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## MARY AND MARTHA

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### Part 46 of Luke's Gospel: Investigating the Man Who Is God

Pastor Mark Driscoll | Luke 10:38-42 | September 19, 2010

*Luke 10:38–42*

<sup>38</sup> Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. <sup>39</sup> And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. <sup>40</sup> 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." <sup>41</sup> But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, <sup>42</sup> but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."

### INTRODUCTION

Father God, I pray for us as a people, as a church. God, I pray that as we study your Word that we would have the heart of Mary who sat at the Lord Jesus' feet, that we'd be humble, submissive, teachable, and available. God, for those of us who have Martha proclivities, I pray we wouldn't check our phone. I pray we wouldn't be working on our to-do list. I pray we wouldn't be ruminating over the fact that our friend or spouse didn't take the shortest route to church today, so we're very frustrated with them because we wasted some time and we didn't get the best parking spot. God, let it all go, may we let it all go. May we examine Mary and Martha. May we have Mary's heart as we sit at your feet to concentrate for a bit in Jesus' name. Amen.

All right, Mary and Martha. Are you ready to go? We get to study two fantastic women today. So all of you women, it's a special one for you. There you go. All right, here we go, Luke 10:38–42, "Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha—" Stewart "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, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.'"

### SIX OBSERVATIONS

Here's the story of Mary and Martha. Let me unpack for you six initial observations and then we'll dig and delve and dive more deeply into the story. Number one, Jesus had foes, fans, and friends. If you are someone who leads in ministry or business, or you're a musician or an athlete, whatever it might be, you will have foes, people who choose not to like you. You will have friends and you will have fans. The fans like you, the foes don't. The thing that is similar between fans and foes? They choose you. Friends you choose. So that's a special, unique relationship. There were many who had chosen to be Jesus' foes. There were many who had chosen to be Jesus' fans. There were only a few that Jesus had chosen to be friends.

Jesus had friends. You and I need friends. We get to choose those friends, and he chooses Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. This is a family comprised of two sisters and a brother. We see them in relationship with Jesus through the gospels. He stays at their house, he's friends with them, he loves them, he cares for them, they care for him. These are close friends. Isn't it amazing that Jesus hand-selected these people to be his friends? Who are your friends?

Number two, second general observation, they were friends who ministered to Jesus. Isn't it amazing that Jesus ministers to a multitude? Well, who ministers to Jesus? Mary and Martha. They feed him, house him. We see that Jesus is traveling quite a bit. He's often homeless, doesn't know where he's going to sleep or eat. Mary and Martha, along with Lazarus, they open up their home and they minister to Jesus. Those who are in leadership pour themselves out and it is really helpful if there are a few friends who pour into them. This is how it works.

So if your friend is a community group leader, your friend is a Redemption Group leader, your friend is a deacon, your friend is an elder, your friend is a pastor, your friend's a leader in another church, or your friend's a leader in business, be asking yourself—maybe even it's a spouse or a child or a parent that you know, and you're in community and friendship with. How can you serve them so that they can more effectively serve others?

Now, we don't know for sure how this worked, but perhaps at their house they had a guest room for Jesus. I can't tell you how nice it is to have friends who get hospitality. Now, Jesus was traveling on foot a few-month journey from the region of Galilee, ultimately to Jerusalem, where he would be crucified. He travels far less than first class. He's definitely not coach. He's walking. All right? Now I could tell you, even just flying, when you show up, you're tired, you're exhausted, you're hungry, and everybody is ready to take the life out of you. That's how it works. They're all rested up and ready to go. They've had a few cups of coffee. They took a nap. They're ready for you. All right?

So when Jesus pulls into a town, the crowd swarms him. Everybody needs, wants, demands something. He's like a rung bell. He's tired, he's hungry, he's thirsty. He needs a quiet place to be. Mary and Martha know that. So you kinda get the picture. They've got a guest room. "Here you go, Jesus. Comfy bed, clean linens. There's a flower on the table, maybe a couple of things to read. Here's a nice meal. Take a nap, pray, get some rest." What a gift that is. What a gift that is. They understand that Jesus needs to be ministered to so that then he could minister to others. And they're his friends.

Number three, the male Jesus, who was single, had female friends. Mary and Martha were friends of his. And they're like sisters to him. Jesus has female friends. And see, this is exceedingly important in our day, particularly at our church where maybe half of Mars Hill is single and unmarried. The majority of those at the Ballard or the Downtown Campus, the closer you get to the urban core, the majority are single. Other campuses, they tend to have a lot of married couples, so sometimes married couples outnumber singles, but in a church like ours where there are so many singles, the relationships between the men and the women can get very confused because in our culture most relationships among those who are single and of the opposite sex gravitate towards sin. It becomes emotionally inappropriate, physically inappropriate. Things are not as they ought be. It's because the category that our world has is that a man and a woman are to have a physical, sexual relationship.

In the Bible, another category is given that is a familial, friendly relationship. So the Bible says, for example, that gentlemen, we should treat the ladies as what? Sisters. With holiness and reverence and respect and propriety. That's what it says. So you can enjoy your sister, and have a friendship with your sister and there's nothing romantic or sexual or inappropriate of any sort or kind. Of course, we need to guard our hearts and we need to be careful and not gravitate toward emotional affair or impropriety, but it is possible, categorically, to be a man and a woman who have a friendship in Christ that is not sinful and wicked.

The Bible says this using the language that God is our Father, that Jesus is our big brother, that he dies and rises for our sin, that he gives us the Holy Spirit, that he adopts us into the family of God, the church, and therein the guys are like brothers and the gals are like sisters. That's all Bible language.

And I didn't know this until I was traveling a few years ago through Australia and I met with a professor, I think he's a Ph.D., and he was lecturing for years at Cambridge. And his specialization is cultural context of the New Testament. Brilliant guy, loves Jesus, was super helpful. And he had me into his home, very gracious and generous, and he taught me some stuff I had never heard and it was really enjoyable. One thing he said was that in the Roman Empire in the days of Jesus and in the days of the New Testament era, it was actually illegal to call someone "brother," "sister," "mother," "father," who was not a biological relative because that was family name, and, as a result, inheritance and property rights were tied to the family name. So you can't say, "That's my brother," or, "That's my sister," because that upsets the entire social order.

And so when the Bible tells us that we're brothers and sisters and that God has created a new family over which he is Father, it is radically altering and upending the entire civic structure of what was, to that day, the largest, most powerful nation in the history of the earth. It's because, through Jesus, our relationships are so radically altered that we need new language to contain them and it is the language of family. And Jesus here demonstrates this in his friendship with Mary and Martha. He's demonstrating that he is like a big brother to them and they're like little sisters to him. And it's a good precedent and paradigm for all of us in relationship with the opposite sex.

Number four, Jesus disciplined women for ministry. To sit at someone's feet was an official position. In that day, you were not accepted to a school. You were accepted by a teacher. So you didn't apply to Harvard. You applied to your rabbi. And if you applied to your rabbi and they examined and investigated you, then you would be accepted and you were given the honorable position of sitting at their feet while they lectured and instructed. And so your commitment was more to a teacher, a professor, a rabbi, than it was to an institution or an organization. And lots of people would want to sit at Jesus' feet, but only a few were allowed to, and Mary was among them. That's why we see with the Apostle Paul, in Acts 22 when he's reflecting back on his former life, before he met Jesus as savior he says that he was formerly trained by, quote, "sitting at the feet of the rabbi Gamaliel." That's his articulation of his academic pedigree and instruction.

So when we see Mary sitting at Jesus' feet, that means she has been selected as one of his honored students to be a disciple of his and to receive formal ministry training from none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Some have wrongly maligned the position of Mars Hill to say that we don't believe in women in ministry. That's not true at all. No one can read the Bible and not see that women, from beginning to end, are involved in ministry and should be involved in ministry, should be theologically trained, encouraged, developed to use the gifts that God gives them to introduce others to Jesus and to help those who know him to grow in love with him. All women who belong to Jesus should be prepared for ministry because they're all in ministry to varying degrees and ways according to their gifts and calling.

Now, Jesus doesn't have any women among the twelve apostles, just like the New Testament church doesn't have any women among the office of elder, and we follow that same precedent and pattern at Mars Hill, but that in no way denigrates, disregards, dishonors, disrespects the women. We see it here. And this was a radical thing. Imagine going to a very traditional, religiously oriented, eastern nation two thousand years ago where women were not regarded, necessarily, as equal to men. They were not present in the instruction among men. And you walk in to Jesus' instruction and there are men and women sitting together, both getting trained and developed for formal ministry. This is radical. This is revolutionary. And this is the gift that was given to Mary.

Number five, siblings in general, but sisters in particular, are just different. Again, six initial observations. How many of you have a sibling who is different than you? Okay? Slight chuckle. How many of you ladies have a sister who's different than you? Here's Mary, Martha. Martha is the firstborn, she's the older, she's the driver, to-do list. She's the gal who comes home from school, checks the chores chart, puts her backpack away, starts chopping stuff for dinner. She has it all nailed down. Mary? She's more like a butterfly. Wherever the wind's blowin', that's where she's goin'.

We had this conversation in my house. My oldest daughter, Ashley, is a lot like Martha. My younger daughter, Alexie, is a lot like Mary. We had this

conversation at dinner and we had it again today over lunch. And they were just cracking up. They walked into my office after service and Ashley looks at Alexie and says, “Hi, Mary!” And Alexie looks at Ashley and says, “Hi, Martha!” And they just both burst into laughter because it’s amazing how different they are.

Number six, the church is a family and, like all families, the brothers and sisters who are different than us annoy us. Amen? Some of you are like, “Man, I’m going to church and I’m in community group, but it’s not working. They’re annoying me.” Oh, yes it is. That’s a family. We annoy one another with our differences. And that’s what happens with Mary and Martha. Martha is annoyed by Mary because Mary is different than Martha. And church is just a big family with a lot of different kinds of kids who have a proclivity and propensity to annoy one another.

## ARE YOU MARY OR MARTHA?

So we’ll unpack this now and we’ll look at Mary and Martha. We’re gonna try to get you into a category. Now I’m gonna sit down like Mary. Okay. We’re gonna deal with Mary first. Some of you are like Mary, some of you are like Martha, okay? And you’re gonna need to pick a team. Who are you?

For those who are like Mary, Mary’s more contemplative. For those of you who are like Mary, you will gravitate toward the contemplative disciplines, silence, solitude, prayer, fasting, journaling. For those of you who are more like Martha, active. You’re gonna do things. You’re a driver and a doer. You’re gonna gravitate toward those spiritual disciplines that are not contemplative but active: preaching, teaching, serving, healing, administrating, fighting for justice, getting things done.

Now, Mary is more Word based. She sits at the feet of Jesus, “Teach me the Bible. Instruct me. I want to grow in my knowledge of the Word.” Martha’s work based. Do something, get up, make something happen.

Mary is a be-bee and Martha is a do-bee. I took this—I did an interview with a theologian, R.C. Sproul. Great, really fun guy even though he’s a Pittsburgh Steeler fan. His wife was there with him. She’s really cute. They’ve known each other since they were little kids. They were literally running around the elementary school and bumped into each other and have been together ever since and now they’re grandparents. And he explained it this way, he said, “Well, one of us is a do-bee and the other is a be-bee.” And I thought it was cute, so I quote R.C. Sproul on that.

Now Mary’s a be-bee. It’s all about being, being with Jesus, being teachable, being humble, being present, getting her time with Jesus, getting her connection with Jesus. It’s about being. For Martha, it’s doing. Gotta do the dishes, do the laundry, you gotta do the chores, do the task. We’d say that Mary is Type B, Martha’s Type A.

Mary is worried about, to quote Brother Lawrence, “The presence of God.” Being in the presence of Jesus, growing in love with Jesus, listening to Jesus, being taught by Jesus, enjoying the presence of Jesus. She’s in the living room. Now, Martha’s in the kitchen. What she’s working on is not enjoying the presence of God, but preparing presents for God. “Hey Jesus, I have a clean bed. Hey Jesus, I made dinner. Hey Jesus, I made a cake for you. I have a lot of presents for you. I don’t enjoy the presence of you, I’m creating presents for you.”

Mary worries a lot about the relationship. “Did I get my time with Jesus? Did I sit at his feet? Did I listen? Did I learn? Was I humble? Was I teachable? How’s my relationship with Jesus?” Martha’s more worried about her responsibilities. She’s the gal with the never-ending checklist of things to do.

Now, how many of you gals, earnestly and honestly, you would be freaked out, like Martha, if you lived in a small village and, sort of unannounced, you heard Jesus is in town along with a whole lot of people, maybe eighty or a hundred of ‘em, and he needs a place to stay and they need something to eat? And you realize that probably is going to be your house. How many of you gals would freak out? Short notice, you would say, “Jesus can’t come over. I haven’t had a shower, I’m in sweats, we don’t have anything to eat, the house is not clean. There’s no Costco here, you know? I can’t just go pick up wontons, you know? This is very complicated, you know? A hundred people, you know? How are we gonna pull off dessert?” All of a sudden, she’s doing *Dinner: Impossible*. Right? This is a lot to ask of a gal, and all of a sudden she’s going through her cupboards, “I don’t have enough plates. I don’t have enough soup spoons. I don’t have enough napkins. Oh, it’s Jesus. I can’t give him food poisoning. If I kill him, what happens to the universe?” I mean, this is a lot of pressure. All right? And you don’t have a lot of extra food. This is a simple, rural village. Ahh! So she’s all worried about her responsibilities.

Mary’s all about a full heart. “Jesus, teach me, pray for me, love me, serve me, encourage me, help me, fill my heart.” Martha’s about a full schedule. “We could do this, then we could do that, and at 10:07 we’re gonna chop cucumbers and at 10:11 we’re gonna start making flan.” I mean, she’s just got this all figured out.

For those of you who are like Martha, you cannot sit down. This is how you can tell if you’re like Martha, right? You’re the person, you go to sit down, you’re like, “Oh, wait a minute. That picture’s not even. Okay, now I’ll sit down. Hi. Oh, wait. There’s dust on that, dang it. Okay, let me dust that. Okay, I’m gonna come sit down. Oh, I forgot to put milk on the grocery list. Okay, let me go write that down.” Come back, “All right, well, I’ll tell you what, we’ll just watch TV. Oh my gosh, there’s fingerprints all over it.” And you can’t, you can’t, you can’t sit down. You’re more like a jack-in-the-box. Right? I mean, you’re just—you can’t stop. You can’t stop. That’s Martha.

Now, let me ask you this. How many of you are Martha? Marthas in the house? Marys? Marys? How many of you are annoyed with one another? Okay? You can put your hands down, but if you’re married to someone who’s—like, if you’re a Mary and you’re married to a Martha, they’re annoyed with you a lot. Amen? They may even be annoyed with you right now ‘cause maybe Mary drove and Martha’s in the passenger seat like, “This is not the shortest route to church. We’re not going to get there on time. There’s never any parking at Mars Hill. You’re gonna make us late.” You walk in

frustrated, Martha. And meanwhile, Mary's just like, "We should have probably prayed or something, I don't know, like maybe we could have sang worship songs on the way to church." Right?

So here's what we're gonna do. Some of you will say, "Don't stereotype me." Okay, fine. Stereotype yourself. You received a nametag on the way in, you're like, "Did the Baptists take us over? Did we get ambushed? How come we have a nametag?" You have to write on your nametag who you are, Mary or Martha, okay? Mary or Martha. And if you're a guy, you could write Marv or Marty if that's very difficult for you, but okay, write it down. Who are you? Mary or Martha? Who are you? Write it down, put your nametag on. All right.

And then I'll—who do you think I am? Martha! Why do you think I'm in charge today, yelling at all of you? If I was Mary, I'd come down and hug you. That's not gonna happen. All right, so here I am. And this is gonna look awesome on YouTube, "Hi, my name is Martha." And you're like, "Wow, she's had a hard life, that one." *[Congregation laughing]* All right?

So put your nametag on. How many Marys? Okay, okay. How many Marthas? Some of you say, "I don't know which I am." Well then you're Mary. *[Congregation laughing]* All right? Martha knows. Amen? All right. We're gonna look at Mary and Martha a little more. It's kinda fun, isn't it? It's good. All right.

## THE GOOD PORTION IS JESUS

So we're gonna look at Mary. Now, first we're gonna look at Mary. For those of you that wrote down Mary, this is for you. This is what the Scriptures say here about Mary. Luke 10:39, "Mary . . . sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching." Here's what the Marys like. Marys need time in the Bible. They need silence and solitude and prayer. They need to go to church. They need to go to community group. They need to go to Redemption Group. They need to be with God's people and they need to sit at Jesus' feet. That's Mary. She wants to sit with her brothers and sisters in Christ and she wants to learn the Bible and she wants to pray and she wants to be equipped for ministry so that she can have a heart that is full of love for Jesus and a life that is filled with good works with Jesus. Amen? That's Mary.

Mary is fantastic. She's amazing. Luke 10:42, Jesus, in speaking of Mary to Martha, says this, "'One thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.'" Here's what Jesus is saying, "Martha, there's a lot you can do, but there's something that's most important. In fact, Martha, you could take everything you've ever written on every to-do list and combine their importance and they're not as important as getting time with me."

Mary chose the good portion. And here he's using curious language because what's Martha been doing all day? Preparing a meal for Jesus and his friends, as well as his fans, and I'm sure she was going to serve Jesus the good portion. All right? He was gonna get the big piece of chicken, right? And everybody'd be like, "How come Jesus' chunk of cake is always bigger than ours?" Because he's God! So he always gets the chicken leg and the big piece of cake. That's the good portion.

And what he tells her is, "You know what, Martha? You are trying to give me the good portion. Mary was wise, humble, teachable, and available and present. I gave her the good portion. She got the best feast of all because man does not live on bread alone, but every word that proceeds from God. Mary spent time with me and I taught her." Jesus is her good portion. Jesus is our good portion, one that will never be taken away. Once you're done with a meal, it's over. Once you've spent time with Jesus, that gift lasts forever. You're never the same. And so Mary is this gal who has her priorities straight, first things first.

Let me tell you what Mary's not, 'cause I know some of you. And some of you are lazy, selfish, disorganized, and ridiculous. And you will say, "Well, I'm like Mary." No, you're not! She's not playing the Wii, right? I mean, she's spending time with Jesus—just 'cause you don't do anything doesn't mean you're like Mary, okay? Okay, you're like Judas. He comes up later in the story. That's a totally different person in the story. So you can't just say, "I don't do things 'cause I'm holy like Mary." No, no, no, no. It's not that Mary's doing nothing, it's Mary's doing first things first. The good portion is Jesus. She's getting time to be discipled by him. You get that?

## GOOD MARTHA

And now we'll talk about Martha. Now, let me say this about Martha. I love Martha and I don't like the way she gets treated. Now that could be because I'm Martha and I'm sensitive here. Now let me explain this. The way it usually goes is Martha's bad, Mary's good. Be like Mary, don't be like Martha. Then we all kind of get judgmental and religious and then we sort of condemn all the Marthas and then all the Marthas—this doesn't help Marthas at all. All Martha does is says, "Well, then I gotta put more things on my to-do list. I need to read my Bible, and pray, and choke Mary. You know, I need to do these things." And it doesn't help Martha at all because it just degenerates it into a competition and it fuels the task-, chore-, list-, works-righteousness.

So I like Martha, okay? And I think Martha gets a little bit of a bad bum rap. And there is a good aspect to Martha. I'll show it to you here in Luke 10:38, "a woman named Martha welcomed him [Jesus] into her house." Jesus comes to town, who's the only person that invites him over? Martha! That's a good thing. There are benefits to hanging out around Martha. Ask Mary. All right? Apparently, Mary's sitting in the living room and she's, you know, I don't know, getting her quiet time with the Lord, and because Martha invites him over she gets time to sit at Jesus' feet. That's a real bonus for Mary that Martha made possible.

Now, I don't know for sure who owned the house, but her house—maybe this is Martha's house. Maybe she picked it out and paid the mortgage and organized it all and she's the queen bee and this is her nest. I don't know. But she does welcome Jesus into her home. She's not an atheist. She's not a

godless woman. She loves Jesus. Her whole life is open to him. Her home is open to him. She loves Jesus, Jesus loves her. She serves Jesus. She's attentive to Jesus. She's concerned for Jesus. She's a mature believer and a godly woman who actually does some really wonderful things and as you read the rest of the gospels, including over into John, there are more occasions where she shows up. She's an impressive gal, she's an astute gal, she has some character defects, but Jesus is working on them. So let's not dismiss Martha. That's good Martha.

## BAD MARTHA

Now we'll go to bad Martha. Martha has a Martha moment here. Luke 10:40–42, “But Martha was,” what's the word? “Distracted with much serving.” Can you be overextended, overcommitted? Yeah. Can you reach the point where you have nominated yourself to do too much and you get distracted?

“And she went up him,” who? Jesus. “And said, ‘Lord, do you not care—’” ooh. That's not right. “‘Do you not care?’” Here's what happens to those who have a Martha heart. They become resentful. Now, outwardly it looks like they're worshipping. Inwardly they're seething. “No one ever helps. No one does their part. No one follows through. I can't depend on anyone. No one ever helps me. I love the Lord the most! I'm working the hardest! I'm burned out and frustrated! How come you never help?” How many of you moms, you're like, “We shouldn't say that to our kids?” Right? You feel self-righteous and judgmental and holy because you're responsible. You see needs and you work hard to meet them. Be careful, Martha.

She walks up to Jesus, “Do you not care?” Jesus would say, “Yeah, I created the heavens and the earth and I'm on my way to Jerusalem to atone for the sin of the world. I care. Thanks for the cake.” You know? We show our care maybe a little differently. How many of you have felt this way? “No one cares.” This can even happen when you're involved in ministry. You're involved in community groups? “No one cares about community groups.” You're in Redemption Groups? “No one cares about Redemption Groups.” Whatever it is, “No one cares as much as me. It's all up to me. Woe is me. I'm the only dependable, faithful one and I'm burnt out and frustrated.” And sometimes our prayer life can even sound like Martha's, “Lord, do you not care?”

And we start bossing God around. You can read it, “‘Do you not care that my sister has left me to serve all alone?’” This is tattletale-ing. You can tell they're sisters, right? Right? You can see this. It starts when they're little. You can see Martha, stomping in, “Mom! Mary's just in there dancing and singing worship songs. She's not setting the table! She's not helping! She's doing it again! She's got a tutu on, she's just playing. She's not!” “What are you doing, Mary?” “I'm singing to Jesus, woo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo.” Right? You can see Martha running in, “I did her chores. I set the table. I did it all myself, Mom.” Ahh, the Martha heart.

And so, it continues, “‘Tell her then to help me!’” Who is Martha bossing around? Jesus. That's a bad day. Right? “Do you not care? Jesus, if you would just do what you were told, I would have this all knocked out! I have a plan! And you and Mary just sitting in there like singing songs and memorizing verses, hey, that does not get meals made!”

Now, she should have already heard that Jesus makes food. He's already—right? I mean, a little earlier in the book, a little boy came up to Jesus with a Lunchable and he fed a stadium. Right? She could have went in there and sat down and said, “Hey, Jesus, you know what? Everybody's hungry. ‘Do that free lunch thing and I'll be taking notes here at the Bible study.’” She doesn't do that. Instead, she nominates herself for something that Jesus didn't appoint her to and then she's frustrated when Jesus doesn't do what she tells him. Doh! What a Martha am I? How many of you are burned out, frustrated, doing things that Jesus didn't ask you to do in the first place?

And all the Marys are sitting next to Marthas going, “This is the best sermon ever. This is the best sermon ever.” I can tell you why Martha's single. She nags a lot! She's a nag. Right?

“But the Lord answered her, ‘Martha, Martha,’” which is a term of endearment. This is, “Come on, Martha. Hello. I'm God. Martha, please. Think this through with me here.” “‘You are,’” what? “‘Anxious.’” Stressed out, freaked out. Furrowed brow, grumpy, grouchy, and troubled. “Oh, we're never gonna get this done. This'll never work. There's too much to do. I can't believe he dropped in on me. How come he has to have so many people with him? He didn't call in advance! This is not acceptable.” She is “troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary.” “Martha, I know you're freaked out. You got a million things to do. You're never gonna get 'em all done. So how about if we start with this? Spend some time with me.”

## MARY FIRST, MARTHA SECOND

Here's my conclusion. Not to the sermon. That's gonna be a long time from now. But to the issue. I think the point of the Bible here is Mary first, Martha second. Spend time with Jesus, then get stuff done. To worship like Mary and then to work like Martha. If all Mary ever does is sits there and studies and never does anything, she's sinful in a completely different way. All right? This would be like the guy who's on his thirty-second year of Bible college. It's like, “Dude, seriously, go do something.” But if all she does is Martha, do, do, do, do, do, go do, go, go, go, go? She's gonna end up distracted, anxious, troubled. And so the key is Mary first, Martha second.

Worship, then work. Worship God before you work so that you could worship God in your work. And do the work that God has called you to do, not chasing your potential, but pursuing your calling. Not volunteering yourself as the savior of the world to plug every hole and meet every need. That job's already taken. And instead to spend time with the savior of the world, asking him what portion of the mission he's entrusted to your service. So we want Mary's heart and we want Martha's hands. Amen? That's what we want. We want Mary's heart, Martha's hands.

## WE LIVE IN A MARTHA WORLD

Now let me ask you this. Do we live in a Mary world or a Martha world? We live in a Martha world, friends. We live in a Martha—the Marthas rule the world. America is now the most overworked country in America. Americans work more hours every year than any other nation on earth. We take our

laptops on vacation if we go on vacation. We have our phones and our technology connected at home, on our day off, late into the night. Work, work, work, work, work, work, work, work, work, work. And what happens? We're troubled. We're anxious. We're distracted. And it leads to all kinds of difficulty. Stress, anxiety, depression, bouts with anger, heart disease, much of it attributed to playing by the rules of a fallen, sin-filled, cursed, Martha world.

God has intended this world to be Mary first, then Martha. God built this world to be a Mary world with Martha moments. Now, in Genesis 3, when sin enters the world and our work becomes cursed and laborious toil, it turned into a Martha world in which we have to fight for Mary moments.

I'll explain this to you in two ways. Number one, in Genesis 1 and 2 that is the world as God created it, quote, "very good," Genesis 1:31, before sin, fall, and the curse, and there was work to be done, but what we see is that it is a Mary world where the man and the woman walk with the Lord God in the cool of the day. They get time, proverbially speaking, at the feet of Jesus. They're in constant communion and relation and affection and communication with the God of the Bible. It's a Mary world with Martha moments, which is why in Genesis 2 it says that the Lord God created the man and put him in the garden to what? To work. So the world is to be a Mary world with Martha moments, communion with God and then work.

We see this, as well, in Genesis 1, where it describes the days of creation, saying there was evening and morning the first day. Evening and morning the second day. Evening and morning the third day. And so on and so forth. And some of you, some of you may have caught this and you realize, "Oh, that's not how we account for time in the Martha world." Okay? In the Martha world, when does your day start? In the morning. So the alarm goes off, your adrenaline fires, you jump out of bed and run like you're insane. And you go, go, go, go, do, do, do, do, do, do, do, do, do. You're frustrated, you're anxious, you're tired, you're burned out, you're angry at everyone, you hate the traffic, you're loading up on caffeine, you can't stop working, and then you just run home and you work some more and your mind is consumed and then you fall into bed and you're hoping for a Mary moment and you can't start sleeping because your mind is racing and your heart is burdened and you're distracted and you're troubled and you're anxious. And you've burned yourself out on a Martha day and you're trying to throw a Mary moment at the end.

And the way that God established the world, it's evening and morning, evening and morning, and evening and morning. The rhythm of our day is Mary then Martha, Mary then Martha, Mary then Martha, Mary then Martha. Because if the day starts at sundown, in that culture where there's no technology, no electricity, no transportation, no formal digital communication, what happens when it becomes dark? You go home. You put a log on the fire and you light a candle and you start the wind down. You eat dinner. You enjoy your family. You read. You pray. You play games. You visit. You snuggle with your kids. You hold hands with your spouse. You have a few friends over and just enjoy their company. That's evening. And then as you have your Mary moment, you have hours of Mary.

Then, when the morning comes, that's not the beginning of your day, that's the end of your day. You will have been worshiping, and then out of your worshiping comes your working as another aspect of your worship. So then you get up in the morning, you go to work. But you do so with a Mary heart, having spent time with God and his people in community and communion with him and others.

Let me ask you this, practically. Do you have your evenings well thought out and planned? Or is it just run home in a hurried, frantic, insane pace, eat something, watch TV, total chaos, crash, hoping to get some rest with your mind consumed for what you did not finish today and what you have to do tomorrow? Or have you prioritized your evenings as the good portion? We need to get the evenings figured out first. Meal, Sabbath, friendship, family, reading, Bible, prayer, sleep, and then go to work and get stuff done. And by go to work, that doesn't necessarily mean you're going to a paid job. That may mean you're a stay-at-home mom, but you get your Martha work done after your Mary time the night before. Evening and morning: the first day. Evening and morning: the second day. Evening and morning: the third day. Evening is where it all begins. Some of you, your big problem right now is your days are organized, your nights are not. Your days are effective, your nights are not reflective time for God.

I'll give you another example of how God intends us to live in a Mary world with Martha moments. Some of you may have noticed that the Bible says that Jesus would be dead for three days and then rise again. And you read the Bible, he dies on a Friday, he rises on a Sunday, and you say, "Well, that's not three complete days. How does that count for three days?" Here's how it works. Again, morning and evening, the way that the Bible reckons time is different than us. And so Jesus is deceased for a portion of three full days and when Jesus rises from death, conquering sin, reconciling us to God, sending us the Holy Spirit to become new people with new passions, new pleasures, and new futures, he does so on what day of the week? What day upon which does Jesus rise from death? Sunday.

Matthew 28:1, Mark 16:2, it says that Jesus rose on, quote, "the first day of the week." You know what the first day of the week is now? Sabbath Sunday. The day starts with Mary time and then Martha time, and the week starts with a Mary day followed by six Martha days. You get it? So the first priority, Sunday's not the last day of the week. You don't run like Martha and then collapse and try and recover in a Mary day. You make that first priority and you start thinking about, "How do I reclaim the Sabbath?" Not in a legalistic way.

Sometimes people legalistically rule the Sabbath. That's what happens when Martha takes over the Sabbath. All of a sudden it's a whole to-do list—you can't do this, you gotta do that, you can't walk this far, you can't eat that, you gotta prepare your meals the night before, you're like, "Oh, my gosh, I can't wait to go back to work where it was simple and I didn't have such a massive to-do list." When Martha takes over the Sabbath, it's no fun at all. The point of the Sabbath is rest, connect with God, connect with people. That's it. It's supposed to be a replenishing time.

So you think through—your first day of the week is Sunday, the day of Jesus' resurrection. Go to church, have a meal, hang out with your family, take a nap, get together with friends, first day of the week. The week starts with Sunday. The day starts with sundown. How many of us have had it all backward? How many of us have had it all backward? We don't have time at night for God and people. We don't have time on Sunday for God and people because we live under the myth that if we just keep punching out our Martha list, eventually it'll be all done and we'll get our life back.

I lived under that myth for over a decade. We had children, the church grew, I eventually blew out my adrenal glands, my thyroid, my health was

terrible. I was grumpy—grumpier, frustrated, difficult, not good. I was like Martha, distracted, anxious, troubled. And God in his providence allowed me to feel a little pain of my folly and make some corrections in my diet and my schedule and my life patterns and habits and rhythms. And I'm not great at Mary yet, but I'm by God's grace better than I used to be.

And the truth is, Martha, you're never gonna get everything done that you've got on your list. And if Jesus is last, you'll never get to him. And so you make sure that time with Jesus is first. Going to church, sitting, first. Going to community group, sitting, first. Getting time with Jesus and his people, first things first.

## A FEW THINGS FOR THE MARTHAS

Now, how many of you in hearing this, you're Martha, you go, "Oh, man." Here are a few things for the Marthas. Number one, be honest. Be honest. I believe Martha is honest because what we learned early on in Luke is that Luke was not an eyewitness to all these events in the life and ministry of Jesus. So he went around funded by a wealthy benefactor named Theophilus, which means lover of God, to interview everyone. "What happened? What did you say? How did it go?" So we know now that this is a private conversation that we're investigating between Martha and Jesus. So there are only two people that know what was really said. And Jesus had already returned to heaven, so Luke had to go and interview Martha.

And she gives us an honest, earnest, repentant, accurate description and depiction of the conversation. But what she doesn't give is the unrepentant version. "Yeah, Jesus came over and I had to feed a hundred people. And like usual, Mary didn't do a dang thing, but I got 'er done." It doesn't say it like that. "Good thing I was there." She doesn't say that at all. She says, "Oh, man, I was chasing Jesus around the house with a wooden spoon and that was a bad day for me. But Jesus lovingly, graciously pursued me, corrected me, loved me, and taught me and restored me." So Martha, first thing is you gotta just be honest like Martha was. Tell the story of your life as it is, not as you have told it. "Nobody's responsible. I'm the only one. I'm a total victim. I'm gonna volunteer for everything. I'm gonna save everyone." Tell it like it is. "I've overextended myself. I'm not worshiping in my heart. I'm seething in my heart, even though it looks like I'm worshiping with my hands. I'm distracted from first things first. I'm anxious and I'm troubled and I've neglected the good portion."

Additionally, for us Marthas, we need to know that Jesus here is not condemning her, but he's inviting her. Now, when he comes to her and looks at her and he says, "Martha, Martha," do you think it's with a furrowed brow? Do you think Jesus is giving her the stink eye? "Martha." You know, grinded teeth. You know, like, "Martha, Martha, Martha," you know? You think it looks like a standoff before a cage fight? You know, you think he's giving her the stare down? No.

I see Jesus smiling, maybe even being a little bit playful. Right? A little goofy 'cause she's so serious. "Oh my gosh, I have to put together a thousand hors d'oeuvres." "Martha, Martha, Martha." All right, I think Jesus has got a friendship with her. She's like a sister and he's drawing her out inviting her out. "Hey, Martha, let's refocus this. Martha, Martha, you know I love you. Come on, let's talk about this. Let me pull you out of your funk." You Marthas, we Marthas need to know Jesus is smilin' at her. He loves her. He's not condemning her. He's not just trying to put another thing on her to-do list so she can check quiet time. He's inviting her into relationship. He's drawing her out, loving and encouraging her. That's Jesus with you today, Martha. He loves you, not mad at you. But he has some things he needs to tell you. So sit at his feet.

Here's what we need to do as well, Marthas. We need to apologize to the Marys, right? "Sorry. Man, the whole time I've been nagging and frustrated and bitter and bossy. I was trying to make you like me, huh. You were trying to be like Jesus and I was trying to make you like me." The point of discipleship is not to make people like us, but to make people like him, by the grace of God.

Some of you with your spouse, your kids, your friends, you keep nagging, condemning, browbeating. You want them to be like you and help. Maybe they're spending time with Jesus and you need to do the same and they're trying to become like him. And they don't need to become like you. You need to become like him as well. Some of you just need to apologize to the Marys.

I'm a Martha. My wife's a Martha. We're both Marthas. That's how we got it done. Early on at Mars Hill, man, we would do, do, do, do, do, do, do all the community groups, all the premarital, all the membership classes, everything in our home. Between two and three thousand people a year in our home. We were Martha on crack, on steroids, on Red Bull, on Monster. I mean, it was just insane. And I've had to, in recent years, and I did it again today, apologize to Gracie. "Honey, I'm a Martha. You're a Martha. I mean, that means we have two gas, no brake. You know? We go fast, it's an exciting ride, but everybody dies in the end, you know? And so, honey, I'm sorry that I pushed. I'm sorry that I didn't draw you out. And I'm sorry for the times that I was frustrated. That unlike Jesus, I didn't come to you lovingly, playfully, and invite you. Instead, I was more condemning of you." So we've had that talk at the Driscoll house. You need to apologize to the Marys.

And then you need to make your Mary time first priority. Church, community group, Bible reading, prayer, day off, time with God and his people. Now, Gracie and I were talking about this and here's what Gracie does every—she's my wife if you're new. Grace, every Sunday morning, she gets up bright and early with me. She doesn't need to, but she's Martha and it's her responsibility to cook me breakfast. That's what she has appointed herself to. I have not asked for it, but there are benefits being married to Martha, like breakfast.

So I get up early on Sunday mornings and she wants to get up and make me breakfast while I'm gettin' ready to save me time, make sure I eat well. And then she wants to talk with me and pray with me and make sure I get my vitamins and then send me out the door. So there are benefits to being married to Martha. But I told her last night, "Honey, sleep in. You're tired. It's been a heck of a week. And I'll take care of it. Don't worry." "No, no, no, it's my responsibility. I have to get up early." And so we have this little Martha argument. So I got up this morning before my alarm and I was sort of ninja quiet, you know? I was ninja quiet. And I got ready and I snuck downstairs and I got out of the house before I woke her up so she could sleep. I

wanted her to have a Mary morning.

And so then she sent me an e-mail this morning, unsolicited. I will read it to you. No, it's—here's how it starts. "If you need to use me as an example of Martha, I'm fine with that." This is my sweetie pie. "During the beginning years of Mars Hill, I was a Martha, sitting as Mary only when I was stressed out. I went on my own strength for awhile, pleasing people and receiving encouragement from them. This was neglectful of the Lord and you. Through the years, I am learning that if and when I don't sit at the feet of Jesus first and regularly, I neglect my family, feel frantic getting things done, get overwhelmed with all my responsibilities, and am empty inside. I notice a difference when I spend time in prayer and reading and study and my day comes out of that. I have peace, calm, patience, attentiveness to true priorities, and don't feel defeated when my list of tasks doesn't get completed. Because I am a disorganized Martha," which just so you know, that's a rare kind of Martha. "I'm very, very busy!" "Doing what?" "I don't know! But it's urgent that I complete it." "Okey dokey."

"Because I am a disorganized Martha, it can be even worse when I don't sit with Jesus and I let distractions overtake me. My heart and desire now is to have God show me how to do both well for the rest of my life. Love you, Grace." I appreciate my wife talking this through with me.

Some of you need to talk it through. Some of you Marthas don't understand that the Marys in your life are feeling really lonely. They're eating meals by themselves. Some of you, this is your spouse. They're going places by themselves. They're reading, relaxing, praying by themselves. You keep walking by. "I'll be there in a minute. I just got to—oh, one more thing. Oh, the phone rang. Oh, the e-mail came in. Oh, the kids puked." There's always something.

The Marys are lonely. They respect, they appreciate, they are blessed by the Marthas, but they're lonely around them. And sometimes the Marthas don't even pay attention to the Marys unless the Marys have a problem or a need or a crisis. And then they're there to help, but otherwise they tend to ignore.

## JESUS MISSED MARTHA

We've looked at Mary. We've looked at Martha. Let me ask one final question. How do you think Jesus felt? I think Jesus missed Martha. I think he appreciated her hard work, her devotion, her hospitality. I believe he was grateful that she opened her home. I think she was right in recognizing that there was a need and people were requiring loving service. I don't think Jesus condemns her for any of that. But he does reveal her heart motive and he invites her to spend time with him.

Friends, let me say this. Perhaps it is that Jesus simply misses you. He doesn't need you to do more. Like every relationship, he just wants time with you because he cares for you. And I believe that is his invitation to Martha. "Martha, Martha, I'm passing through town. I'm not gonna be here for long. Eventually, they're gonna crucify me. I have a lot of foes, I have a lot of fans. I don't have a lot of friends. Martha, you're one of my friends. We're here. Let's just sit in the living room and visit with everybody and pray and talk and laugh. We miss you. I miss you. We all miss you." Jesus missed Martha. He didn't need her, but he loved her and he enjoyed her and he pursued her.

So here's what we're going to do now. We're going to give you Marthas an opportunity to not leave, check your e-mail, Twitter that it was a very convicting sermon, run out the door first so you can beat traffic and get a good seat at a place to eat. And I know you Marthas. You're like, "Oh, man, he just knocked out my to-do list." Okay, let's get a little Mary time. Just be together in the presence of Jesus as God's people.

And for those of us who are Marthas, we need to apologize to some of the Marys. For those of us who are Marys, we need to forgive the Marthas that we feel bitter against or neglected by. We're gonna take Communion, which is remembering Jesus' broken body and shed blood in our place for our sins, that before we work, we remember Jesus' work. We don't work for our salvation. We work from our salvation. Amen? That Jesus said it was finished, so the most important work was done on the cross and through the empty tomb. And we're going to sing. And as we sing, it's a Mary moment together to sit at the feet of Jesus and to enjoy him, and him to enjoy us. Amen?

So Father God, I thank you so much for the Bible, the most earnest, honest, truthful, and the only perfect book that has ever been written. I thank you that in it there are real stories of real people with real sin and real failures and real needs. And I ask, Lord Jesus, that as we have a Mary moment in your presence, to sing and contemplate and consider, that you would send the Holy Spirit to encourage, to draw out, to refocus the Marthas, to allow the Marys to be patient and humble, forgiving and encouraging. And that, Lord Jesus, that you would choose to meet with us now. We ask for this gift as we come to sit at your feet as Mary did. May we have Mary's heart and Martha's hands. May it be Mary first and Martha second. Please help us to learn that now as we practice your presence. Amen.

*[End of Audio]*

*Note: This sermon transcript has been edited for readability.*