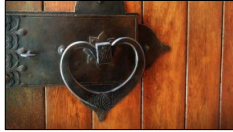


Martha-Martha

Settle Down and Listen Up

December 1, 2024

Today we're focusing on *settling down, listening up, and giving God our undivided attention!*



So tell me: **Was Jesus the guest of honor at your family feast?** I sure hope not! Right?! Cuz **He won't settle for being a guest!** Revelation 3:20 says, *He knocks and we open, but He'll only come in and dine as a permanent resident.* And you're not off the hook if you ate at someone else's house, cuz He sets up His throne in your heart. And not only that, but **He'll only make your heart His home as Lord-Lord**, a.k.a. *Lord of lords*; (Dt 10:17) which means **He's Lord over everything else that commands, demands, or lords over our time, attention, talents, and treasure.** And even then:

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' [lit. Master-Master] will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father [to know Him as friend] ... Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name and in Your name drive out demons and in Your name [even] perform many miracles?' [But] Then I will tell them [who only know Me by name] plainly, 'I never knew you.'" – Matthew 7:21-23 NIV

Serving only gets you so far; because **our Lord of lords demands to know us as best of friends.** Just before the cross, He washed His disciples' feet and said:

"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from My Father [regarding His will and our friendship] I have made known to you." – John 15:15 NIV

Now let's go back, one year earlier, and invite ourselves to *Martha's* – one of Jesus' very best friend's. Passover is near, (Jn 6:4) and the markets are wall-to-wall people preparing for their big feast, when Jesus suddenly shows up at Martha's with His hungry entourage.

But, remind me, **was it Mary or Martha who sat at Jesus feet to listen?** You sure?

Now it happened as they went [Who's this "they"?) that [Jesus] entered a certain village; [called Bethany (Jn 11:1)] and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him [and those with Him] into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who [like Martha] ALSO sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But [on this occasion something happened; and] Martha was distracted with much serving, [so she got Mary to help her; but while she's serving, she notices Mary back sitting and listening] and [upset and distressed by much more than you think] she approached Him [interrupted Him, and scolded Him, publically] and said, "Lord, [Singular – which is only significant because of His response] do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? [Not a question. An accusation. It's kind of fun to watch Jesus, who was fully man, deal with an angry woman's rhetorical question!]

John (11:5) says that “Jesus loved Martha and her sister”. And the way she just cuts Him off and tells Him off doesn’t suggest disrespect, as much as the depth of their friendship] Therefore tell her to help me. [She’s not asking for help; she’s telling for help! I’m surprised it doesn’t say, she took Him by the ear! You ever do that? Instead of asking for His help, you tell Him how to help?] And Jesus answered and said to her, [“How dare you speak to Me in this manner!” No, He didn’t. He said something unexpectedly disarming] “Martha, Martha, [or, Martha of Marthas. Who’s in charge here? Cuz it’ll always be either Lord-Lord or Me-Me! But who’s in control? Not Martha!] you are worried and troubled about many things. – Luke 10:38-41 NKJ



There are only seven people in the Bible who are called by God by their name-name. And they all turn out to serve a major role in His plans. And **it always serves as a wakeup call to stop, drop, and start trusting Him as Lord of Lords.**



[For instance] Abraham took the knife to slay [Isaac] his son. But the Angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, [in the nick of time] “Abraham! Abraham!” “Here I am,” he replied.– Genesis 22:10-11 NIV



And the Lord said that the amazing faith of this Abraham-of-Abrahams would serve to save not only his son, but the whole world through His seed.



And God spoke to [Isaac’s son] Israel in a vision at night [when he was filled with fear about moving his eleven son’s tribes out of the Promised Land, into Egypt, at the request of his long lost son, Joseph] and said, “Jacob! Jacob!” [Jacob of Jacobs] “Here I am,” he replied. – Genesis 46:2 NIV



And the Lord calmed his fears by reassuring Him that **He’s always with those who serve Him as their Lord of lords**, no matter where they are, or what troubles or trials or worries their faith requires them to face. And:



God called to [Moses] from within the bush, “Moses! Moses!” And Moses [who’d fled for his life from Egypt] said, “Here I am.” – Exodus 3:4 NIV

And the Lord tells him that He’s heard the cries of suffering back in Egypt, and so He’s sending this Moses of Moseses to serve as their savior. And Moses more or less says, “Pretty sure You got the wrong guy. I’m a horrible public speaker.” (Ex 4:10) **How would you feel if the Lord called you to be His ambassador** – which He has – but as His Ernie of Ernies, or Cheryl of Cheryls? Well, the last recorded double-name call, is Paul, (Acts 9:4) who says he was saved as a pattern to all who are going to believe. (1 Tim 1:16) So, **it’s time to take a stand as the _____ of _____s.** Insert your name.

The last double call in the OT is young Samuel, who jumps up and leaves the first three times.

[And] [The Lord came] calling as at the other times, [but this time, said] “Samuel! Samuel!” Then Samuel [sat up and] said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.” – 1 Samuel 3:10 NIV

For, the Lord was doing this to demonstrate the importance of **listening to His voice in order to be led by His Spirit.** And each of these rare, double-name callings were well known by the Jews.

Which *brings* us to: “Martha, Martha, you are *worried* and *troubled* about *many things*.” Did you *think* this was *just* about *servicing a meal*? **What are these “many things” that have her so “worried and troubled” that she reacts in such an emotionally charged way?** Let’s weave *Matthew* (in purple) and *Mark* (in blue) and *Luke* (in green) and *find out!* A few weeks earlier:

[Jesus] called the *twelve* to Himself, and began to send them out two by two, [in *Judea*] and appointed *seventy* others *also*, and sent *them* two by two [in *Galilee*] ... Then the *seventy returned* [to Jesus in Jerusalem; and] ... *Now* it happened as *they went* that ... *Martha welcomed Him* [and those with Him] into her house. [But that’s only where the *chaos begins*, because King] *Herod* said, “John [the Baptist] I have [just] *beheaded*, but *who is this ...?*” So [Herod] *sought to see* [Jesus]. [To *kill Him!* (Lk 13:31) So it’s only a matter of time before *Herod’s goons* find Him at Martha’s. But He *had* to stay *put*, because] *Then* the [twelve] apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all that *they had done*. *Then* [John the Baptist’s] disciples ... *buried* [his body], and *went and told Jesus*. [And] *When Jesus heard it*, He said to [the twelve], “Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.” For *there were many coming and going*, [and *panicking* and *warning*. Which is why Jesus says, “Martha, Martha, you are *worried* and *troubled* about *many things*.”] and [sorry Martha, but] *they did not even have time to eat*. So He took [the twelve] [to the Sea of Galilee] and *departed from there by boat* to a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. – Mt 14:12-13; Mk 6:7, 30; Lk 10:1, 17; 9:9; 10:38 NKJ

And *this is where* and *when* 5,012 men will *learn* what *Martha*, and *all Israel*, will later *learn*.

He said to them, “You give [the crowd] something to *eat*.” And they said, “We have no more than *five loaves* and *two fish*” ... [for] about *five thousand* men [and their *families*]. Then He said ... “*Make them sit down*”... and [they] *made them all sit down*. Then He took the *five loaves* and the *two fish* ... *blessed* and *broke* them, and *gave* them to the disciples to *set* before the *multitude*. So they *all ate* and were *filled* – Luke 9:13-17 NKJ

Cuz just *one* thing is *needed* when *He’s* in *charge*: ***sit down, quiet down, calm down, and trust.***



[So] “Come to Me, [and *trust* in Me] *all* you who are *weary* and *burdened*, and *I will give you rest*. [How?] Take *My yoke* [a *wooden collar* that *joins two beasts of burden*] upon you [i.e. *lean on Me*] and *learn from Me*, for I am *gentle* and *humble in heart*, and [this is how] *you will find rest for your souls*. For *My yoke is easy* and *My burden is light*.” [Because, between us *two*, I’ll be *doing the heavy lifting*] – Matthew 11:28-30 NIV

Trying to control a world that runs on chaos is exhausting. But, like:

“*Martha, Martha*, [it’s *easy* to get *distracted* when] you are *worried* and *troubled* about *many things*. [That *He brought on her!* Every *rattled* group *rushing* in could’ve been King *Herod’s goons!*] *But one thing is needed*, [above every other *competing, distracting, troubling* thing] and *Mary has chosen* that *good part*, [to *cast her anxieties on Christ*] which will *not* be taken away from *her*.” [As it *had* from *Martha*] – Luke 10:38-42 NKJ

Worry is such a common part of life, we forget it’s a sin against Him. But our *worst worries*, and most *tragic troubles*, often *keep* us from *choosing* the *good, less common part*, of *life*. Because the *one* thing that’s *needed* is to: ***settle down and listen up to the Lord of Lords.***

Because, **the peace that passes understanding won't be taken away.** But, *instead of allowing Jesus to take her burden, Martha takes the wheel and drives herself to distraction and frustration,* and then *doubles down and takes control, and spirals out of it!* Truth is, He wasn't even *there to eat,* but to *meet the Twelve and make a quick getaway, after calming everyone's fears and worries and troubles, by reassuring them that God's still in control.* But **Martha isn't listening, because she's too busy interrupting,** while He's *offering the very thing she needs most.*

So, we *all* need to *learn to discern when sitting and listening best serves His plans and our created purpose – and when we're being called to serve others on His behalf.* Ecclesiastes (3:1) says **there's a time to sit and time to get off your seat.** I'm *paraphrasing.* But, we are called to:

Be *doers* of the *Word,* and not *hearers only,* deceiving yourselves. – James 1:22 NKJ

There's a time to be a doer and a time to be a hearer. And when in doubt, go to Him for help. Because, **we should only sit and listen till it's time to rise and serve.** Which *brings us to Jesus' next recorded encounter with Mary and Martha, several months later, when He returns just after their brother Lazarus has died. And just before Jesus raises him from the dead!*

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met Him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have *died.* But [Listen to *this faith!*] even now I know that whatever You ask from God, God will give You." ... [And He said] "I am the *resurrection* and the *life.* ... Do you *believe* this?" [And she said] "Yes, Lord; [I was just *distracted*] I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God," ... [and Jesus said, "Where's Mary?" And] she went and called her sister Mary, saying in *private,* ["Get off your seat!"] "The *Teacher* is here and is *calling* for you." And [the way we can *imagine she said it*] when [Mary] *heard* it, she *rose quickly* and went to Him. ... [And] *fell at His feet,* saying to Him, [*just like Martha*] "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have *died.*" [But, *unlike Martha, said nothing else.* No words of *faith or trust* between them. She just *sat and cried; and yet*] ... When Jesus saw her *weeping ... He was deeply moved ... and greatly troubled.* – John 11:32-33 ESV

[So] Cast *all your anxiety on Him,* because *He cares for you.* – 1 Peter 5:7 NRS

Our *worries and troubles* from the *madness of life* will always *compete to keep us from drawing close to Christ ... unless we take the time, to take a break from the chaos, and take a seat at His feet, and take a breath, and give it a rest, and really connect with the Friend of sinners; through prayer or silence or Scripture or confession or conversation with a fellow believer. And learn to discern the difference between serving the urgent versus serving the eternal.* Because, at the end of the day, that's why *Mary, by sitting, was serving when she wasn't – and Martha wasn't when she was.* So **maybe it's time to settle down and listen up.**

Isaiah offers a *Scripture* to help us *pray our worries away,* writing:

You will *keep in perfect peace* those whose *minds are steadfast,* [who offer the Lord their *undivided attention*] because they *trust in You.* – Isaiah 26:3 NIV

The most control we'll ever know is the control we give to Him.

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.