## **Martha**

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[0:00] Now, as many of you will be aware, we've been looking in recent weeks through those who are addressed in the New Testament by Jesus by name.

And there's only nine, or as we found out now, ten of them altogether, certainly, that I can find and I'm aware of. And we come, then, this morning to the fifth in our series of that.

And that is, as you will have gathered from our reading, Martha. Martha is the only one of two women who's addressed by name by Jesus. The other one is the one we began with, Mary Magdalene. And so we opened with her.

And then we get Martha, who also is unusual in that she's one of only two people, as far as I'm aware, whom Jesus, when he speaks to, uses the name twice. Martha, Martha.

The only other one that he does so is for Peter, where he says, you know, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan is desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, and so on. But here we have Martha addressed by name by Jesus.

[1:01] And, of course, if we were to think only in terms of this little section at the end of Luke chapter 10, all that we have about Mary and Martha, then we'd be doing something of a disservice to them both.

Because, of course, the biggest chunk of Scripture where they are mentioned is John chapter 11 and on into 12, which we looked at last time with the addressing of Lazarus by name.

Lazarus, come forth, and so on. So, but this little section where we're using this one as opposed to the John one, because this is the occasion where Jesus actually addresses Martha by name.

Although he has much longer conversation with her in John 11, yet he doesn't address her by name there. And one of the things we need to establish here is that Martha's faith, obviously, is as deep as Mary's.

She's making a mistake here, for which, of course, history has not been kind to her, in terms of people's respective judgments of the merits of Mary and Martha and so on.

But we'll come to that in a wee minute. But what is her concern? Her concern here is not just to think that busyness and food and so on and preparing is more important than listening to Jesus.

She probably is taking the exacerbated line, well, I would love to have time to sit on the feet of Jesus and just listen to him. But, unfortunately, there's things to do. There's work to do.

There keeps you to prepare. Remember that we probably, in our mind's eye, think of Jesus sitting alone in the house, with Mary sitting alone at his feet while poor and Martha slaves away in the kitchen.

Now, let's just get the context here. Remember that Jesus has been addressing the 70 who have returned from their mission, casting out demons and so on.

And we read then in verse 38 after he's addressed the lawyer. Now, it came to pass as they went. Who's the they? Jesus and his disciples.

[3:02] Thirteen men. And that's not counting all the other hangers on. But let's just say it's only him and the disciples which entered into the house. Wherever he went, his disciples went. If a Pharisee invited Jesus to dinner, they have to invite his disciples too.

That's why, you know, the Pharisees said, oh, the disciples, they're washing their hands before they eat and so on. And the disciples are doing this wrong. And the disciples were there wherever Jesus was. And sometimes, maybe, there will be a bit of an embarrassment in the fact that they weren't perhaps quite as particular as Jesus was on some things.

But wherever Jesus went, the disciples went. So, in a comparatively small home here, you will have not Jesus sitting alone with Mary at his feet. You will have Jesus plus the twelve apostles in the room.

They are probably being taught by Jesus some of the deep spiritual truths of the kingdom. And as they sit around listening to Jesus and being taught by him, they are amongst them.

Because that must have been the case. Verse 38. And as they went and he entered into a certain village, a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And the Lord just says to him, it is inconceivable that the twelve apostles would be set around in the cold and only Jesus in the house.

[4:18] Where Jesus went, everybody, all the disciples went too. So, Martha is not just preparing for one honoured guest plus her own family. Me and Lazarus, who's not mentioned but would have been there somewhere in the house.

But another twelve grown men as well. Another twelve grown men who have been walking and going from place to place and are probably very hungry. It's coming to the end of the day probably.

That's when they have their main meal. And she is, as she says, serving alone. Now, I'm not trying to sort of make things better and say, oh, well, so we should have more sympathy.

We should have sympathy for Martha, right or not. Because the situation she's facing is a struggle. She's struggling away there. She's trying to feed all these men, plus her most honoured guest, Jesus.

And Mary, who might have been help to her, is there sitting at Jesus' feet just soaking it all up. Which, no doubt, Martha would have loved to do. But she has other things she has to be about.

[5:20] And so, she seeks Jesus' intervention. Martha was cumbered about much serving and came to her and said, Lord, does thou not care that my sister left me to serve alone?

And, you know, she was looking for a bit of sympathy. She knew that Jesus, who knows all things, would know that she was tackled. She was, you know, stretched. She was trying to do 101 things at once.

She wasn't getting any help. She wasn't getting any support. Now, Lazarus was probably sick still and unable to be of any help. Not that he probably would have helped much with that, which would have probably been regarded in those days and in that culture as exclusively women's work.

She doesn't say, why didn't you get the disciples to lend me a hand, Lord? But, being a fellow hostess, she would expect her sister to help. But Mary is there soaking up the teaching of Jesus.

Now, what does Jesus say to her? He doesn't say, don't be so spiteful as a sister. You know, back you go into the kitchen. Maybe she's paying me attention and that's what I've got.

No. You have to get the context here of how he speaks to her. The doubling of her name. It's just pouring with this gentleness and affection.

Martha, Martha. Thou art careful, full of care. And troubled about many things. So many things are coming in against you, Martha.

I do understand. I haven't called you and they could say, Martha, leave that. Come and sit here. Because it's more important to listen to me. I've left you to do what you feel is your particular service.

But Mary, too, has hers. Martha, thou art careful, full of care. Troubled about many things. But one thing is needful. Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

I'm not going to send her away from my feet. Because at the end of the day, salvation will not be dependent on how well a dinner is prepared. That's not to diminish the work or the service of the faith of this saint of the Lord.

[7:26] Which Martha, just like Mary, would have been. But that there is a more important thing to focus upon. And you've got to get as much of Jesus as you can while you can.

All his teaching. All his presence. Just the spirit that would be with him. If you have Christ in your house physically, you've got to soak that up and use every opportunity.

Jesus is not saying, come on, where's the dinner? Why haven't you served it up yet? He's got as much time as it takes. He can do miracles to produce food if he needs to.

The danger is that if we allow the busyness and practicalities of life, which are very pressing, and Jesus doesn't deny that, to squeeze out our opportunities to be with Jesus, then we will be the poorer for it.

It is necessary and good that we eat and drink and have time, yes, in fellowship together with these things. But one thing is needful, and that is Christ himself.

[8:31] And to absorb his teaching and that which he gives. One thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

I think from this, Mary is pretty much Jesus' favourite in this. And Martha is the sort of bossy older sister, and he's got less time for her. Those of you who have heard me on this subject in the past will know that, if anything, I'm a fan of the poor, oppressed Martha in one sense.

And I always feel it necessary for us to get the wider context. Because as I said, this few verses here, one, two, three, four, four or five verses here at the end of Route 10, doesn't give the picture as it is.

Turn to John 11, where we were last week. And you find here where it talks about Lazarus who was sick at Bethany. And how it says, you know, Jesus loved Martha, verse 5 of John 11.

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Now, name order is significant in the Bible. Name order is important. It's why, for example, Peter is always named first in the list of the apostles.

[9:39] It's why Judas is always named last in the list. It's why when Barnabas and Saul go out on the mission and are sent out, it begins with Barnabas as the senior Christian and the senior apostle.

And it's Barnabas and Saul. And then gradually it becomes, you know, then it becomes Saul, also called Paul. And then it becomes Paul and Barnabas. And then only on particular occasions where Barnabas maybe is given a lead position, he's named first.

But it's very, very rare afterwards. It's almost always Paul first and then Barnabas because he is beginning to take the lead. Name order is significant in the Bible. And here we have Jesus loved Martha and her sister.

It doesn't even name Mary there and Lazarus. And you also find that when Jesus comes to the grave there for Lazarus, it's Martha that goes out to meet him. And then he engages in a conversation with Martha.

And if you think about it in Scripture, the number of conversations of any length that Jesus has with any one individual are comparatively few.

[ 10 : 45 ] And the length and the content, the depth of content in that comparatively huge exchange between Jesus and Martha and the depth of this woman's faith, what she rasps as the truth.

You know, the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus. Jesus, a Pharisee, a leader in Israel. And, you know, they don't exchange all that much. Jesus is doing most of the talking.

Yes, Nicodemus throws in the odd word and odd question here. This is more in John 11. It's more of an equality of exchange between Jesus and Martha. You know, Lord, if thou has been here, my brother had not died.

But I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. Here is the faith of this woman. Jesus said that thy brother shall rise again.

Martha said that I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection of the last day. So here is the faith coming out again. Jesus said unto I am the resurrection and the life.

[11:53] He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? Now notice again, the authorised Russian helps us with it.

He's not saying to the crowd in general, do you collectively believe this? He's not saying believe ye this. It's believeth thou this. It's personal, it's individual. He is addressing Martha.

This wonderful statement, I am the resurrection and the life. To whom is it addressed? It's addressed not to the crowds, it's addressed to Martha. And Jesus then asked her, believeth thou this?

Do you, Martha, my sister in the faith, my friend, do you believe this? And what does she say? She said, yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Now in Matthew 16, when Peter comes out with much the same thing. Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus says, blessed are thou the Son of Barjona. Because, you know, flesh and blood is not revealed this to you, but my Father which is in heaven.

[12:52] Now if the Father which is in heaven has revealed it to Peter. Martha, for all her virtues, does not have some sort of extra human virtue that the name is of the glass.

If it is the Lord who has revealed it to Peter, it is the Lord who has revealed it to Martha. Now that puts her right up there with the leading apostle, with the major pillars of faith in the New Testament.

Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. That's Martha saying that. And when she had so said, she went away and called Mary, her sister, secret, and said, The master is come and calleth for thee.

And the only other words that are exchanged between Jesus and Martha, further on when he's about to roll the stone away, as you know, said, Lord, by this time you stinketh, for you have been dead four days.

Jesus said unto us, said I not unto thee. Again, individual, personal, thee. Not ye, not you, thee. Individual. That if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God. Then we take away the stone.

[13:53] And so on. So this depth and length of conversation between Jesus and Martha, it's quite deep. And it's quite spiritually deep. And how much conversation then, if we can compare this to that with Mary?

You'll notice that in the Luke section, in Luke chapter 10, where Mary sits at his feet and listens to all he has to say, they don't actually exchange, or they're not recorded, they're actually exchanged any words at all.

How much conversation did Jesus and Mary exchange in John 11? Well, she sends verses to Mary. Mary was calm when Jesus was. She saw him.

She fell on his feet saying, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. That's what Mary says to Jesus. What does Jesus say to Mary? Nothing. There is no record of Jesus actually addressing Mary personally, individually.

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping, which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled and said, Where have ye laid him? Ye, you. It's plural.

[14:57] It's to the crowd in general. It's not to Mary. Where hast thou laid him? It's plural. It's to the crowd. They, plural, said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.

Then said the Jews, behold, how he loved them, and so on. Many of Jesus did not exchange any further words. In fact, there is no actual conversation recorded between them.

Even when we move into chapter 12 of John, where Mary does that beautiful thing, anointing Jesus with the perfume, and then weeping, and his feet, and so on. Then he says, you know, this is, she's done, against the day of my bedding, had she done this, the blue you've always got with you.

They don't actually exchange words. He speaks up for her, and he says what a wonderful and beautiful thing she's done, but they don't exchange conversation. There's none of that takes place. The only conversation between Jesus and Martha, and the only conversation here in Luke 10 is between Jesus and Martha.

You know, the sense here, then, is a one who is, for her time, and in that context almost, in Jesus' eyes, the equal of the apostles, if we can say that reverently.

[16:05] This is a woman on whom Jesus spends time, and whom he gives conversation, whom he knows is a strong enough believer to be able to take a rebuke in love, and still not to damage their relationship in any way.

Because Martha uses what gifts she has to continue to serve the Lord. And even if we go back to John 12, and that incident where Mary is anointing Jesus' feet, then we read, of course, that six days before the Passover, he came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, when he raised from the dead.

There they made him a supper. Now, that would imply, perhaps, it was Mary and Martha that made him a supper. But wider context, if we look at the other gospel accounts, would imply it was somebody else's house in Bethany there.

Then Mary took a pound of ointment. But what we read is, Martha served. Lazarus was one of them that sat at table with him. Now, Martha serving doesn't mean it was necessarily her house.

It could mean she's helping a neighbour or friend with the serving. But this is her gift. This is her ability to give, to serve, to work for the Lord in this way.

[17:13] The thing is that she feels as if her gift is not being appreciated either. And that's why she's getting exasperated. Nobody's sharing a burden with her. And Jesus is ever so gently saying, Martha, Martha, I know how burdened you are.

I know how filled with care you are. I know your busting I got to try and feed us and prepare everything for us. But listen, one thing is more needful. That's actually what Mary has chosen.

It's not going to be taken away from her. What's he really saying here is, really, Martha, you would be better to sit with her just now. You'd be better to drink in what I'm saying and the teaching and the opportunity.

In other words, come and sit with my apostles. Now, I'm not getting ideas about, you know, sort of feminising the gospel or whatever. Oh, look, they were apostles too. But no, but he regards their position as clearly, as worthy as that of the apostles.

Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet in the room where undoubtedly the apostles would have been too. Martha is, to all intents and purposes, invited and slightly rebuked for not being there as well.

[18:24] Martha, you need to do this as well. You need to be where I am. You need to drink in the truth. I'm giving out. This is the one thing that is needful. And Martha, I want you here with me

That's really what he's saying here. And we have gone down through history taking this as a slap on the wrist and the rebuke to the worldly bossy older sister who's trying to love her little sister about.

And there's sweet lady just drinking in all the truth. And yes, to extend that may be true, but I think there's a huge injustice to Martha. And also, I would suggest to you, when you take in the wider context of John 11 and 12, it distorts the nature of the relationship between not only Mary and Martha, but Martha and Jesus.

Which would suggest it is an extremely close and spiritually deep and mature spiritual relationship. Martha makes a confession of faith that only Peter really equals amongst the followers of Jesus.

So he's just Martha, Martha, they were careful and troubled about many things. Now, usually where women in the Bible attended upon Jesus and gave him of their substance and supported him and so on, it was usually in the context of because of what he had done for them.

[19:47] And that they were expressing gratitude for what he had done. If we go back to Luke chapter 8, there we find, you know, certain women which had been healed of evil spirits.

It's chapter 8, verse 2 in Luke. Healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Madonna. Out of whom went seven devils. They didn't go out by themselves. Jesus cast out those devils.

Seven devils had inhabited her. He cast out the demons. She became his devoted friend and servant after that. And Joanna, the wife of Chusa, or Chusa, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others which ministered unto him of their substance.

Many others who are not named. Now, the implication is not that Martha followed Jesus about ministering to him, but rather her home became a base for Jesus in Bethany when he was visiting Jerusalem.

We don't read of Martha going about from place to place, but we do read of her home being open to Jesus. And possibly one reason why, again to take the wider context, why she wouldn't be in a position to follow Jesus all over the place is because with a sick brother, somebody had to look after him.

[21:00] Now, why would not Mary perhaps stay to look after him? Well, again, this is where, being not slightly controversial, but just looking at the evidence of scripture.

We remember in John 12 how Mary anoints Jesus' feet with the ointment and how the scent of it fills the whole house. This incident is recorded in Matthew and also in Mark, but it's not recorded in Luke.

Luke, who records this incident in chapter 10 about Jesus and Mary and Martha, where Martha is named and so on, has, however, in chapter 7, an incident of a woman in a particular city.

We're not told which one, which was a sinner. Now, that doesn't mean that she was working in any illicit sort of trade. It doesn't have to mean that.

It could just mean that perhaps she had been taken in by some romantic, you know, Valentino who had promised to the world that she'd given herself to him and then he just cast it off when he got what he wanted.

[ 22:03 ] But she was thereafter defiled. And her reputation would be absolute mud. Nobody would touch her with a barge ball. She would have a reputation thereafter as a sinner. Why, that wouldn't imply the guy himself, but that's just the nature of culture as well in those days.

But she had the name of a sinner. Whether or not that meant that she made a habit of that particular kind of behavior. Possibly, probably not, but we don't know for sure.

At any rate, the Pharisee in whose house Jesus was eating, he said, if this man was really a prophet, he would know who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him.

For she is a sinner. And the Bible doesn't, you know, doesn't make any bones about it. This woman in the city, which was a sinner when she knew that Jesus was at need in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, stood at his feet behind him, weeping, began to wash his feet with tears, to wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment, and so on.

Now, it has many similarities to the incident in Matthew, and Mark, and John. And John is the one who tells us that it was maybe of Bethany who anointed Jesus' feet with his feet.

[23:17] It could be two completely separate incidents. It might be two completely separate people doing a similar thing. But if it was, then it is perhaps on balance more likely that Scripture might have mentioned them both.

For example, Matthew makes two mentions of blind men that Jesus healed. You know, one or two of them quite early on in Jesus' ministry, and another two, one of whom would have been Bartimaeus, in Jericho later towards the last week of his life.

Matthew and Mark, like all the Gospel accounts, make mention of the feeding of the 5,000. Matthew and Mark also make mention, a couple of chapters further on, of the feeding of the 4,000.

Now, if they didn't mention them both, then you might be inclined to think, oh, well, they've made a mistake. Somebody said 4,000, one of the other Gospel accounts says 5,000. They've just got the details slightly mixed up.

No, because they are both specifically mentioning Matthew and Mark, we know that it's two incidents, not one. A feeding of the 5,000 with various little details that are different from the feeding of the 4,000.

[24:28] Different number of baskets taken up afterwards, different kinds of baskets, different number of fish, different number of loaves, and so on. As well as the different number of people. Two incidents, both recorded separately.

Despite the fact of how similar they are. And yet, John, Mark, and Matthew only mention one incident of Jesus being anointed with perfume on his feet and his head and so on.

Luke only mentions one as well. Nobody mentions two. It is entirely possible that there were two completely separate but very similar in many details instances.

To him, personally, from the scriptural evidence, it is more likely that they are the same incident with the details remembered differently by the different Gospel narrators.

If that were the case, that would mean that Mary was the woman who had been a sinner. As I said, that doesn't mean that she worked in any illicit trade.

[25:34] She could just have been ill-used and cast off. And then with a bad reputation after that. That was the cruelty. But the reality of life often in those days are not culture.

But this is one who comes to Jesus having sensed or realized that only he could heal her life. And he does it. Now, if Jesus has done that for somebody.

If he's done that for a particular woman. The women who followed him and ministered to him of their substance. He had done something for them. He had either cast out demons or he healed them from something.

Or, in the case of this woman here in Luke 7, he had given her back her dignity and her life. He had done it in the face of all his disciples and in the face of disapproving fantasies.

Now, the fantasy who is addressed in Luke chapter 7 happens to be called Simon. Jesus spoke to him and said, Simon, Luke chapter 7 verse 40.

[ 26:34 ] Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. He said, Master, say on. And so on. So I suppose we should have included him really in the number of people addressed by name by Jesus. But here we have mentioned him anyway.

Simon. Now, in Matthew and Mark, the Pharisee's house where Jesus is eating, he's called Simon. Simon the leper. He wouldn't be a leper at the time because he wouldn't be able to mix with other people.

He must have formerly been a leper and then be healed of his leprosy or cured of his leprosy so that now he's able to mingle and mix with ordinary people. But he would still have this nickname, Simon the leper.

It used to be a leper. Now he's healed. Jesus goes to his house. It's in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper that the anonymous woman in Matthew and Mark anoints Jesus' feet.

It is in Bethany where May anoints Jesus' feet. So you have Bethany, May doing it. You have Matthew and Mark saying it's in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper.

[ 27:36 ] You have Luke having an incident where a Pharisee called Simon has Jesus in his house and an incident like this takes place. Now to me personally, that's just too many coincidences and not enough separate recording.

Only one incident each time. That would imply, it would suggest from the evidence that Mary is the woman in Luke 7. It doesn't have to be it. Lots of people disagree. Most Bible commentators perhaps would disagree.

But the evidence would suggest it. And if that is the case, then Jesus has done this unspeakably beautiful thing back for Mary who has done this unspeakably beautiful thing for him.

Against the day of my burial, she has done this. And wherever the gospel is preached, this that she has done for me will be told as a memorial for her, Jesus said. That gives her not simply a glowing spotlight and testimonial.

It raises her up in the sight of men and society who were ready to trample her into the dirt. Now that would be something that would change not only how Mary saw Jesus, but how everyone in her family saw him.

[28:48] Because when somebody in your family may be trampled in the dirt reputation-wise, there's a sense in which the whole family shares in it. And if Jesus has raised up and exalted Mary in this way, that's a reason to always want him in your home.

It's a reason to always have him there, to be his devoted servant and follower. And that is something which, of course, Martha and Mary and Lazarus do.

Now the timing of exactly what happens, John has it after the incident of Lazarus being released from the dead, quite late in Jesus' ministry.

Luke's implication is that it's earlier on. People, remember, are writing these things decades after the events. But the point is, the truth of what happened, and probably the individual who is at the centre of it, is on the balance of probability, Mary of Bethany.

That would change not only how she views Jesus, but how the whole family does. It would mean it was one reason why Martha was so devoted to Jesus, wanting to welcome him into her home, knowing that he is the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God, who should come into the world.

[30:05] Why she's ready to spend and be spent with all the gifts at her disposal for such a man as Jesus. And yet, and yet, even with all the love in the world, it is possible to lose sight of that which is the one thing we do.

Sometimes we may be desiring to serve Jesus with all that we do. We may be intending to do that. We may be even thinking that that is what we are doing.

But it is so possible to be so busy with all the things of the Lord that we take our eyes off the Lord himself. And that, bless her, is what Martha is, if we can use the word, guilty of here.

That Jesus, in his gentleness and mercy, if he has raised up her sister, who was without reputation in the mud, he's not going to crush Martha when she's doing her best.

This, yes, it is a rebuke. But it is a rebuke of such gentleness, such tenderness, that Martha could not regard it as a slap in the face, I would suggest to you, but rather something from which perhaps she needed to learn.

[31:29] that you can't pass up the opportunities to spend time with Jesus and to drink in the truth of what he is teaching and say, we need time with the Lord.

We need to listen to the Lord. We need to be focused upon the Lord. And all these other things, yes, they are needful and right in their time. But what Jesus is saying here is that this is more important.

Don't lose sight of it. Martha, Martha, they are careful and troubled about many things. Which of us is not full of care and anxiety and trouble about many things?

Life in this world is trouble. There is so much that so often goes wrong, so many hassles, so many pressures, so many difficulties and challenges. We are filled with care, careful and troubled.

But one thing is needful. And maybe that's not true. But if you have thought about many things, I would gently suggest perhaps take out the name Martha and insert your own name.

[ 32:40 ] Doubled over. And place yourself in this narrative. Jesus speaking to you. You are careful. You are careful.

You are filled with care. You are troubled about many things. But one thing is needful. And may he have chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.

And I would suggest, if it's not a distortion of the text, that Martha, having been directed to where she also should be, would not be taken away from Martha either.

Well ye Anun and he was neutral to find an author, capable of pertaining to her burnt- zum offline- shark pattern, but the perfume- zum on parag **Indian** liarschime he also must be touched from her. When you are celebrated, you can roll on. You jaki1men have burned in theTIONshime **Indian** You have killed, after all this on the YouTube Fitlight-Summer and Tff timestre worcyj, the H song was filmed here for 3 1 22!

trend short the horse and boy 2 17 years old as well, So we are mostly ■■ free hands with heat staff at last three petroleum series, but one thing is like this, You can always Tyr and Ron Punk will