

**Luke 10:38-42** <sup>38</sup> Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. <sup>40</sup> But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. <sup>41</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: <sup>42</sup> But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

**John 11:1-4,17-21,28-29,38-40,43-44** <sup>1</sup> Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. <sup>2</sup> (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) <sup>3</sup> Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. <sup>4</sup> When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. ... <sup>17</sup> Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already. <sup>18</sup> Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: <sup>19</sup> And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. <sup>20</sup> Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. <sup>21</sup> Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. ... <sup>28</sup> And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. <sup>29</sup> As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. ... <sup>38</sup> Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. <sup>39</sup> Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. <sup>40</sup> Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? ... <sup>43</sup> And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. <sup>44</sup> And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

**Matthew 26:6-7,13** <sup>6</sup> Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, <sup>7</sup> There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head, as he sat at meat. ... <sup>13</sup> Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

**Mark 14:3-9** <sup>3</sup> And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. ... <sup>9</sup> Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

**John 12:1-3,9-11** <sup>1</sup> Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. <sup>3</sup> Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. ... <sup>9</sup> Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup> But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; <sup>11</sup> Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

- Bethany was a small village situated on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, 15 furlongs (about 1.5 miles) from Jerusalem. Its name meant "House of Unripe Figs" or "House of Misery" (because of its lonely location facing away from the city). Today it is called Lazariyeh, "the place of Lazarus."
- Bethany represents UNFULFILLED POTENTIAL ("unripe") – a MISERABLE PLACE to live in!
- In Bethany lived Lazarus and his two unmarried (or widowed) sisters, Mary and Martha. They were close friends of Jesus and their home was a place where He obviously felt comfortable.
- There are three events in Scripture which take place in Bethany involving this family:
  - Luke 10 – a private supper for Jesus hosted by Mary and Martha in their home
  - John 11 – the resurrection of Lazarus at a gravesite near the town
  - Matthew 26, Mark 14, John 12 – a public supper for Jesus held in Bethany at the home of Simon the Leper, at which Lazarus was present, Martha served, and Mary anointed Jesus
- IN THESE THREE PEOPLE JESUS LOVED IS A PICTURE OF THE CHURCH HE LOVES!

### **MARTHA, THE WORKER**

- Mary and Martha are often contrasted as though each believer must make a choice between being a worker like Martha or a worshipper like Mary. The truth is we must be BALANCED!
- Charles Wesley's hymn: "Faithful to my Lord's commands, I still would choose the better part; Serve with careful Martha's hands, And loving Mary's heart."
- Martha's problem was that she received Jesus into her home and then NEGLECTED Him as she WORKED for Him! Martha was "cumbered" or "distracted" with serving (literally, "dragging all around"); her love for Jesus had gone to do one thing, then saw another thing that would be good, and another, and another. But in doing the GOOD, she had neglected the BEST!
- The woman who wanted to WELCOME Jesus ended up REBUKING Him out of her frustration!
- However, it looks like Martha eventually got her priorities straightened out, for at the public supper at Simon the Leper's house she served once again – a much larger crowd, and without complaint!
- Just because Jesus reproved her for being troubled with MUCH SERVING, Martha did not QUIT SERVING! She did not leave one extreme to move to another, but she became BALANCED.
- It is necessary for every WORKER to balance their WORK with WORSHIP!

## **MARY, THE WORSHIPPER**

- Every time we see Mary in Scripture she is at Jesus' feet – for the Word, for Weeping, for Worship.
- At the house of Simon the Leper, she took a pound of ointment of spikenard and anointed Jesus. Spikenard was very costly because it took 500,000 crushed nards, the spike of a fragrant East Indian plant, to make just one pound. It cost approximately one year's wages. It was poured on Jesus only to refresh (minister to) Him – an extravagant act of worship (a waste to some people!).
- Whenever you make time for Jesus, there will ALWAYS be someone trying to pull you away, even to REBUKE you for spending too much TIME or EFFORT in your worship (i.e. Martha, Judas).
- In Luke 10, Mary must have already done her SHARE of the work, or else Jesus would have defended Martha. (Perhaps the reason we have so many modern-day Marthas is that we have a few out-of-balance Marys around who leave all of the work for others!)
- Just as it is possible to take "working" to the extreme, it is also possible to take "worshipping" to the extreme. ("You can't worship too much" – BUT – "You can't work for Him too much" either!)
- Worship that never works is not real worship! The FULNESS of FAITH is FAITHFULNESS!
- When Lazarus died, it was Martha that broke the tradition of "shivah" (seven days of mourning) to leave the house in order to meet Jesus. She had to go back to bring Mary to meet Jesus.
- Worshippers (prayer warriors, etc.) are more susceptible than workers to paralyzing depression.
- It is necessary for every WORSHIPPER to balance their WORSHIP with WORK!

## **LAZARUS, THE LIFELESS**

- In the SAME HOUSEHOLD as these two women was a man who had known Jesus, BUT DIED OF A SICKNESS. He now lay lifeless in a tomb, just as many so-called "Christians" do today.
- The distinction between the world and "dead Christianity/Pentecostalism" is evaporating rapidly:
  - 19% of Christians watched MTV this week (24% of non-Christians)
  - 27% of Christians have been divorced (23% of non-Christians)
  - 70% of Christians subscribe to cable television (70% of non-Christians)
  - 15% of Christians had a session with a counselor this year (15% of non-Christians)
  - 7% of Christians took medication for depression this year (8% of non-Christians)
  - 76% of Christians watched a PG-13 or R-rated movie this quarter (87% of non-Christians)
  - 9% of Christians watched an X-rated movie this quarter (16% of non-Christians)
- **The heartfelt desire of MARY and MARTHA must be to get LAZARUS out of the GRAVE!**
- He is BOUND by the graveclothes of the sin in which he has involved himself, and has already started to decay in corruption. He has been dead four days, beyond hope of human intervention!
- Neither Mary or Martha really believed that Lazarus would rise: "If thou hadst been here ..." (This is probably all they said during the four days, as they each greeted Jesus with the same statement!)
- Jesus said: "I AM the resurrection and the life!" He moved the promise out of the future to TODAY!
- Jesus gives TWO COMMANDS to those around the tomb:
  - **TAKE YE AWAY THE STONE!** The dead man could not do it, so those wanting to see him resurrected had to break Talmudic tradition and risk defilement to see the miracle.
  - **LOOSE HIM, AND LET HIM GO!** When people are set free from the death of sin, they are often still clothed in their rags of the past. Others must help them to be loosed in Christ.
- The resurrection of Lazarus was the most notable miracle done by Jesus. He had raised others who had recently died, but Lazarus' resurrection could not be denied by the skeptics. Lazarus became such a powerful witness that many came to know Jesus!
- Imagine the scene at the supper in John 12, where Jesus sits between the resurrected Lazarus and the miraculously healed Simon the Leper – TWO TROPHIES OF HIS GRACE!
- There are many who have been ACQUAINTED with Jesus, but they are still DEAD and entangled in the graveclothes of sin. Their transformation will impact the church and the community!
- IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE JESUS TO THE TOMB AND LET A MIRACLE HAPPEN!
- Modern-day Mary, it is time to put "legs on your prayers" – real worshippers also work!
- Modern-day Martha, it is time to set aside your busyness and take some time in His presence!
- Sleeping Lazarus, it is time to heed the call of the Master and walk out of your tomb. Like Lazarus, you will have to put forth the effort to walk out, but it will be well worth it just to be unbound!
- **The cry of Jesus is still "Come forth!"** Come forth out of sin, come forth into My presence!