

## **Luke 10:38-42: Mary, Martha and Priorities**

### **05-13-18 PM**

Jesus' Interactions with the people around Him in life are a fascinating study. It is clear that Jesus was a man with close personal friends. Many are more prominent (mentioned more often) than some of the Apostles. An excellent example of this are Mary, Martha and Lazarus of Bethany.

Mary, Martha and Lazarus are often assumed to be a wealthy family that supported Jesus financially in His work. We read about Mary anointing Jesus before His death in John 11:2. We see that Martha made the good confession in John 11:27, after explaining a clear understanding of the resurrection in verse 24. We also see in John 11 that Lazarus was a dear friend to all disciples. Simply stated, "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus" (John 11:5).

In Luke 10:38-42 we are brought to their home and we see a rather typical home scene. Martha is working in preparing for all of the visitors (Martha's name means *mistress* of the house). She is doing the important work of Hospitality for Jesus (Hebrews 13:2) and of supervision of the home (Titus 2:5). So to be clear, she is not doing something wrong. Yet when she points out that Mary is at Jesus feet rather than helping her ("at his feet" is the term used to describe when someone is teaching and the position of the students, as seen in Acts 22:3), Jesus' response almost sounds as though she is being chastised herself. What was she doing wrong?

This was not an issue of wrongdoing; the problem was that she did not have the right priority.

In regards to Spiritual Priorities we are told some things are more important than others (Matthew 23:23-24, Matthew 12:5-7). We are told that if we confuse priorities, we can become ineffective or worse (Matthew 23:16-21). In other words, it is easy to become focused on details but miss the main event.

Let us consider some examples. Our attendance with the church is a command of God (Hebrews 10:26). We often try to dress appropriately. But which is the greater priority: Dressing nice vs. being right minded (James 2:2-4). Which is the priority: being on time vs. being present? Which is the priority: what I receive vs. what I give (Acts 20:35)? Of course all of these things are important, but let us not confuse which ones are more important.

Another area of confusion is the priorities of the church. What is the purpose of the church? We see works like edification, evangelism, or worship. But is there another greater priority? What about church purity? We ought to consider Matthew 23:15 and the evangelism of the Pharisees; without a priority of first examining themselves, their efforts caused more harm than good. This brings us to the important work of withstanding religious error; if we are focused on exposing error but not self-evaluation, Revelation 2:2-5 condemns us. The priority is first our own purity.

In the home these things also apply. Raising our children can be a mixed priority of looking obedient vs. being obedient (Matthew 21:28-31), or listening to you vs. listening to God. At work, this same issue is manifested with making a living vs. leading a home (Mark 8:36-37).

Ultimately, the point is this: we need to first prioritize receiving the things we need to live in Christ. Jesus told Martha "only one thing is needed"; at that moment, what counted most was the teachings of Jesus. We need to make sure our priorities are correct (not in order; there is only ONE thing). That one thing? Get to heaven! Help get your loved ones to heaven!