

Martha and Mary

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Date: 31 August 2024

Preacher: Rev Murdo Macleod, Nairn

[0 : 0 0] Good afternoon, brothers, sisters and friends, a joy to worship the Lord again together. A special welcome to our brother, Reverend MacLeod, from Nairn. We thank him and Maggie for their company.

We ask the Lord to bless them. Also a special welcome to yourselves for visiting with us today. You know the Lord's blessing with us. A few intimations just to go over the services to remind us, God willing, we'll be at prayer meeting at 6 p.m. tonight.

Again, if you haven't come before, come for a while, please do attend. By all accounts, it's an encouraging time. A short time of prayer together, so 6 p.m. tonight. And nice and early tomorrow morning, if you're up and awake at 8 a.m., our early morning prayer meeting in the hall.

Again, a short time of prayer. I'll be myself doing that, but very short. It's a time of fellowship, a time of prayer. So it's 8 a.m. tomorrow morning. Then 11.30 for our communion service.

And then 6.30, our evening service. And God willing, a time of fellowship afterwards in the hall. So 6 p.m. tonight. And tomorrow, 8 a.m. if you're up and awake.

[1 : 1 3] Then 11.30 and 6.30, and then God willing, a fellowship. Passing now over. A reminder, just the session is, of course, open. The session is open and is glad to and would be overjoyed to meet with any who wish to profess Jesus publicly as their friend and as their saviour.

Just a reminder, yes, the session is open just now and we'll meet after the service. But the session is open all the time. I've been in Mance all day, all evening.

Come and knock on the door. Come walk in, whatever you want. I'll be there waiting for you. Come and say hello. Come and make that public step forward. It's for you to do it. Pass it over now to Reverend MacLeod.

Well, it is a privilege always to be asked to take communion services anywhere.

But you know what I mean when I say it's a particular privilege to be here in the ancestral homeland and among our own people. So thank you so much for your kind and warm welcome.

[2 : 3 0] We look forward to God's blessing on us this weekend. Let's worship God. We sing to his praise in Psalm 100. Psalm 100, traditional version.

All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. Him serve with mirth. His praise forth tell. Come ye before him and rejoice. We can stand if we're able.

We'll sing to God's praise. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

Him serve with mirth. His praise forth tell. Come ye before him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God in thee. You are with a courage.

[3 : 45] When■ Messi get back with téléphone. Soulipschant. If you are also with canción. From the vulnerável voice. We as inquisitive voice. When everything is done is right, During sing to the Lord with listening to the Lord.cross Furthermore, Él■ is coming to the Lord who can hear you. We speak internally immediately.

And the tacit of God's ■■■■■■ is their Christmas. How Jesuscaadan is coming to that fatheroke. A church by Jesusca■■■ may the language or essenper. What is a lack of blanket, car unnerable desire.

So do not seek to the meditation. We share in efforts to be■. is sheende and is Oh It is simply so to do For why the Lord our God is good His mercy is forever sure

Is true at all times firmly stoo and shall from age to age end true Let's come before the Lord in prayer. Let's pray.

Our gracious God and Saviour we humble ourselves, we bow down before you the living God this morning as we seek to come doing what the psalmist has encouraged us to do. Remembering that the Lord our God is good and that his mercy endures always. And that your truth has stood for all time and shall endure from age to age into eternity the praises of God will resound in the highest realms imaginable.

[6 : 26] Lord God we pray that you would enable us to come today entering your courts with praise in our hearts with joy in our lips. Lord we pray make us to be a worshipping people. A people who rejoice in the living God.

our God resurrected. Our God gloriously risen and ascended. Our God who reigns for us even now.

Who intercedes for us even now. The one who is yet coming again and will come again for his people. We bow in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray that all that we seek to do at this time would be to his praise and that he would be uppermost in our minds.

We thank you for the tremendous privilege it is once again to come to our communion season. To remember the Lord Jesus Christ in the way that he has commanded us to remember him.

Do this in remembrance of me. And we pray that he would be at the forefront of our thoughts. We pray that he would be our all in all. Lord.

[7 : 48] That we would love him. With our whole heart and soul and mind and strength. That you would give us love for one another. That we love our neighbour as ourselves. Lord we come and we give thanks for the privilege that we have been spared to see another communion time.

We give thanks that we can remember in the symbols that will be before us. The broken bread. The poured out wine. Christ's broken body. Of his shed blood.

Why? Because he did it for us. And we can never get our heads round the depths that that involves. The enormity of what it should mean for the Son of God to come into this world.

To come in obscurity. To come in anonymity. To come and be so humbled. To be born in poverty. To live life in this world with all its sin.

And all its horror. Lord God. For the Lord Jesus. Who loved us so much. That he was willing to do this for us. Loved his Father so much to do this for us.

[9 : 02] To take delight all his life in doing the Father's will. Lord we cannot grasp adequately the love of the Father in sending the Son. We cannot grasp adequately the love of the Son in his faithfulness to his Father.

We cannot imagine why he should give himself for people like us. And yet your word tells us these things are true.

And we praise and bless you. That they are true. And we bless you that we can remember them afresh. As we come into your presence at this time. And as we seek to gather.

And to remind ourselves in fellowship with one another again. Around the table of the Lord. We give thanks for everyone who will be at that table.

We give thanks for those there for the first time. And bless you for the faith and courage given. Knowing all the obstacles that are so often in our way. So often on the lips of others.

[10 : 03] So often in our own imagination. Our own hearts. But Lord we give thanks for your servant who has been given grace to come and profess Christ at this time.

For the first time. We give thanks for those who have been there many a time. We give thanks for those who over the years have borne faithful witness to Christ. Christ. And we give thanks for the the congregation that is here.

We give thanks for their witness to Christ over decades and longer. Lord we bless you. That you have your people here. We pray for any maybe completely unknown to ourselves.

Any who are at the table for the last time. Lord till we taste it new with you. And drinking wine with you. In the kingdom of heaven. Lord we know that this is our future.

That this is what we have promised. That we will yet, if we are your people, we will gather at the marriage supper of the Lamb. These things this weekend are but a shadow of what is to come.

[11 : 07] And we praise and bless you for the hope you have given us. For the promises you have given us in Christ. We give thanks that all these things will come to pass for you have promised.

We pray for your people here. We pray that they would be encouraged. We pray they would be strengthened. We pray for any who are still wrestling with whether they ought to come and profess Christ.

Lord give them grace. Give them faith. Give them courage that they may do so. And not to be filled afterwards with regret. We pray that you would strengthen your people.

We pray that you would remember all your people here. We give thanks for every encouragement they are enjoying in the Lord. We give thanks for all that you're doing in this place and in this congregation. Lord we long to see even greater things.

We long to see better things. We long to see the things that some of our people saw in the past. And we long to see greater than these. We give thanks for the heritage that we have here.

[12 : 05] We give thanks for the testimony of your people. We give thanks Lord God for the faithful prayers and devotion and dedication of your people. Asking that you would use them in this village, in this town, in this island, wherever they live and move and work.

Lord we pray that they would be blessed as they go in and out among people. That their testimony and their lives would be fragrant. And that they themselves would be found a living witness for the truth of God as it is in Jesus Christ.

May your blessing be upon us even now. Open your word to us. Give us ears to hear what you have to say to us. Give us grace that we might be found truly worshipping and praising even this day.

And take away our every sin we ask for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Amen. We can sing again to God's praise this time in Psalm 147.

Sing Psalm's version. Page 192. Page 192 in our Psalm book. Psalm 147 from the beginning.

[13 : 15] O praise the Lord. How good it is to sing him songs of praise. How pleasant to give thanks to him for all his gracious ways. We can sing verses 1 to 7 of Psalm 147.

And they sing Psalms to God's praise. For all his gracious words. O praise the Lord. How good it is to sing him songs of praise. How pleasant to give thanks to him for all his grace. God's praise the Lord.

How good it is to sing him songs of praise. How good it is to sing him songs of praise.

How pleasant to give thanks to him for all his gracious ways.

The Lord builds up Jerusalem. And he is alone.

[14 : 22] He reaches out to Israel. To bring the exiles home.

He heals his people's broken heart. Restores the bruised and wind.

He sets the number of the stars. And calls them each by name.

Great is our Lord and great in power. His wisdom is profound.

The Lord sustains the meek. But casts the wicked to the ground.

[15 : 48] Sing to the Lord with thankfulness. With joy his praise proclaim.

And with the music of the heart. Give glory to his name.

Amen. Turn with me now, please, to the Gospel of Luke. In chapter 10.

Luke's Gospel, chapter 10. We can read from verse 21.

Luke 10 and verse 21. Then turning to the disciples, he said privately, Blessed are the eyes that see what you see.

[17 : 29] But I tell you that many prophets and kings desired to see what you see and did not see it, and to hear what you hear and did not hear it. And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

He said to him, What is written in the law? How do you read it? And he answered, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbour as yourself.

And he said to him, You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live. But he, desiring to justify himself, said to Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

Jesus replied, A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.

Now by chance a priest was going down that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

[18 : 38] But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.

Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back.

Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers? He said, The one who showed him mercy. And Jesus said to him, You go and do likewise.

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered the village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.

But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me. But the Lord answered her, Martha, Martha, You are anxious and troubled about many things.

[19 : 47] But one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her. Amen. May the Lord bless to us that reading of his own holy word.

And to his name be the praise and the glory. We can sing again to his praise this time in Psalm 89. Traditional version of Psalm 89. Find this on page 345 in our Psalm books.

It's page 345. Psalm 89. And at verse 13. Thou hast an arm that's full of power. Thy hand is great in might.

And thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height. We can sing verses 13 to 18 to God's praise. And thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height. And thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height.

And thy right hand exceeding thee, exalted in height.

[21 : 06] Justice, the sanctum of thy throne, are made at dwelling place.

Mercy, a company that you shall go before thy face.

O give thee blessed people, the joyful Son that knows.

In thy best all thy face, O Lord, the effort all shall go.

In thy name shall all the day rejoice exceedingly.

[22 : 23] And in thy righteousness shall be, exalted be on high.

Because the glory of their strength doth only stand in thee.

And in thy favour shall our own, and proud exalted be.

For God is our defence, and he to us, God's safety bring.

The Holy One of Israel is our almighty King.

[23 : 51] Turn with me again, please, to the Gospel of Luke, in chapter 10. Luke's Gospel, chapter 10. We can read again at verse 38.

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.

And so on. As I said already, it's always a great privilege to come to a communion season. To be able to sit and remember, once again, and focus in that special way on the Lord and his death, as he's commanded us to do, to focus on his love, on his grace, on his devotion to his Father.

Because, of course, that's what this is all about. It's obeying the Father's will. But it's so much more than that as well. It's his love and his grace and his faithfulness to us, an undeserving and unworthy people.

And we never get our heads round the enormity of what Christ has done for us. We never know the depth of words like his love, his grace, his devotion to us.

[25 : 24] But that's right at the heart of what we're doing here this weekend. And it's also a good time, it's a great opportunity to reflect on our devotion to him.

And to question ourselves as to our own devotion to him and our love for him. And I was really thrilled that that was one of the points that Hugh Ferrier made last night.

That was his final point, wasn't it? He spoke about things like the difficulties of Calvary. Calvary, the, I'm not even remembering the phrases he spoke, the darkness.

There was several D's. But one of them, the final one, he focused, didn't he, on the devotion of the women folk that were so faithful and stood there at the cross, even when so many others, his closest friends, you might say, had fled and deserted him.

And he wanted us to focus and think about the devotion of these women. And what a lovely way of beginning a communion weekend and asking ourselves about our own devotion to Christ.

[26 : 29] Aren't we supposed to do that? Let a man examine himself, let a woman examine herself. Come and to take and to eat of that bread and drink of that wine.

We know that he loves us and he gave himself for us. And what we seek to do is to express our love and devotion to him.

And what a wonderful thing it is when God's people can come together and express their common devotion to our Lord and Saviour. Do we love him?

That's a question that we might well ask ourselves. Do we love him? Well, he himself gives us a test. Do we love him? If you love me, obey my commandments.

If you love me, obey my commandments. Am I walking in obedience? Yes, I'm a sinner. But am I seeking to obey his commandments, to walk in the ways of righteousness? Do I love him enough to keep his commandments, including this commandment?

[27 : 31] Do this in remembrance of me. It is a commandment. It's not a suggestion. It's not a piece of good advice. It's a commandment. If we love the Lord Jesus, do this in remembrance of me.

He has commanded. And maybe we want to think about our own love and devotion for Christ as we come together this weekend. And we can do so initially, at least.

I want that to be the theme of our weekend, devotion to Jesus. We'll look at the same thing tomorrow, God willing, in a different passage. But with that same underlying theme, our devotion to Jesus, thinking about his devotion to us and to his Father.

And I want us to think about it today, thinking about these two people, Martha and Mary, these two sisters from Bethany. We know there's a brother, Lazarus.

He's not specifically mentioned in this passage, but he's mentioned elsewhere. And as the Lord will enable us, we'll come to him as well in due course. But thinking about this particular passage today, I want us to think two basic headings.

[28 : 39] Wrong priorities and right priorities. Simple way of looking at things. Wrong priorities, as exemplified here by Martha. Right priorities, as exemplified here by Mary.

So thinking first of all then about wrong priorities. And this will be a longer section of our thoughts this morning than the right priorities.

Which is not to say that wrong priorities are more important than right priorities. But I think the balance of this passage would take us in that direction.

So thinking first of all about the wrong priorities. We're reading here about this woman, Martha, who opens her home. And we're told it's her house. So perhaps she's the eldest.

Maybe she's a widow. We don't know anything really very much about their circumstances. But she opens her home. They're obviously a popular family.

[29 : 37] Family. Again, we pick that up from other passages where they're mentioned. They're a respected family. They're clearly a friendly family. They're a very open family. It's a very open home.

And the doors are open wide on this particular occasion. Because I don't know how many people are here. More importantly, we know that Jesus loves them.

We're specifically told that in John chapter 11. That John loves, Jesus loves Lazarus and his sister Mary and Martha. Jesus loves them.

That's the most important thing we can probably say about Martha and Mary. And it just makes you wonder what kind of people they were. Perhaps in a sense that tells us massive amounts about the kind of people they were.

And they open their home to Jesus. And Jesus comes and receives of their hospitality. Somebody has pointed out, I think it was Tim Chester, points out how much food Jesus loves.

[30 : 40] As you go through the Gospel of Luke, he says Jesus seems to be either coming from a meal or having a meal or going to a meal. He says he loves food.

And it comes up over and over again. You can think of the feeding of the 5,000. You can think of him dining in the Pharisee's house. You can think of him feasting with Matthew and his friends. You can think of him going to Zacchaeus' house for a meal.

This whole thing at Martha and Mary's house. The Lord's Supper is centred around food. He tells parables about food. Jesus loves food.

And he enjoys meals. It would appear with Martha and Mary. And we too can enjoy feasting with Jesus this weekend as we come to participate in that special feast that he has ordained for us.

The Lord's Supper. He has made that, the very thing that we are to remember him by, a sitting down together to eat and to drink together. Together. These things are not accidents.

[31 : 43] The Lord has ordained it that way. Martha is clearly hospitable and loving and caring and friendly.

She's helpful. She has a servant spirit. And all these things are great. All these things are wonderful qualities. They're qualities that you and I should be asking, am I cultivating these qualities in my own life?

These are very spiritual qualities. She's definitely not lazy. Anybody opening their home to this group of men. Could be as many as 13, couldn't it?

Jesus and his 12 disciples are there. As they went on their way, they entered the village and they came to this home. So she's definitely not lazy. And we're reading here that she is busy about much serving.

And she seems to be doing it all on her own. Which, of course, is the very thing that's starting to bug her and to distress her as things are going on.

[32 : 47] She's got a lot on. She's got a lot in for dinner. And she's got a lot on. And it's all starting to build up in her. Nothing wrong with being busy for the Lord.

That's what she is. She's being busy in the Lord's service. And she's wonderful. She's selfless. She's caring. She's generous. She's a sharing person.

And it's lovely to think of that kind of spirit. You know, there are many, many different ministries and many different ways in which we can serve the Lord.

This is obviously, you know, if you talk about ministry, you tend to think of, don't you, of the pulpit and so on. And it requires, you know, to come up here, Donald and myself and every other minister, we've had to go through a measure of training.

We have to collect a measure of expertise as we go along. We go to the college to learn. We keep topping it up within service training, with courses that we have to go on.

[33 : 51] And in some ways, it's a very specialized form of ministry. And yet at the same time, of course, it's only one form of ministry. And every single Christian has their own ministry that they can be busy about.

And they don't require going to college. And they don't require specialist training. They require a heart for the Lord and for his work. Maybe some ministries are within reach of all of us, depending on age, health, ability, circumstances.

But one thing that's reasonably universal is hospitality, isn't it? It's not difficult to be hospitable in the Lord's service.

You don't have to go to Highland Theological College to learn how to give a cup of tea to somebody in the name of the Lord. How to feed somebody in the name of the Lord.

How to be friendly to somebody. How to give a cup of coffee, a glass of water, says the Lord Jesus, a bed for the night. You don't need specialist training for those things. I'm sure Martha and Mary didn't have it.

[35 : 02] But here they are ministering faithfully, serving the Lord. And isn't it encouraging for each and every one of us that in our own way, according to our gifts, our abilities, our calling, our resources, as God has prospered us, we're able to serve the Lord.

And that's a great thing too, to remind ourselves of at a communion time. How can I best serve the Lord? How can I serve his people? How can I serve his church? Good question to ask of ourselves.

Doesn't need to be lavish. Doesn't need to be extravagant. Doesn't need to be over the top. Possibly. That's Martha's mistake. On this occasion, she's burdened.

We read here, distracted. In verse 40. With much serving. It sounds like she's gone to a lot of effort. And it's really, it's building up the pressure and the stress that she feels herself under.

Needn't be like that in our service for the Lord. A cup of cold water, he says, given in his name, is a wonderful thing. And getting that balance, it's so important, isn't it?

[36 : 07] And clearly Martha goes too far here. And she overbalances in the wrong direction. She seems to want to do something grand for Jesus.

Instead of simply listening and learning about what he has to say. And what he would have had her learn. She wants to do something grand, something less.

It would appear it would have done just as well. They're not looking for something lavish. Something extravagant. Something over the top. And Mary, on this occasion, has got the balance right.

The food. Of course food's important. We all need food. Food's important. It was important on this occasion. But it's only food, isn't it? The word of God, to be fed on the word of God.

That's so much more important. And that's what Mary has deduced on this occasion. And where she sets her priorities. The Sermon on the Mount reminds us not to obsess about food.

[37 : 09] Not to obsess about clothes. The Lord knows that you have need of all these things. Trust the Lord to provide. Martha, it might be said, wants to feed Jesus.

And Mary wants to be fed by Jesus. And she gets the commendation from the Lord that she's the one who has chosen the right priorities. But we'll come to Mary in due course.

It seems, though, that she feels that enough preparation has already been done. Whatever has been done up to this point, that was enough. I can go now and I can sit at Jesus' feet and I can listen and learn what he's got to teach me.

I can savour something of his teaching. I can enjoy his love and his presence and his fellowship. And she comes and leaves.

I don't know the layout of the house. Leaves the kitchen. And comes into the place where Jesus is speaking. And many need to learn the balance.

[38 : 13] Probably all of us need to learn the balance. Between being busy in the service of Christ. And the discipline of being quiet and still in his presence.

And we can be so busy. We all fall into this trap. We can be so busy running around doing the work of the church. That we don't take the time to be still.

Know that I am God. The time of prayer. The time of Bible reading. The time of devotion. And saving that. We can also fall into the same trap. The opposite trap, can't we?

Vice versa. We can be almost like monks and nuns. Hold up with our Bibles in prayer. When there's all kinds of things that we should be doing. Are being neglected and being ignored.

And that's why we need that Holy Spirit balance in all things. Pray the Lord would give us wisdom. To have that balance right in all things. And to remember that our relationship with Jesus.

[39 : 16] Is far more important than any activity. That we ever do for him. I think Martha's needing to learn that lesson on this occasion. The Lord of the work.

We might say. Comes before the work of the Lord. What a wonderful thing to be able to come apart. On a Saturday morning. With all that needs to be done. And all the things that could be done.

Elsewhere to come together. And to think about Christ. But if that was the way we spent all our Saturdays. And all our days. The balance would have tipped wouldn't it? And we need to be doing the things that he's called us to do.

In our homes. In our lives. In our community. And Martha. Although no doubt. Her motives. Are right. And they're good. And she just wants to serve.

She ends up here being rebuked. By Jesus. Doesn't she? She ends up here being rebuked. She comes to him with her protest. Lord. Do you not care? My sister has left me to serve alone.

[40 : 18] Tell her then to help me. But the Lord answers her. And he answers her. He says her name twice. You can almost picture him.

Martha. Martha. You're too distracted. You're too busy. With all these things. She ends up being rebuked.

By Jesus. That's quite a thought isn't it? This good woman. And she ends up being rebuked. By Jesus. Both for her attitude to Mary. And even.

Her attitude to him. To the Lord himself. You know. She's kind of lost. Perspective. Somewhere. At this point. She's troubled. About things that are needless.

While she's neglecting. Things that are needful. And we can all fall into that trap as well. Can't we? It's good to care. But it's a sin. To be so anxious.

[41 : 16] The way she clearly is. At this point. And I don't know. Maybe again. A bit of sanctified imagination. But. I'm picturing it. In terms of the kind of homes.

We live in ourselves. Kitchen. Maybe off to the side. The living room. Where the people are gathered. And from. From the living room. In there. As Martha's getting more and more agitated.

You're hearing the banging. And the crashing. And the humping. And thumping. Of. As she mooks her way around the kitchen. Have I done enough? Is there going to be enough food?

Is it going to be hot enough? Is it going to be tasty enough? What if they don't like it? Look at all these dishes piling up. You can imagine. It might not be. Specifically like that. But. You can imagine something.

Like that. She's getting herself all worked up. About something. She really shouldn't be getting herself worked up. About at all. Is there an element of sibling rivalry? Mary. Through there.

[42 : 11] If she's the. If Martha's the oldest. Maybe she feels. Mary. Has always got off. Lightly. Not older sisters. Sometimes. Think. That way. It's not fair.

I get left to do everything. She doesn't do her part. It's not fair. She always gets off with it. Why do I have to do all this? You can imagine. That seems to be the sort of. Attitude.

That's going on here. She should be encouraging Mary. To listen to Jesus. Not to. Not to leave him. And get into the kitchen. And help. With all that's got to be done. She should be encouraging Mary.

And saying. That's brilliant Mary. I love that you're able to sit. At Jesus feet. I think I'll do that myself. But that's not. Where she's coming from. At this time. And it's so easy.

To criticise. Which is what she's doing. She's critical of Mary. And she's coming to Jesus. With that complaint. So easy. Especially if we feel.

[43 : 06] Somebody's more spiritual than us. She doesn't need to be doing that. There's time later on. For doing that. She can sit and listen. At any time she wants. But right now. She should be in here. Helping me.

That's her attitude. Isn't it? Because Mary obviously feels. That her work is already done. And that they've already done. Sufficient. For this time.

And that the best thing to do now. Is to go. And to be where Jesus is. And to sit. And to listen. At his feet. To what he's got. To say. Good people.

Both of them. Good people. Both of them. But. So easy. To fall out. Even on something so simple. So mundane. So everyday. For Martha to.

To develop. What seems to be. Almost a bitter spirit. Toward Mary. Believers fall out. On the silliest things. Don't they? Sometimes big things.

[44 : 03] Emerge from things. That only started as tiny. How we should be. Where. Of such things. Creeping in. That something that. Just annoys.

Over time. Becomes something that. Festers and festers. And grows. And leads to a real bad spirit. Even between. Faithful. Believing people. But Jesus.

Praises. Mary's. Position. And obviously feels. She's done the right thing. Whatever she's done already. Is enough. Now it's time. To. To come in.

And to sit. And simply enjoy. The fellowship with Christ. We need to beware. Stress. Or overwork. Or being so tired. That we get grumpy. And we get grouchy.

About all these things. And get touchy. About things. At the end of the day. Sometimes don't even really matter. And if Martha. Had taken a step back. And thought about things.

[44 : 57] Perhaps. She would have. Behaved differently. On this occasion. Maybe. I wonder. What might have happened. If she'd also just sat. At Jesus feet.

Alongside her sister. We wouldn't have. This tension. That arose. And doesn't that. Remind us too. That. Sometimes. These.

Little things. Bug us. And annoy us. Just because. We've not spent enough time. In devotion. Have we skipped on our prayers? Have we skipped on our bible reading? Have we neglected fellowship?

Have we neglected the prayer meeting? Is it then? That these. Little things. Little foxes. That spoil the vine. Is it then? That these things happen? Certainly seems to be something like that.

That's going on. With Mary. At this time. What's even more amazing. Than Martha being annoyed. With Mary. Is that she seems to be annoyed. With Jesus himself.

[45 : 54] You would think. Surely not. But that's the way it comes over. Isn't it? Don't you care? She's accusing him. You're accusing the Lord Jesus. Of not caring. You're indifferent.

To my situation. Almost saying. You're just as bad. You're letting her off. Tell her to help me. Tell her. To help me.

She's telling him. Telling the Lord Jesus. What she wants him. To say. Ordering him. About. What a mess.

We get in. When devotions. Are missed. When we're not. Walking with the Lord. And we don't have our head. In the right place. And our spirit. In the right place. What a mess. We can get into. She's arguing.

With Jesus. And almost. Rebuking. And getting annoyed. With Jesus. Tell her. Tell her. What she should be doing. Again.

[46 : 53] That relationship. With him. Is so much more important. Than activity. For him. The Lord. Of the work. More important. Than the work. Of the Lord. I hope that's something.

That we can all. Remember this weekend. We want to be busy. About the work. Of the Lord. We ought to be busy. About the work. Of the Lord. We're commanded. To be busy. About the work. Of the Lord. But not at the neglect.

Of the Lord. Of the work. He. Is our focus. He. Is our love. He. Is the one. Who loved us. And gave himself. For us. He comes first. He must.

Increase. We must. Decrease. Martha's not a bad woman. Of course she's not. She's not a bad woman. But on this occasion. Mary has chosen. Better. Mary's got her priorities.

Right. Martha's got her. Priorities. Wrong. Today. Martha. Has got the balance. Wrong. But as we go on. And we look. And we see more. About this woman.

[47 : 48] We'll see that there's so much more to her. Than this. And perhaps it's because maybe she learns. From this. Maybe she looks back with shame. And embarrassment. At the day she was rebuking Jesus.

And accusing him of not caring for her. And ordering him about. And telling him. What he should be saying. And what he should be doing. Maybe we all need to learn. And learn again.

There's a time to be quiet. There's a time to be still. There's a time to sit. And to learn. And to worship. As well as a time. To be active. In his service.

There's a balance. And we need the balance. Both for a. A spiritual. Practicality. And a practical. Spirituality. May God give us the grace.

To get that. Balance. Right. I think on this occasion. Martha. Fails to do so. Her priorities. Are all wrong. But on the other hand. We find Mary.

[48 : 46] And her priorities. On this occasion. Are correct. Martha seems to feel that Mary. Has been a poor hostess. Jesus knows that Mary. Has made absolutely.

The right choice here. And he says that to her. One thing is necessary. Verse 42. Saying to Martha. Mary has chosen. The good portion. And it will not be taken.

Away. From her. Pray for wisdom. Pray for grace. That you choose. The right thing. That you serve Christ. In the way that Christ. Is looking to be served.

And not. According to our own. Flawed. Wisdom. Mary wants to know. What Jesus has to say. She wants to learn. She wants to discover.

Better understand God. Better understand Jesus. Better understand the word. She wants to know these things. How to understand. The world around her. How to.

- [49 : 38] How to relate. To that world. She knows. That he is the answers. To all the big questions. All the important questions. All the things she needs to know. She has to learn from him.
- Other things. Can wait. This is an opportunity. Not to be missed. That's clearly the way she sees it. Even the food. That they are here for.
- It can wait. Other things can wait. In the meantime. She has to. She learns these things. Man cannot live by bread alone. Food is not the be all.
- We need it. Our heavenly father knows we need it. But no meal. Is more important to us. Than feasting. And feeding on God's word. And that's where Mary.
- Scores on this occasion. Isn't it? She realises that. She is giving Jesus her time. She is giving Jesus her heart. She is giving Jesus her devotion. As he is devoted to her.
- [50 : 35] She is devoted to him. Martha and others. May criticise her. But here she is. Being defended. By the Lord Jesus himself. And he is backing her.
- And he is saying. She has done the right thing. She has chosen the right priorities. Leave her alone. He will say that again. As we will see. At one stage tomorrow. Martha's service.
- On this occasion. Is temporal. It's dealing with the temporal needs. Of the men that are in her house. Mary's focused. On the eternal. At this time.
- She wants to learn. The things that will feed her soul. The things. That will build her up. The things that will increase. Her devotion to him. Laying up treasure in heaven. That won't be taken away.
- From her. She has chosen. Well. And she has chosen wisely. She has chosen. The good portion. Which I say. It doesn't mean. That we are to be monks and nuns. And we should closet ourselves away.
- [51 : 31] In a cave. Or a monastery. Or something. And live. Some kind of. Pseudo. Spiritual life. Life is meant to be lived. In the real world. The Lord Jesus himself. That is where he lived.
- That is where he operated. That is where he worked. That is who he interacted with. He never got the balance wrong. Always. The first thing. His father. And the word of the father.
- We don't want to become hermits. We don't want to become nuns. We want to serve the Lord. In the way. In the place. Where he's put us. To become too Mary-ish.
- We might say. Would be as bad in its own way. As becoming too Martha-ish. Pray the Lord. Give you that balance. That you serve him. In a way that is.
- Adequate. A way that is. Right. A way that is spiritual. A way. That has the right. Problem. Priorities. Because what we see of Mary. Elsewhere.
- [52 : 28] Is that she is a well-balanced believer. She is practical. As well as spiritual. We will see more of her love. We will see more of. Her devotion. Her priority.
- Here. Is taking the opportunity. She has. While it can still be had. While it can still be had. Who knows. How many times. How few more times.
- There might be. That Jesus will come. To this house. I guess she doesn't know. But. She's taken. The opportunity. While she's got it. To increase her love.
- And devotion. For her. For him. It reminds us too. Doesn't it. That it's not scandalous. And I'm sure. We don't think it is.
- It's not scandalous. For the woman. To be sitting. In the living room. Fellowshiping. With the men. As it were. While. Somebody would be saying.
- [53 : 22] She should be working away. In the kitchen. There's no place. For that sexism. In the kingdom. Is there? There's no place. For that sexism. In the kingdom. The men and the women. Both have their role.

In the kitchen. The men and the women. Both have their role. In the sitting room. There's a balance. To be had. And there's a balance. Between sitting at Jesus feet. And learning. And there's a time. To find time. To be working for him. And serving him. In practical ways. And we all have that same need. To prioritise.

That same need. To find the balance. Service. Devotion. Bible. Prayer. Fellowship. Worship.

The Lord's Supper. Taking time out. As often as you do this. Do it in remembrance of me. Taking time out. From time to time. To be. At the communion table.

[54 : 16] Our church calendar. Is such that. It compels us. To do this. From time to time. Do it. What a blessing it is. For us to do it. What a blessing to be.

At the Lord's table. What a blessing. To have a communion time. It's not always easy. To get the balance. Sometimes. We will. Air. The way Martha did.

Sometimes. We will. Fall into the trap. Of being too spiritual. When we should be more practical. Sometimes we will fall into the trap. Of being too practical. When we should be more spiritual. How we all need to sit.

At Jesus feet. Metaphorically. We can't do it. The way Mary did. But we can sit. With our Bibles. We can sit. In church. We can be at the prayer meeting. We can fellowship.

With the Lord's people. We can feed our souls. In whatever way. There's so many resources. Available to us. In this day and age. And it's those.

[55 : 14] That love him. Who come. To the Lord's table. Listen to. And to remember his love. For us. And to. To foreshadow. That. Eternal. Lord's table.

That God's people. Hope to be at. And hope to be at. And we will be. By his grace. We'll be at forever. Why would we want to be at it forever?

If we're not. Happy to be at it. In this world. It's not a burden. It's a privilege. It's a privilege. And so thankful. And so encouraged. For the congregation.

Every time. There's new members. Every church is encouraged. By new members. How we praise God. For new members. How we give thanks. For those. Who have been given the grace.

To come. And to. Say. I'm one of his people too. I'm not just going to be. Serving in the background. I want to sit at Jesus feet. I want to know him better.

[56 : 09] I want to love him. I want people to know. That I love him. I want. For all my flaws. For all my failings. I want to be part. Of his people. I want.

Folk to know. That I love the Lord Jesus. And that he loves me. And that. That. I. Will take the privilege.

Of being. At his table. But I know that. For. For many. Culturally. It's become a big step. We get. Put off.

By so much. We get put off. By things. That should never put us off. And it's. Become such a big. Obstacle. For so many people. Fears within. Fears without.

Came across. A story. Recently. I'll share it with you. Just as we finish. Just to. To think. About these things. Comes out of.

[57 : 03] FP. Circles. And it was. A. In. Bit of. Sanctified. Imagination. Again. Imagine. That night. In Egypt. The night.

When the. The destroying angel. Is to pass over. And you go to a house. And you go in. And the people there. They're so worried. They're so worried.

And say. What are you worried about? I said. Well have you not heard? I said. Tonight. The. The destroying angel. Is to pass over. And. Unless. The. The blood of the lamb.

Is. Painted. Round the. The lintels of the door. We're doomed. I said. Well have you done that? Yes. Well then. What are you worried about?

Well. I don't know. Well we haven't done it right. What if I haven't. Put enough. Blood. You know. What if he doesn't notice? And you go to the next house.

[57 : 58] And you get into that house. And the people there. They're rejoicing. And you say. Why are you rejoicing? I said. Have you not heard? The destroying angel. Is coming tonight. And he's going to.

He's going to. Pass over any house. That's got paint. Dogged around. The door posts. And the lintels of the door. I said. Does that not worry you? Yeah. Well yes. But. We've been told.

That if we do that. The angel will pass over. And we'll be safe inside. And we've done it. And we'll be safe inside. And sure enough. That night.

The destroying angel. Comes. And he sees the house. With the worried people inside. And he sees the house. With the rejoicing people inside. And he sees the blood. Around the door posts.

Of both houses. And he passes over. And it doesn't matter. Whether they were worried. Or whether they were rejoicing. He passes over. Because he sees the blood. And that's what counts.

[58 : 54] And those that are inside. Whether they're of a worried disposition. Whether they're of a happy disposition. They're all covered. By the blood. And that should encourage us. As we think about.

Even a communion weekend. Because we can come. With our worries. We can let these worries. Dissuade us. From coming to the Lord's table. But if we're covered.

By the blood of the lamb. If Jesus has died. For us. If Jesus has died for you. Then your place. Is at the Lord's table. Your worries. Don't matter.

The things that trouble you. They don't matter. As long. As the blood is there. As long as Jesus. Is your Lord and saviour. This is your place. At the Lord's table.

May he give grace. To any. Who are still swithering. Still wondering. Still hesitating. It's not about you. It's not even about your feelings. It's about him.

[59 : 50] And what he's done. What he did on Calvary. That's what we're coming. To remember. That's. His devotion to us. The expression of our devotion to him. Is how we respond.

To his commandment. Do this. Do this. In remembrance of me. Let's pray. Amen. Our gracious God. How we give thanks.

That. Jesus has died. And that. Is what matters. It is his. Sacrifice. That is acceptable to you. We get so. Caught up in ourselves. In our own thoughts.

Our own emotions. Our own feelings. Our own failings. When what matters. Is that. The blood of the lamb. Has been spilt. And that we are saved. By the precious blood.

Of Christ. If we confess our sins. He is faithful and just. To forgive our sins. And to cleanse us. From all unrighteousness. How we give thanks for Jesus. How we give thanks for his love.

[60 : 45] His devotion. To us. We pray. That our hearts. May be filled with love. And devotion. For him too. And we ask everything. In Jesus name. And for his sake. Amen.

Our closing praise. Is from Psalm 27. Psalm 27. Sing Psalm's version.

On page 32. Page 32. Psalm 27. Verse 4. One thing I'll plead. Before the Lord. And this I'll seek. Always.

That I may come. Within God's house. And dwell there. All my days. That on the beauty. Of the Lord. I constantly may gaze. And in his house. May seek. To know. Direction. In his ways.

Verses 4 to 8. Of Psalm 27. Page 32. And we can stand. And sing. To God's praise. One thing. One thing I pray.

[61 : 41] Before the Lord. And this I seek. Always. That I may come.

Within God's house. And dwell there. And dwell there. And dwell there. All my days. In my days.

On the beauty. I constantly may gaze. And in his heart. May seek. To know. Direction.

In his ways. In his ways. And in his house. May seek. To know.

In his ways. For in his dwelling. He will keep me safe. In his ways. In his ways. For in his dwelling.

[62 : 42] He will keep me safe. In troubled days.

Within his tent. He will shelter me. And walk.

And walk me raise. My head. My head. Will then be. Lifted high.

Above my enemies. And in his tent. And in his tent.

I stand there by. With shouts of joy and peace.

[63 : 42] Lord. Hear me. When I call. To you. Be merciful.

And speak. Come seek. My face. You told my heart.

You face. Lord. I will see. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. The love of God. And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Be with you. Amen.

Amen. Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you. Amen.