

SINGLE ALLIANCE

01/18/09

HOW TO BE MARY IN A MARTHA'S WORLD

I. Introduction

A. Last week we looked at Peter and the story of two fires. This week I want to look at a couple more characters in the Bible and learn from them.

B. Today I want to look at how we can be Mary in a Martha's world. Of course this is a play on words but we can learn from a young woman named Mary how we can experience true joy and freedom in a world lacking both.

C. Both Mary and Martha were believers in Jesus. They both called Him "Lord".

D. We see two types of believers in Mary and Martha. One is works oriented and the other grace oriented.

E. Works oriented believers are focused on what they do for the Lord. Grace oriented believers focus on what the Lord has done for them. One achieves for God, the other receives from God.

G. Some misunderstand grace to mean that you do not do any works. This is not the case. Works that come from a grace oriented believer proceeds from what they have received from the Lord and is done at His direction and by His empowerment.

H. Let's look at these two types of believers pictured for us in Mary and Martha.

II. Dinner Time!

A. [Luke 10:38-42- Wuest Translation]- Jesus comes to dinner!

B. Martha

1. She was distracted- The Greek word means "to be drug around in circles".

2. with MUCH serving- She was cooking a lot of food. She probably had a number of courses planned.

3. She was upset with the Lord because He did not recognize nor was He sufficiently impressed with how hard she was working and or with the grandeur of her preparations. "Lord do you not care?"
4. She expected others to get in line and fulfill her plans- "Tell Mary to help me!"
5. She caught nothing of what Jesus had been saying because of her work.

C. Mary

1. She had sat herself at the Lord's feet- She was at rest and submitted herself to learn from Jesus at His feet.
2. She was listening and hanging on every word Jesus was saying.

D. Jesus

1. He was ministering the Word
2. He gently rebuked Martha for being so worked up about so many things
3. He said few things were necessary and really only one. There is only one main dish necessary to nourish. That is the Word of God.
4. He stood up for Mary and said she had chosen the best portion [dish] and He would not allow it to be taken from her.
5. Jesus' Word was the main dish and Mary partook of her food before anyone else had theirs.

E. Martha represents so many Christians today that get so distracted and too busy to hear what Jesus is saying.

F. Reasons why we get too busy

1. We set up our own set of expectations for ourselves and often they are unrealistic. We endeavor to be everything to everyone and never disappoint anyone. We are big people pleasers.
2. We make up our own plans that look and sound good. Human plans tend to grow and become grandiose to match our egos. God's plans are usually very simple. Our plans must be sustained by our own resources. God will not offer His resources for plans He has not approved of. God sustains His plans with His aid.

3. We get self centered and life becomes all about me, my comfort, my pleasure, my desires.

4. [Luke 8:14]- The Word gets choked out by cares- [misguided priorities], riches- [misguided allegiances], and pleasures- [misguided affections] .

G. Jesus is teaching here in this story that the primary focus of a grace oriented believer is to rest first and hear what He is saying and then arise and do the works which are God directed and inspired by Him. These good works will be **God inspired, God empowered, and God blessed**. They will be works **that last**.

H. Mary took what she received from Jesus and did a lasting good work for the Lord with it.

III. The work of Mary

A. [Mark 14:3-9]

B. Mary came and broke an alabaster box of ointment which was very costly and anointed the Lord's head and feet.

C. Judas and the disciples were not pleased with Mary

D. Mary's receiving from the Lord produced a good and lasting work.

E. Again Jesus stood up for Mary and said

1. Leave her alone- she has done a **GOOD WORK** on me.

2. "She did what she could"- This is a bad and inaccurate translation. The Greek actually says that, "**She is doing what she had previously received**" The word "could" is the Greek word "**pro lambano**" which comes from *pro-* before or in advance of; and *lambano-* to receive. Strong's dictionary brings out that this word was used of someone partaking of a meal before anyone else did.

3. What Mary was doing in anointing Jesus came from what she had previously received from Him sitting at His feet. No doubt Jesus was related that His purpose was to die for us and redeem us. She understood and moved to anoint Jesus for His burial. She understood and believed the Lord more than the disciples that

still did not grasp that Jesus had to die for them. Mary had already dined on Jesus' Word before anyone else did and she took what she received from Jesus and **DID A GOOD WORK** for the Lord.

4. Jesus said that wherever the gospel would be preached what she did would be proclaimed. Her work lasted and is still producing results! It is because she sat, rested, and listened to Jesus. She received first and then worked.

IV. Closing: Mary's lesson

A. Have you been spending time sitting at the Lord's feet lately and hearing from Him? If not, why not?

1. Do you have unrealistic expectations you are trying to fulfill?

2. Do you have plans going that are not God directed, God empowered, or God blessed?

3. Is your life overly complicated?

4. Is self on the throne of your life and cares, riches, or pleasures choking out Jesus's voice?

B. We sit at the Lord's feet and hear from Him when we open up our Bible and spend time in quiet contemplation listening to what He speaks to our hearts. It is sitting at His feet in quiet worship waiting before Him.

C. Prayer