

## Martha and Mary - A Tale of Two Sisters -Luke 10: 38-42

*Mary: Jesus is coming to our house. I'm so excited! He's the best! Aren't you excited, Martha?*

Martha: (in a distracted tone) Yes, yes, it is wonderful. But there are a million things to get done. The house has to be cleaned. The bread has to be baked. The lamps have to be cleaned and trimmed. The guest list has to be finished. The seating chart completed. There is just so much to be done!

*Mary: But aren't you excited? This is Jesus we are talking about. You do know that he is the messiah, he is holy? You know that don't you?*

Martha: Yes, yes. I know that. Jesus is holy. All the more reason that everything must be just right when he gets here. Now, please, get back to work.

*Mary: Wow! You are so bossy and grumpy.*

Martha: I am not bossy and grumpy. I'm practical. Hospitality is a sacred duty. Everything has to be just right. Oh, no! I forgot we are out of wine. Someone has to go buy some more wine.

*Mary: I'll go get the wine.*

Martha: No, no. I need you here. Lazarus can go get the wine. There is no way that he is going to help us clean and cook. You know how he feels about **women's** work. Have you fed the donkey and cleaned his stall? Have you trimmed the lamps? Did you get the bread started baking? I've got to figure out something really special for dinner. (Pause) Why are you looking at me like that?

*Mary: I don't care about how the house looks or what we serve. Jesus isn't going to care either. I just want to spend time with him. He makes me feel so loved, so forgiven, so . . . safe.*

Martha: Yes, yes, everyone wants to spend time with him. But there is so much to do! You don't think we can just feed Jesus a peanut butter sandwich do you? Or maybe cheese and crackers? How about we just order a pizza from Dominos? (Shakes her head). And don't forget there are going to be 12 disciples with Jesus - that's 13 hungry men - 14 if you count Lazarus. And all of them are going to expect something special.

*Mary: But I just want to spend time with Jesus. He is always saying that he wants everyone to be his followers. How can I follow Jesus if I don't listen to him?*

Martha: Burnt potatoes Mary! You drive me to distraction! I know you just want to sit and listen to Jesus. But we don't always get what we want. Our job is hospitality and I for one take that very seriously. If we don't do the necessary work, it won't get done. We can't let that happen. (Raising her voice) WE CAN'T!

*Mary: Martha you know I love you like a sister. (Smiles a bit) I guess I have to since you **are** my sister. But I still think Jesus doesn't care about how clean your house is or having something extra special for dinner. I just want to spend time with him. And I'm going to.*

Martha: (Takes a deep breath) Let's do this another way. You trust Jesus don't you?

Mary: *Of course I do! Jesus is trustworthy.*

Martha: (triumphantly) Then let's just ask him, shall we?

Mary: *(wilts a little but stands her ground) Okay.*

(Jesus enters and sits down on the steps. Mary immediately sits down on the floor at the bottom of the steps, and bows her head.)

**Jesus: Hello Martha, thank you for inviting me into your house today. Hello Mary? It is good to see you both.**

Martha: (to her sister) Mary don't you have something you want to ask Jesus?

Mary: *(shakes her head and just sits there)*

Martha: Then I will ask him. Jesus Mary thinks it is okay for her to just sit there are you feet and listen instead of helping me. She's acting like a man. I think she has forgotten her place. Tell her, Jesus, tell her to get up and help me with the cooking and the serving!

**Jesus: Martha I love the way that you honor me by serving me and caring for my needs. I also love the way that Mary honors me by stopping what she is doing and listening to me. Mary wants to be close to me and I will not deny her that.**

**She is not acting like a man. She is showing that she has understood my message that I welcome everyone to follow me - men, women, children, - old, young, and in between - Jews, Gentiles and people from every race, nation, and place.**

**I know this is a bit of shock to the both of you. But you could both take a page from the other's book. Mary there is a time for listening and a time for doing. Devoted listening to me is great, but if you never put it into practice caring and loving others you risk becoming so heavenly minded that you are no earthly good.**

**And Martha, you know how to show your love in action. Again I am honored. Yet, only one thing is needed, not a seven course meal. I would be just as happy with a peanut butter sandwich. (Mary looks up and giggles).**

**If all your constant doing keeps you from devoted listening, you will burn yourself out of both energy and love. You can become so earthly minded that you are no heavenly good.**

**My friends I do so love you both and I need you both. Let me help you find the right balance of devotion and action. Together we will change the world. Amen.**