

Oversimplified caricature?

Doing vs. Being

The real question is.....

- Is there balance between being and doing?
- When life becomes stressful or overwhelming, do we remember that he is the one thing we need?
- Do we regularly take time and make space in our busy lives to sit at the feet of Jesus?

A Model of Hospitality

- What is hospitality?
- Hospitality is making our space and our time available for others.
- The Gift of Hospitality involves opening our home to others, and/or making people feel “at home” wherever we are.
- Hospitality has a healing effect on others (root word is hospital), which can include meeting physical, emotional, or spiritual needs.
- Hospitality requires an open posture toward others, trust and optimism in others, and a genuine concern for and desire to connect with others.

A Model of Hospitality

Henri Nouwen says, hospitality “wants to create a friendly emptiness where strangers can enter and discover themselves as created free; free to sing their own songs, speak their own languages...free also to leave and follow their own vocations.

Hospitality is not a subtle invitation to adopt the lifestyle of the host, but the gift of a chance for the guest to find his own (lifestyle)...

Hospitality is not to change people, but to offer them space where change can take place.”

A Model of Hospitality

- Hospitality - the role of the church in the world

Some are sent out into the world to carry the gospel message = called out to be guests.

Others are sent to stay home to live out the gospel message = called on to be hosts.

A Model of Hospitality

- An Example of Hospitality

Martha creates a space where Jesus can enter in and change can take place.

Mary sets aside time during which Jesus can be present and change can unfold.

Both time and space are needed in genuine hospitality.

A Model of Hospitality

- The Bigger Story... We are all guests in this world and Creator God is our Host!
- All of human history is evidence of God's hospitality.
- Our ultimate destiny is God's HOME!
- God's hospitality is a gift freely offered and freely accepted.

Martha & Mary

- The Meaning of the story: An Invitation to receive Jesus' Hospitality
- Jesus is the Host, and Martha is his guest.

Jesus says, "Martha, Martha. This life is stressful and there is much to worry about. So remember who I am. Mary has figured it out. I am The Host who will never leave you."

Martha & Mary

We are invited by Jesus
to enter into his presence
so that we can be changed,
on our journey to his home.

We are called by Jesus to invite others
so that they too can be changed by Jesus
as they choose to make this home their home.

Martha & Mary

■ Conclusion

The respect and compassion that Jesus shows Mary & Martha reminds us to treat people of all status with respect and compassion.

Jesus' response to Martha reminds us that he knows what we need: to be in his presence, so that we can do what he calls us to do!

And Mary and Martha, as exemplary models of Christian hospitality, demonstrate that we can show hospitality to others because of God's hospitality toward us!