

ARM Prison Outreach International

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Martha the Meticulous...becomes Martha the Mature!

Luke 10:38-42 ... John 11 & 12

Editor's Note: This "MM" is an email sermon, the 8th of 2007 and 68th overall, ARM is sending as an encouragement to preachers, chaplains, and Christians around the world. This message is a lesson I developed recently using the story of the incident in John 12:1-11. It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and honor God. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, use it or components of it!

If you need a plain text version, or the Power Point slides (55KB) to accompany this message, just reply to make your request. May God bless your labors!

-- Rod Farthing, ARM Prison Outreach Development Director rodfar@arm.org

ARM FAST FACT **American Bible Academy Update**

May/June 2007 Summary

3,108 courses were sent to NEW ENROLLEES!
3,462 courses were sent to UPPER CLASSMEN!
6,570 total courses were sent to prisoners!

In 2003, an average of 83 ABA Bible courses were mailed from ARM every day!
In 2005, an average of 127.3 ABA courses were mailed from ARM every day!

Here is an actual testimony from a former inmate:

Rod, I am blessed to read about how the Lord is using ARM to reach brethren around the world passing on God's word. I am praying for your ministry and you. In these in times the enemy has taken on many forms to win souls. As a former inmate I personally have seen it. In His Service, TLO

You can see these courses for yourself at <http://www.abarc.org/#Courses>

Martha the Meticulous...becomes Martha the Mature! **Luke 10:38-42 ... John 11 & 12**

INTRO:

Four characters together for supper ... John 12:1-11

- Martha, Mary, Lazarus, and Judas Iscariot
- Martha the Meticulous -- and Maturing!

- Mary the Meditative
- Lazarus the Living
- Judas Iscariot theyou know, the TRAITOR!

Let's look more closely at these four important CHARACTERS gathered in ONE PLACE for dinner in John 12. Three of these are friends of our Savior. Godly friends are a tremendous asset. Jesus didn't have many friends, but the ones He had were important. Consider this historical affirmation of the value of a Godly friend:

In Proverbs 27:17 we read: "As iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend." John Wesley was such a friend to William Wilberforce, who tried again and again--with seemingly no success--to abolish Britain's slave trade.

In 1791 Wilberforce received a letter from Wesley which included this exhortation: "Go on, in the power of His might, till even American slavery . . . shall vanish away before it." Though Wesley died four days after writing that letter, it remained an inspiration to Wilberforce through years of disappointment after disappointment. Finally, after 20 years, he was able to get a bill passed which abolished the slave trade. Shortly after, slavery was completely outlawed throughout the British Empire. Wilberforce might not have prevailed if it had not been for the encouragement of his friend who strengthened him in the Lord.

Before you pray, "Lord, give me a friend like that," try praying: "Lord, make me a friend like that."

Yes, Martha, Mary, Lazarus, and Judas (yes, even Judas) were friends of Jesus. They are main characters in the compelling drama of "Four Characters for Supper" in John 12.

First we look at Martha of Bethany. Here is the story from John 12:

- 1 Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.
- 2 So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him.
- 3 Mary therefore took a pound of very costly perfume of pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.
- 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said,
- 5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii, and given to poor people?"
- 6 Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to pilfer what was put into it.

- 7 Jesus therefore said, "Let her alone, in order that she may keep it for the day of My burial.
- 8 "For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have Me."
- 9 The great multitude therefore of the Jews learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead.
- 10 But the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus to death also;
- 11 because on account of him many of the Jews were going away, and were believing in Jesus. (NAS)

Martha the Meticulous... let's see her as she first appeared in Luke 10:38-42

- 38 Now as they were traveling along, He entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home.
- 39 And she had a sister called Mary, who moreover was listening to the Lord's word, seated at His feet.
- 40 But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him, and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me."
- 41 But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things;
- 42 but only a few things are necessary, really only one, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (NAS)

Martha is usually thought of negatively, especially compared to her sister, Mary. In this passage, Martha is gently rebuked -- note "gently" -- by Jesus for being impatient with Mary's desire to simply sit at the feet of Jesus and soak up His wisdom and love.

But Martha IS A SERVANT and has many qualities to emulate! Note what we learn about her in this passage in Luke 10:38-42:

- She was hospitable, probably the older sister v. 38
- She was distracted from the Word by her work v. 40a
- She sought to recruit Jesus to re-direct Mary v. 40b
- She was gently rebuked for poor priorities! v. 41-42
- She was able to grow spiritually, which we'll now see as we look at John 11

Martha the Maturing One...let's see her as she has grown ... John 11:1-5

- 1 Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.
- 2 And it was the Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.
- 3 The sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."
- 4 But when Jesus heard it, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it."
- 5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. (NAS)

... John 11:19-28

- 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother.
- 20 Martha therefore, when she heard that Jesus was coming, went to meet Him; but Mary still sat in the house.
- 21 Martha therefore said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.
- 22 "Even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."
- 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother shall rise again."
- 24 Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."
- 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies,
- 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"
- 27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, even He who comes into the world."
- 28 And when she had said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister, saying secretly, "The Teacher is here, and is calling for you." (NAS)

Martha the Maturing One... gleaning important facts from John 11 & 12

1- She was not mentioned in a negative way 11:2

Jesus 'holds no grudges' -- no bringing up of past mistakes. What grace! In fact

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2- She is mentioned as loved, listed first 11: 5

A special compliment indeed! In fact, though Mary is compliment in verse 2 --Jesus DOES REMEMBER THE DEVOTION WE'VE SHARED -- Martha's name is in v. 5 and Mary's is not! His love is not diminished by Martha's earlier impatience with Mary. Jesus loves us WHILE we are still coping with our baggage -- impatient with family members, bitter toward others, etc.

**He stood there in his soggy, smelly diaper--
a helpless creature
reaching up to his father.
I marveled that anyone could love this runny-nosed,
candy-smearred,
tear-streaked being
Enough to lift him up,
kiss him, and care for his needs.
I heard your whisper, Lord.
And, I remembered
how I came to You--
heartbroken and dirty
from playing in the world.
Thank You, Father,
For picking me up
and loving me
through my unloveliness.
--Kitty Chappell**

3- She heard first and went first to Jesus 11:19-20

We can't say exactly what this means, but her actions her are fully commendable. As the "shepherds made haste," so did Martha. How many of us are "too slow" in running to Jesus in our hour of need? There is wisdom in hurrying to what is REALLY A PRIORITY. Perhaps knowing "the night cometh" would help us all hurry a bit to "run to Jesus" and the mission He's left for us:

In a certain factory, where each man was required to finish so much work in a given length of time, bells were rung at intervals to remind the men just how much time they had left. "The men work better when they realize that the day is slipping away from them," the manager explained.

The same thing is true of us concerning spiritual things. We need often to be reminded that "the time is short." "The night cometh when no man can work" (John 9:4). We work better when we realize that the day is slipping away from us.

4- She showed faith in Christ's power 11: 21-22

Though not yet seeing the fruit of Christ's power, Martha, nonetheless, was certain any outcome was possible through the divine creative abilities of the Master. A child-like and commendable faith!

A friend tells of overhearing two little girls, playmates, who were counting over their pennies together. One said, "I have five cents." The other said, "I have ten cents." "No," said the first little girl, "you have just five cents, the same that I have," but the second child quickly replied, "My daddy said that when he came home tonight he would give me five cents, and so I have ten cents." The child's faith gave her proof of that which she did not as yet see, and she counted it as being already hers because it had been promised by her father. So are we to trust the promises of our Heavenly Father, and we, too, can count among our possessions the thing which he has promised to give us.

5- She agreed to His declaration of being Messiah 11: 27

Peter is often praised for his confession in Matthew 16:16, and well he should be. But here is an eloquent statement of faith that has left a pattern for us through the centuries.

6- She called Mary to come to Jesus 11:28

She was not worried about any rivalry for the attention of Jesus -- she wanted her beloved sister to have the opportunity of comfort from her beloved Lord!

7- She serves others John 12:2

Serving again! Will she not "learn her lesson?" I submit it was NOT her serving that caused the mild rebuke in Luke 10 -- it was her impatience with her sister. THE LORD LOVES THOSE WITH A SERVANT'S HEART. He loves those who serve -- He led by serving -- and he calls those who are busy.....

God never goes to the lazy or idle when He needs men for His service--

**Moses was busy with his flocks at Horeb.
Gideon was busy threshing wheat.
Saul was busy searching for his father's lost sheep.
Elisha was busy plowing with twelve yoke of oxen.
Amos was busy following the flock.
Nehemiah was busy bearing the king's cup.
Peter and Andrew were busy casting a net into the sea.
James and John were busy mending their nets.
Matthew was busy collecting customs.
Saul was busy persecuting the friends of Jesus.**

Let's all get busy at this great work and the Lord will use and bless us.

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Check out our web sites: www.arm.org www.abarc.org www.raphahouse.org www.daughtersofruth.org

In 2006, ARM donated over 5 MILLION DaySpring Greeting cards to prisons!